



**In A Manner Of Speaking**

*A talk with artist Rebecca Ackroyd.*

**London and Berlin based artist Rebecca Ackroyd in conversation with Maria Abramenko on femininity, rage, distractions and inspirations.**

**I can see lots of femininity in your art, what is the message you are aiming to transmit?**

I struggle a bit with the idea of femininity, it's something that women get questioned so much, like you wouldn't ask a man to talk about the masculinity of their work and in some ways maybe that's what I'm reacting to. I want the work to be confrontational in its feminine-ness but also raw and a bit angry as well as vulnerable. A sort of guttural scream. Then there are times where I want it to be straightforwardly abstract, architectural or industrial, harder. Speaking of which, I've just started boxing so maybe there's another kind of hard I'm exploring – how to channel a kind of rage that women aren't really meant to express.

**In your most recent show, “100mph” at Peres Projects, you showed predominantly drawings. Can you talk a bit about the ideas behind the show and your choice of installation.**

The show was conceived in 2020, pre-pandemic, and pretty much all of the works were made during various lockdowns in London and Berlin. In the first three or four months of the pandemic I didn't make very much but started working on these dream drawings in a journal. I suppose, looking back, it was a very intimate way of documenting such a strange time that I started as a way of keeping track of the days but ended up being a record of the night. In many respects the journal became the seed for the whole show, and I ended up showing some of the drawings on a table in the space. The show opened and closed in lockdown so even the memory of it is surreal and dreamlike. For the install, I was thinking about creating a physical headspace for these fragments of images and broken bits of sculpture to inhabit. A distorted recollection or a hazy memory, where both real and imagined events merge I all the works were fragmented in one way or another; the drawings all have torn edges, the sculptures broken or fractured and the dream drawings have been torn out of a journal, like there's a bigger picture; they're all fragments of sentences in a bigger conversation.

**Can you talk a bit about the artists that have inspired you, I often think of Louise Bourgeois looking at your work, would you consider her as one of your inspirations?**

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Certainly, a work in my last show was an homage to her, "In all my fear or glory" (2020), the spider was a direct reference to the influence of her work, particularly at school. I remember the first time I saw her work and also Rauschenberg's actually, it was like suddenly realising the possibilities in making art were materially and formally limitless. I think the state school art curriculum in the UK is particularly unimaginative (or was), and I was lucky to have a teacher who introduced me to contemporary art at a young age and was encouraging beyond the still life drawing aspect of art school hoop jumping.



**Your works seems to look very complex, could you talk about this layered approach to making.**

When I'm in the studio I often work on several ideas consecutively. I make in a similar way to how I think, which can be impetuous and fast. That's maybe why I started drawing, the immediacy. With sculpture it's a slower process and often involves working with numerous people who help me, but even then I'm always trying to find ways to short cut mould making processes or making things in a more rudimentary, immediate way. It's a bit like a train of thought, there are interruptions and ruptures – distractions – and I'm interested in allowing those in so there numerous voices speaking at the same time. I see it a bit like a memory bank, some are more vivid than others.

**What are the next shows/projects you are currently working on?**

I just finished a work that will be shown as a banner on the side of the building at Understated Projects in Glasgow in October. I've been working on developing a new series of sculptures which are coming together slowly and I'm excited to see how they develop.