

FEATURED ARTIST: ROXA SMITH

July 5, 2022



Chlorofilled, 30 x 36 inches, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 2021

This week we welcome Roxa Smith, a Brooklyn-based artist represented by C24Gallery working primarily in figurative painting and collage. Smith, who was born and raised in Venezuela, studied art history and German at Bowdoin College, Maine, and University of California, Santa Cruz. She moved to New York City in the early 1990s, where she began to explore and eventually anchor her work in themes of quotidian domestic settings. Influences on her work include Latin American art, Indian miniature painting, Post-Impressionism and naïve art.



Covid Chair #9, Renewal, 10 x 8 inches, Gouache on board

In 2022, she had a sold out show at C24 Gallery (NYC) in the two-person exhibition “In Her Space.” In 2013, she had a midcareer show in which she exhibited over 25 pieces in the atrium of the Conde Nast building in Times Square.

Smith has received a range of awards, residencies and fellowships. Most recently she participated in “Creative Imperative,” a program sponsored by the Vermont Studio Center in 2021 and was awarded an artist grant by the same program. In 2017, Smith was a finalist for a Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) Arts and Design commission. In 2013, she was awarded the prestigious New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA)-Basil Alkazi Fellowship at the Sheldon Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska. She has been featured in *New American Paintings*, *Studio Visit Magazine*, *Artspace magazine*, the NYFA Newsletter *Artspire* and *HuffPost*.

“I have a long history of painting familiar domestic environments, landscape, and everyday objects. Informed by my Venezuelan upbringing and a passion for naïve and outsider art, lush color and intricate patterns dominate my work. My oil, acrylic and gouache paintings emerge from slow observation as I metaphorically collage different elements into the work to create a composition steeped with personal symbolism. Through the lens of my experience, I idealize and dramatize imagery to form and re-form a visual narrative. I navigate between seeing, describing, interpreting and inventing.



Flower Power, 40 x 30 inches , Oil and acrylic on canvas, 2021

The pandemic and its protocols reshaped how I perceive personal space. Familiar objects took on a new meaning, mainly chairs and houseplants. Chairs became metaphors of our collective isolation while houseplants evoked a sense of companionship and compassion. While indoors, I painted a series of 8x10 gouache paintings: “The Covid Chair Series,” journaling my experience during the quarantine of 2020 through early 2021. I placed a chair in the middle of the picture in every piece. Fern-like plants, seasonal flowers or imagery referencing the social and political upheaval of the time framed each chair. Every piece in this group of paintings germinated from a reflection of this dense and complicated time.

The visual diary of the *Covid Chair Series* and other small gouache paintings I made during isolation informed my studio practice. They gave way to larger oil and acrylic paintings of interior settings crowded with plants, exploding with luscious, vibrant color and flat contrasting patterns. My paintings are lively, effervescent compositions where planes oscillate as the viewer moves through space. Their vivacity contradicts the darkness and grief often present in our reality. Familiar yet idiosyncratic, my pieces become off-kilter reconsiderations of spatial and psychological possibilities infused with a unique and magical vibrancy.”

<https://epicenter-nyc.com/featured-artist-roxa-smith/>