

rated

ART

Fall 2023

A McQueen Agency Publication

**10 Things We're
Looking Forward
to This Fall**

**Get to Know
Ashdale
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MEET

**Lisa
Graziotto**

AN ARTIST Q&A

AGENCY DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Falling Into Place

As summer begins to fade and the fall colours emerge, I can't help but marvel knowing that what has been, can always be new again.

Though it's a notion that's always worthy of being front and centre, it feels particularly compelling this month as we chat with artist Lisa Graziotto, who's been navigating her own renewal, both in her work and with her health.

Speaking of renewal, we're returning to Art Toronto this fall for the first time since the pandemic and CANNOT WAIT to connect with all of the gallerists, collectors, and artists who will descend upon Toronto to celebrate art! Having this opportunity to connect in person and share the exciting things that our McQueen Agency artists have been up to is something we couldn't be more excited about.



Jared Tabler, photo by Aaron Pedersen.

Until then, we hope you'll join us in remembering to look for inspiration in unexpected places—starting with *ratedART*, which looks to honour the ways in which art goes beyond “business” to inspire, nurture, and remind us that art can be the salve you didn't know you needed. Of course, the September issue of *Vogue* and a pumpkin-spice latte could never hurt either...

Take care, everyone!

- Jared

ARTIST Q&A

Meet Lisa Graziotto



Lisa Graziotto

You can't have optimism without gratitude. And Lisa Graziotto mines the world for both. Sometimes, she finds them in life's grandeur. Other times, in the smallest acts of the day. Her art, as you'll soon discover, is a reflection of all she sees and the narrative truths that lie beneath. And though her work will often depict people alone, her greatest hope is that it will help them realize they are not. Modern realist, student of the world, and outstandingly terrible napper—Meet Lisa Graziotto.

When you were first starting out, what was it about the arts that made you feel like it could be your community?

According to my mother, the first drawing I ever did was when I was 18 months old. It was of a dog, and my mother wrote on the bottom: *"My daughter's first attempt at drawing is a dog, and she barked at it."* So as far back as I can remember, I've always liked creating things using my hands. When I got older, I still enjoyed art but had also discovered things like biology and thought, *"Oh, I think I want to be a marine biologist or a biologist who works in Africa,"* and then I thought, *"Maybe I'll be a vet!"* So that's how it started. As for the rest, the long version of how I gravitated more directly toward arts is a tragic story.

In high school, I continued with art and still liked it, but had also discovered that biology, and physics, and geography really interested me, too. But all of that very abruptly got pushed away in Grade 10 when I was sexually assaulted by my guidance counselor. Having received no support from the principal, I found comfort in hiding out

in the art room where I discovered a lot of other people who felt like outcasts, too. The other place I found comfort was in the gym. I played a lot of sports growing up, so between those two places, I found that I could hide away from the academic world, which I knew would eventually lead me to the guidance counselor to discuss options for becoming a veterinarian—which never happened because I just wanted the hell out of high school and the hell out of my town. And art provided that for me. When I did leave, it was for Toronto to go to university for visual arts.

Having never been on my own, the academic environment was kind of overwhelming. Coming from high school where you could feel like you got too much attention, to an environment where instructors didn't pay much attention to first-year students, it felt like all you did was take instruction, leave the class, do your thing, and show up a week later to hand stuff in. So fast-forward a little, I was thrown out of university! And for a long time when people asked me which university I graduated from, I

would get all nervous because I felt I'd be judged as not being an accomplished artist or as being an artist who wouldn't be able to find a gallery—because I was told by gallery owners, “Oh, if you don't have a university degree, we're not interested in looking at you.” Thankfully, I now wear that with pride because I know that other accomplished artists in history also were thrown out of school. Just to clarify—I was thrown out not for bad behavior, but because I had questioned one professor a lot and had also just failed a couple of classes. So, no, they really didn't want me back for a second year! Regardless of that, within the visual arts environment, I found that I was very comfortable with these people who too were outcasts and had interesting stories that paralleled my life. In fact, I had found more than comfort and familiarity with these people—I'd found a community.

You've said that your travels have greatly informed the work you create. In what ways does that influence emerge?

I've taken long trips across the United States that opened up a lot of opportunities for me to go to small galleries and be exposed to regional artists that I would have never heard of, let alone begun to understand their techniques, and styles, and points of view—including what they saw out their studio windows.

There was also the landscape aspect of travelling. At one time, I was doing a lot of landscapes without any figures, so travelling to New Mexico and spending two months there really influenced the way that I saw my surroundings. It also cemented what I had studied about Georgia O'Keeffe and her work. I remember thinking, *“Oh, yes, I see the purple in the landscape, I see the light changing every hour, I can feel that energy.”*

“I was very comfortable with these people who too were outcasts and had interesting stories that paralleled my life.”



The Second Last Exit, oil on canvas, 30 x 40, by Lisa Graziotto, 2022.



Northern Lights, oil on mylar, 7 x 4.5, by Lisa Graziotto, 2017.

Then, of course, there was the experience of travelling to Europe, and going to the museums, and seeing artists who aren't represented in the books in my studio, and looking at their techniques, and just people-watching to understand how people are... I'm so fascinated by the politics of wherever I am and how people interact with each other and get along in their environment. For me, travel just offers more of that—an understanding of how humanity is getting along with itself—and that reflects in my figurative work.

What narrative do you find yourself constantly returning to?

Humanity and how humanity gets on with itself. And politics... but I suppose politics is obviously part of humanity. I also like the loneliness of human beings.

In the series I've been working on, I've been looking at the way that humans have been interacting with our planet and how we've been destroying it. There's one painting I did of a Douglas fir, and it's based on the Douglas fir that's growing in BC, Big Doug. And I had read about it in a novel at the time and I thought, *"Okay, that's going to be an interesting subject."* So in the painting, Big Doug is in colour and sort of towering off the canvas, and everything around it is gray. And there's a caretaker who's sweeping up all the debris around the tree, all nonchalant, like it's just another job. So, yeah, that aspect of humanity really fascinates me lately.

Tell us about someone who mentored you or helped set you on your path.

That would be my friend Dennis Hunkler, who I've known for over 30 years. He's an American artist who grew up in San Francisco and then came to Canada in the 60s and worked with Jack Bush as his assistant.

When we met, we instantly had a connection, and to this day he's somebody I talk with on a weekly basis. He pushes me to work harder and to take what I'm trying to say to a different level. He helps me when I am stuck on an idea, and also when I have nothing to say at all. And he's not the opposite of me, but his level of intellectualism in the studio is w-a-y up there and also abstract. And I'm w-a-y over here with narrative and portraying realistic views because I'm a modern realist, so we just work together very well in that sense. He's been integral to my existence in my studio life. And I'm so grateful to have him.

“In the series I’ve been working on, I’ve been looking at the way that humans have been interacting with our planet and how we’ve been destroying it.”



The Sweeper, oil on canvas, by Lisa Graziotto, 2023.



Snack Pact, oil on canvas, 48 x 36, by Lisa Graziotto, 2014.



The End, oil on mylar, 6 x 4.5, by Lisa Graziotto, 2017.

What attracts you to working in series?

When I was first starting out, I needed to build a portfolio to shop around to galleries. And as per the suggestion of my mentor/good friend, Dennis, he suggested that I work in series because then I'd not only have a body of work that's consistent, if a gallery appreciated that and were to offer me a solo show, I'd have a story to tell. So that's the way it started out—as a way to bulk up my portfolio.

Then, as life got on, I'd begin with one idea and start working in my sketchbook or notebook and then think, *"Oh, let's move on to this other idea because that's a shoot off of this concept,"* and so on and so forth until I came up with 10, 11, 12, and so on. From there, the sketches would follow, and I'd create this entire narrative of what I was trying to say with the first painting! So working in a series appeals to me a lot.

What is it about working in different scales (from matchstick miniatures to large canvases) that plays to your strengths as a storyteller?

I'm almost six feet tall, so I love working in large scale because it reflects my space—my personal space is that shape of the canvas. And I feel that when I work large, I'm hoping that the viewer is just grabbed by the size of the canvas, and that whatever composition is on it holds the viewer in that space for a while to consider what I'm trying to say, as well as their own conclusions.

So the large size I love because of my size; and the small size I love because it's the same feeling, but the opposite process. It draws me in and makes me feel like I'm working on something very special. It's also a very quiet space for me to be in and allows my brain to change the way it thinks and the way ideas flow. My hope with the smaller scale work is that when it's hanging on the wall in a gallery, people will be drawn into it and have a quiet, intimate moment with this thing that I'm trying to say to them.



38221, oil on board, 32" Tondo, by Lisa Graziotto, 2023. Shortlisted for the 2023 Kingston Prize.



High Plains Surveyor, oil on canvas, 30 x 30, by Lisa Graziotto, 2023.

Who is someone or something inspiring you right now?

That would have to be my husband and all the ways he inspires me to work (often posing for me for paintings), and is always there with his unwavering support and patience with the various moods and alternate views of this wonderful place we call Earth (like when I point out a lovely cerulean blue sky or the vermillion hue of a flower, and so on). He truly has been one person that has kept this artist above the waterline when days/ moments are tough with my powerful and lovely Muse.

What makes you hopeful these days?

That's funny, because I've been thinking about that lately. I finished my cancer treatment a few years ago and had been extremely positive throughout the entire process. I meditated every day and practiced gratitude in my journal, so I was on a high. This past year though has been different. It's been more... I don't know... filled with residual feelings from the current series that I'm working on—Big Doug and the falling of the trees

“Looking back, I now see that I had just lost my original version of who I was, and that I was becoming 2.0 me.”

around it—so I guess I've just been reflecting on that and am struggling to find positive things—other than looking at dog and cat videos online, that is! My niece's newborn is, of course, also giving me pause to think about something positive, and beautiful, and lovely.

But finishing my cancer treatment during the pandemic and not being able to celebrate was very weird. I had planned a party where I was going to have a bonfire to burn all the clothes I had bought to wear only on chemo or radiation days, and I'd imagined having everybody around me and how it would feel to release all that energy—but it never happened. We were all just so isolated.

The other big thing was that I couldn't work at that time—to the point that I thought, *“I can't do this anymore. I can't be an artist. I've got to do something else.”* And I remember talking to a friend of mine, another mentor who has since passed away from cancer, and he was like, “No, my whole life I've known you, and you're creative! You can't just stop.” But I had. I'd given away a lot of my things, and had thrown out portfolios of work, and was convinced that was it. Looking back, I now see that I had just lost my original version of who I was, and that I was becoming 2.0 me. So I wasn't in a space of *“Whoa, stop.”* I was in the space of becoming that transition. Today I can say I'm optimistic that I'm okay, and back on track, and that I'm starting to say something with my work—including a portrait I finished of me bald during cancer treatment. So, yeah, I'm optimistic for that because I'm looking at this emerging 2.0 of me. I'm still not 100% comfortable in this person. But I'm grateful for this person. I'm grateful for the opportunity I have to be in this space. I'm grateful that I have no worries in the world.



Prime Living, oil on canvas, 20 x 30, by Lisa Graziotto, 2022.

It's a perfect day. How do you spend it?

My perfect day in a perfect world would start at my house in the country, where I'd be surrounded by a forest, and rolling hills, and a river, too. I would wake up from a colossal night's sleep, meaning every fiber is rested and I'm raring to go. Then I'd work out and meditate and have a great breakfast. Next, I would go for a long walk with dogs, and a horse, and maybe some chickens—who knows!—but there'd be wildlife with me. I would walk by the river and stop to do some writing or some sketching and then head back to the studio where I would regurgitate what I had felt during that moment. Next, I would have a great lunch, and a sit outside, and maybe a little bit of a nap—but that really would take a perfect world because I'm not a napper and would love to learn how. I read all the time that, "Oh, Picasso slept in the afternoon," but it would take me two-and-a-half hours to fall asleep, and I'd wake up feeling worse than when I'd laid down!

Anyways... after the "perfect nap," I would go back to the studio and work for a little bit, and then have dinner with my husband, where we'd eat and spend some quality time together. After that, I'd head back to the studio to work from nine or ten o'clock until three in the morning—which is my favourite and most creative time to work, but is no longer practical because I want to spend time with my husband. However! In my perfect world, I would work, and it would be okay, and my husband would actually probably like it because he'd get the whole bed to himself. So, yeah, that's my perfect day.

Discover more of Lisa Graziotto's work [here](#), and give her a follow on [Instagram!](#)

*Editorial note: Since this interview, Lisa's self-portrait was shortlisted for the Kingston Prize, one of the most anticipated Canadian portrait competitions and exhibitions in the country.



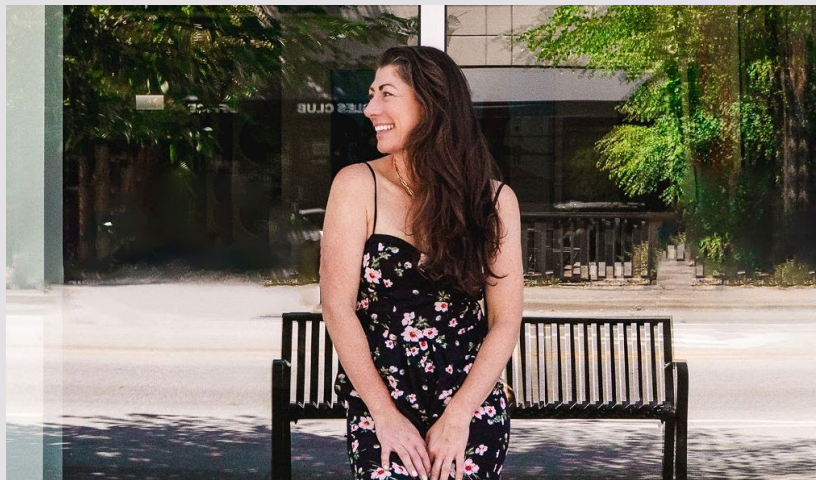
IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Get to Know Ashdale Gallery

Everyone is welcome.

Not only is that the greeting you'll find etched on Ashdale Gallery's front door, it's also the feeling you'll get once inside. Despite having just opened this July, the gallery is already becoming a community-driven space, fiercely dedicated to offering North Vancouver an exceptional opportunity to engage with contemporary Canadian art. No one could be more excited about that than Jessica Arbour, the gallery's co-owner and director. Whether you're a collector, an artist, or a curious visitor, Arbour is always happy to show you around or to answer questions about the gallery's 2D and 3D work.

Among that incredible art you'll find paintings, mixed-media, drawings, sculptures, and more—including work by our very own **Johnny Taylor**. To discover all the artists on Ashdale Gallery's current roster, be sure to visit their **website**, give them a follow on **Instagram**, or pop in to see for yourself. As the door will let you know, you'll always be welcome.



Jessica Arbour, co-owner and director of Ashdale Gallery.



Ashdale Gallery interior.

10 Things We're Looking Forward to

This Fall



Boletinus Merulioides, archival print on Hahnemuehle Photo Rag 308gsm, 54 x 40, edition of 15, by Julya Hajnoczky, 2021.

- 1. David Zwirner presents: Emma McIntyre,**
Opening September 21, 2023. New York. Learn more [here](#).
- 2. The Chapel Gallery presents:**
Grant McConnell: *Rogue Royal*,
Opening September 23, 2023. North Battleford.
Learn more [here](#).
- 3. Remai Modern presents:**
Kapwani Kiwanga: *Remediation*,
Opening October 6, 2023. Saskatoon. Learn more [here](#).
- 4. MoMA presents: *Picasso in Fontainebleau*,**
Opening October 8, 2023. New York. Learn more [here](#).
- 5. Miller Art Gallery at the Roxy presents: Julya Hajnoczky,**
October 12 – November 16, 2023. Edmonton.
Learn more [here](#).
- 6. Art Institute of Chicago presents:**
Ellsworth Kelly: *Portrait Drawings*,
until October 23, 2023. Learn more [here](#).

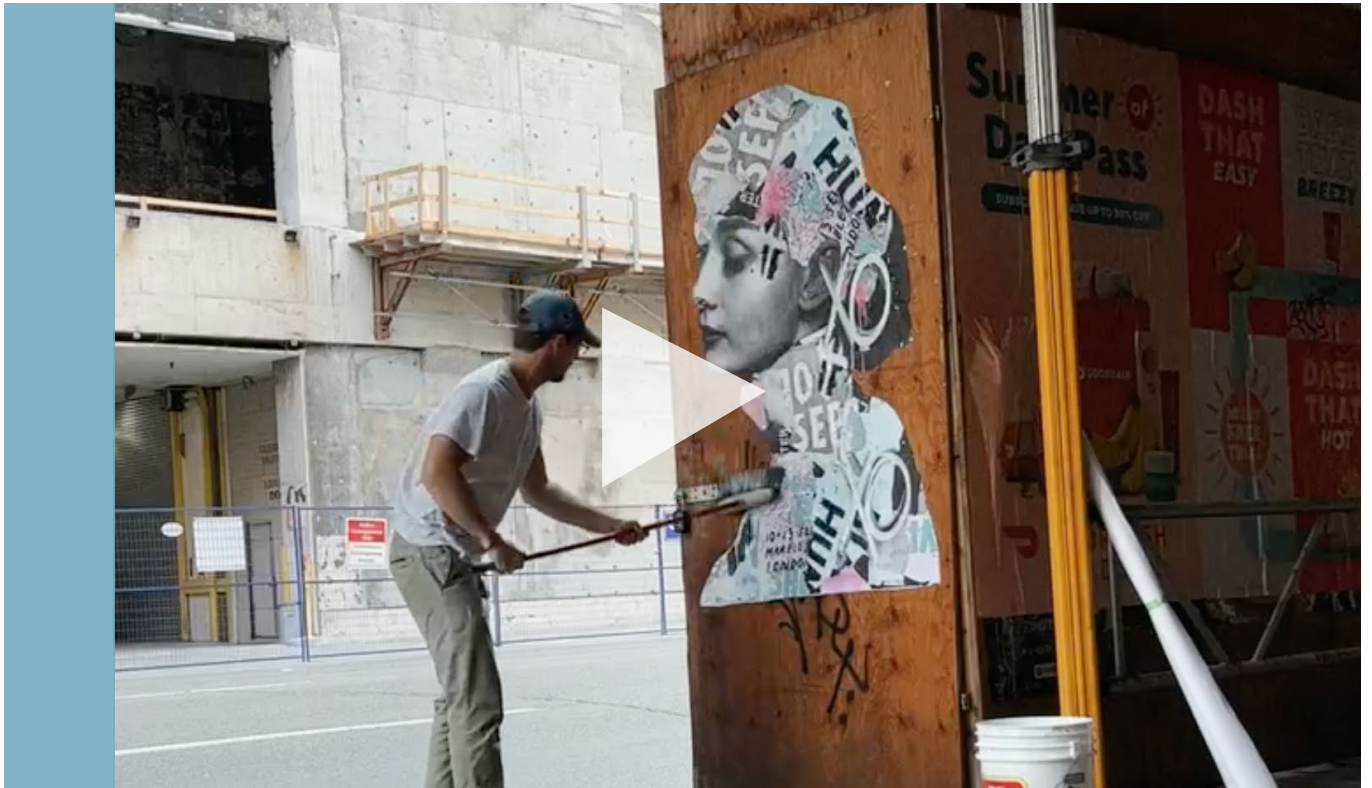
- 7. Art Toronto at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre,**
October 26 – 29, 2023. Learn more [here](#).
- 8. Vancouver Art Gallery presents:**
Denyse Thomasos: *Just Beyond*,
opening November 10, 2023. Learn more [here](#).
- 9. Art Gallery of Ontario presents:**
Keith Haring: *Art Is for Everybody*,
Opening November 17, 2023. Toronto. Learn more [here](#).
- 10. Miller Art Gallery at the Roxy presents:**
Caroline Campbell,
Opening November 23, 2023. Edmonton.
Learn more [here](#).

What's On

McQueen Artists Take Centre Stage

If you're already missing summer and need something to look forward to, here's a list of where you'll find spectacular work by McQueen artists, exhibiting between now and December.

- ▶ **Michael Abraham** will be appearing in two upcoming shows:
Looking Forward, Looking Back, will be Abraham's first solo show in a decade! Be sure to catch it at the **Visual Space Gallery** in Vancouver, September 28 – October 4, 2023.
2023 Eastside Culture Crawl, is where you'll find Abraham and David Haughton working in their Vancouver studio (Studio 1610), 1610 Clark Drive, November 16 – 19 (Thu/Fri: 5pm – 10pm. Sat/Sun: 11am – 6pm), 2023.
- ▶ **Tiffany Blaise** will be taking part in two upcoming shows:
Blaise and Fanny Tang will be featured in an exhibit titled *Seasons of Eternity*, located in the lobby of the **Queen Elizabeth Theatre** (Courtesy of the Vancouver Civic Theatres Art Program), October – December, 2023.
2023 Eastside Culture Crawl, is where you'll find Blaise working in her Vancouver studio, 116 E Pender Street, November 16 – 19, (Thu/Fri: 5pm – 10pm. Sat/Sun: 11am – 6pm), 2023.
- ▶ **Dunce** will be in Edmonton showcasing a solo exhibit titled *Fame & Fortune*, at the **Miller Art Gallery** at the Roxy, September 8 – October 5, 2023.
- ▶ **Lori Goldberg** will be showcasing the forest painting collection she created during her **2023 NVRC Artist Residency**, October 1, 2023, from 1pm – 4 pm at the Delbrook Community Recreation Centre in North Vancouver. Goldberg's showcase is part of **Culture Days**, a national event that runs September 22 – October 15, 2023.
Flying YVR to the US or Europe? Head over to Gate E 79 to see Lori Goldberg's newly installed 'Plasticized Fish' Mobile series, created from sewn single-use plastic, found glass, paint, and resin. Vancouver International Airport, now until summer 2024.
- ▶ **Lisa Graziotto** will have her self-portrait, titled *38221*, on display at the 2023 **Kingston Prize Exhibition**, as it was shortlisted for the Kingston Prize! The finalists' works will be showcased at the Firehall Theatre in Gananoque, October 6 – 27, 2023, and the winner will be announced October 13.
- ▶ **Charlene Johnson** will be participating in three shows this fall:
Market at Manchester Pop-Up in Edmonton, August 19, 2023.
Strathearn Art Walk in Edmonton, September 9 & 10, 2023.
Hello Pretty Market at the **Enjoy Centre** in St. Albert, September 30 & October 1, 2023.



SNEAK PEEK

A Behind-the-Scenes Look at *Fame & Fortune,* by Dunce

Calgary-based street artist, [Dunce](#), created this video to promote his new exhibition, [Fame & Fortune](#), in which he takes a critical look at pop culture by juxtaposing the glamour of celebrity with the realities of how icons are often viewed, consumed, and exploited. Dunce emphasizes this point by utilizing the grittiness of torn up street posters he's reclaimed from city walls and billboards, while blending the visual language of street art with traditional fine-art techniques.

Want to see more in person? Catch *Fame & Fortune* at the [Miller Art Gallery](#) at the Roxy, September 8 – October 5. And be sure to give Dunce a follow on [Instagram!](#)

Quick >> Tips

6 Tips for Collecting Art on a Budget

1. Set an annual budget. Yes, we're starting with the no-fun tip first, but trust us: if you think a little budgeting is a buzzkill, you really won't like the wincing pangs of buyer's remorse. So set a budget, and stick to it. Some years that might mean allotting your entire budget to one statement piece. Other years, it might mean buying multiple small pieces from the same artist (which can also create a big visual impact). Whatever you do, be sure to factor in the cost of framing, shipping, and other expenses.

2. Ask about payment installments. Lots of artists and galleries offer financing, a.k.a., monthly payment plans. Though everyone negotiates that differently, it generally means that your artwork will remain in the gallery (or on the artist's website) marked as "Sold" until all payments are complete.

3. Don't be in a rush. Collecting art is a long game, and that's part of the joy. So instead of focussing on wall space that you wish was filled, enjoy the anticipation of what could be around the next corner, or at an auction, or on your morning scroll through Instagram. Look at art all the time, and then look at it some more. It will help you identify what you truly love and will enjoy over a lifetime.

4. Support emerging artists. Besides just being a fabulous idea all the time, it's also a great way to get into art collecting. So take in all the art walks, attend gallery shows for debuting artists, follow local artists and galleries on social media, and chat with everyone along the way. Your local arts community is full of people who'd love to share their knowledge and stories. Before you know it, you'll have lots to share, too.

5. Consider signed limited editions rather than originals. Prints are a great option for any collector—not just newcomers on a budget. Just remember: prints and photographs with edition sizes greater than 200 are often considered "reproductions" rather than "fine art," so look for small print runs. By restricting the total amount of artworks produced in an edition, each individual work produced will retain its value over time.

6. Trust your heart. Buy what you love—not what you think you should love. A personal art collection should represent you—not your investment portfolio. So trust your instincts and that feeling you get when a work stops you in your tracks. Value is determined by you. And no one knows your heart better than you do.

NOW REPRESENTING

Say Hello to Pat Marino!

Please join us in offering a big, warm McQueen welcome to our newest signed artist, **Pat Marino!**



Pat Marino.

Currently residing in the New York City and Finger Lakes regions of New York, Pat uses his art to bridge cultural divides, provoke thought, and encourage viewers to challenge their own perspectives. Much of his artistic exploration delves into the socialization of modern identity—particularly in relation to our contemporary co-habitation of both the physical and digital world, the expansion of intelligence and communication in human communities, transcendental human biology, Theosophy and religious doctrine of the Western World, and the relationship between text, imagery, and silence as equal conduits for knowledge, wisdom, critical thinking, and holistic expressionism.

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