



Virgyl Edwins, oil on linen, 100 x 81cm, 2021. Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery and the artist.

A TALK WITH REBECCA BRODSKIS

REBECCA BRODSKIS GREW UP SURROUNDED BY ART AND CULTURE. THE PARIS-BASED ARTIST USED TO SPEND WINTERS IN MOROCCO WITH HER GRANDMOTHER, WHO WAS A PAINTER AS WELL. SHE DESCRIBES HERSELF AS VERY INSTINCTIVE AND ACTIVE. HER EVOCATIVE PAINTINGS ARE A MIRROR OF SOCIETY AND THE FACES IN IT. IN THIS INTERVIEW SHE TALKS ABOUT HER CREATIVE PROCESS, WHY THE HUMAN BODY IS THE MAIN CHARACTER OF HER WORK, AND HER UPCOMING SHOW IN ROME.

Words LEILA SALINAS

When did art begin being a form of expression for you?

Art has always been a form of expression for me. I grew up surrounded by artists and filmmakers and I had very, very restricted access to television. Actually, I was never allowed to watch a screen except to see Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Laurel and Hardy or the Marx Brothers every once in a while. As a young kid, I would spend a lot of time drawing and painting. We usually spent the winters at my grandmother's home in Morocco. She was a painter as well, and I would literally be in her studio all the time; I've been using her oils since I was three years old.

What is the artistic process like for you? What would a typical day in your studio look like?

I am very instinctive and active. I don't sit and reflect for hours when I am at the studio... that is something I do when I lie down in the evening before falling asleep. Usually, the minute I step into the studio, I go straight to my brushes and start painting. Since I have two small kids, my time is always limited, so I try to use every second I have fully. I can spend up to three hours painting without even taking a minute break. When I get into it, I am just very, very focused, and all I see is the stroke of the brush on the linen; I think of nothing else but the painting, the painting, the painting!

How would you describe your art?

I paint people. People I know, people I don't know, people I see on the streets, people I imagine, people who inspire me, writers, actors, choreographers, dancers, thinkers, poets and whoever has an impact on my thoughts. I would say my art is a portrait of the society I live in. I am inspired by my daily travels, the things I see, the meetings along the way. For me, it's like keeping a diary—a record of faces and scenes of everyday life.

Regarding your choice of subjects to paint, what draws you to paint human figures?

I have always been obsessed with human figures; I just love watching people. Every face is like a landscape. There is always so much behind it, an entire existence that is the result of so many influences. Even as a kid, I would always stare at people on the subway and I haven't changed since.

The fact that you have a master's degree in sociology is fascinating. How do your background studies influence your art?

Studying sociology has been an amazing journey and it gave me so

many tools for a deeper understanding of society. It really opened up my brain to a much wider spectrum of analysis, broadening my horizons. As I said before, my painting is a diary, a reflection of the society I am living in. It has a very sociological side to it: questioning the foundation of human relationships while questioning the social context in which we live, a world in perpetual change, interwoven with ties that we do not understand. The loss of bearings of contemporary societies, caused by the questioning of social foundations, also interests me. Pointing out the doubt, anxiety and disorientation of my characters in totally decontextualized environments, both void and the setting of the universal. My characters are metaphors for the contemporary man, entangled in ever-expanding social circles, wandering through the meanders of sprawling cities, condemned to extreme lucidity but constantly invaded by the fear of tomorrow.

How did the pandemic and the quarantine affect your art and your form of work?

Well, people are my main source of inspiration, so the lockdowns, empty streets and masks covering faces led me to look into other things. I have always been interested in dance and body movements, and recently I have been inspired a lot by old pictures of experimental and expressionist dancing from the early twentieth century. I also feel like painting dancers and all these interlaced bodies is my way of facing the lack of human interaction since the pandemic began. With each painting I am reminded of how beautiful bodies are when they intertwine.

Can you tell us about your commitment to sustainability?

I am very conscious of my usage. I am always extremely careful with trying to waste as little as possible when it comes to water, electricity and so on. Having small kids, I think it's essential to teach them this practice, to teach them to be aware that these resources are not endless and that you should really value them and be responsible about using them. Every human can make a difference and we all really need to learn how to reduce our expenses, recycle and buy second hand.

Any upcoming projects that you are excited about?

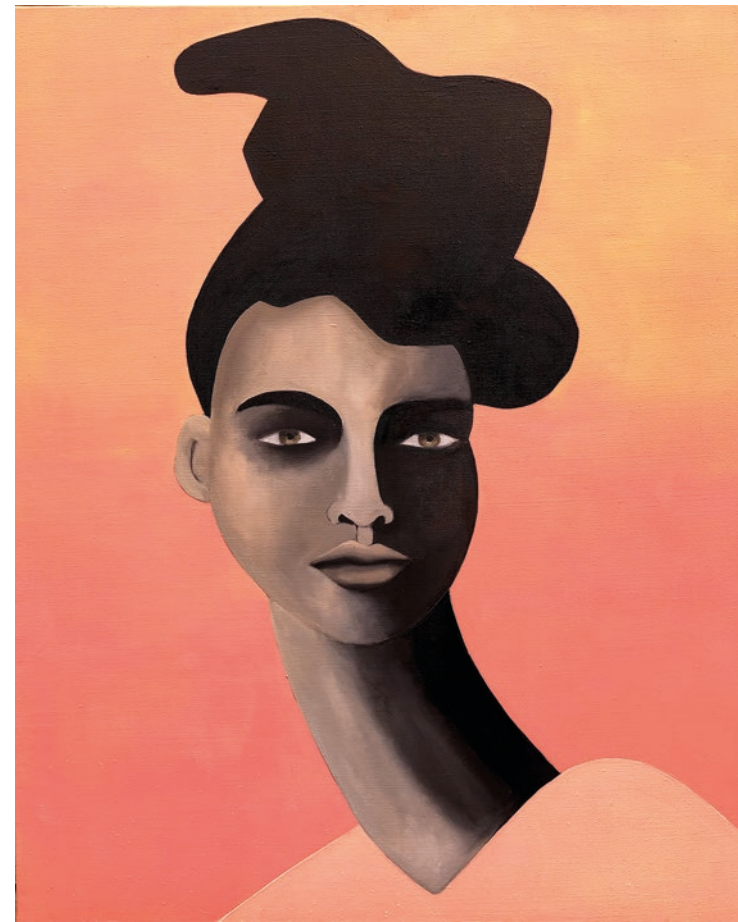
I will have a solo exhibition opening in Rome at the beginning of October 2021, and from there I am flying straight to Dakar for a two-month residency. After that, I will have solo exhibitions in Lausanne, Vienna and London, and I will also be showing at Art Dubai and Art Paris. www.rebeccabrodskis.com



Assia, oil on linen, 100x81cm, 2021. Courtesy of Koenig Gallery and the artist.



An afternoon with Lilach, oil on linen, 320 x 130cm, 2021. Courtesy of Koenig Gallery and the artist.



Alma, oil on linen, 81 x 65cm, 2021. Courtesy of Septieme Gallery and the artist.



La danse de l'absurde, oil on linen, 100 x 97cm, 2021. Courtesy of Galleria Anna Marra and the artist.



Hafsaka, oil on linen, 70 x 50cm, 2020. Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery and the artist.



Le joueur d'échecs, oil on linen, 100 x 81cm, 2021. Courtesy of Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery and the artist.



Effet Mirroir, oil on linen, 162 x 260cm, 2021. Courtesy of Septieme Gallery and the artist.