

NINO MIER GALLERY

# REBECCA NESS

## PIECES OF MIND

JULY 10-AUGUST 31, 2020



NINO MIER GALLERY  
7277 SANTA MONICA BLVD  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90046





Rebecca Ness's recent paintings and works on paper, produced between February and June of this year, reveal new spaces and quotidian rituals--subtle moments that reflect profound shifts. *Holly Coming Home* (2020), among the largest works in the show, exemplifies this impulse. The work is somewhere between a domestic mise-en-scene and a still life capturing the entryway to an apartment and the casual disorder of a home cum work space. Alongside portraiture, studio and domestic spaces are among Ness's chief subjects, and she consistently depicts piled-up pages of *The New York Times*, books, and images within her works, illustrating a world of thought and information, and marking time.

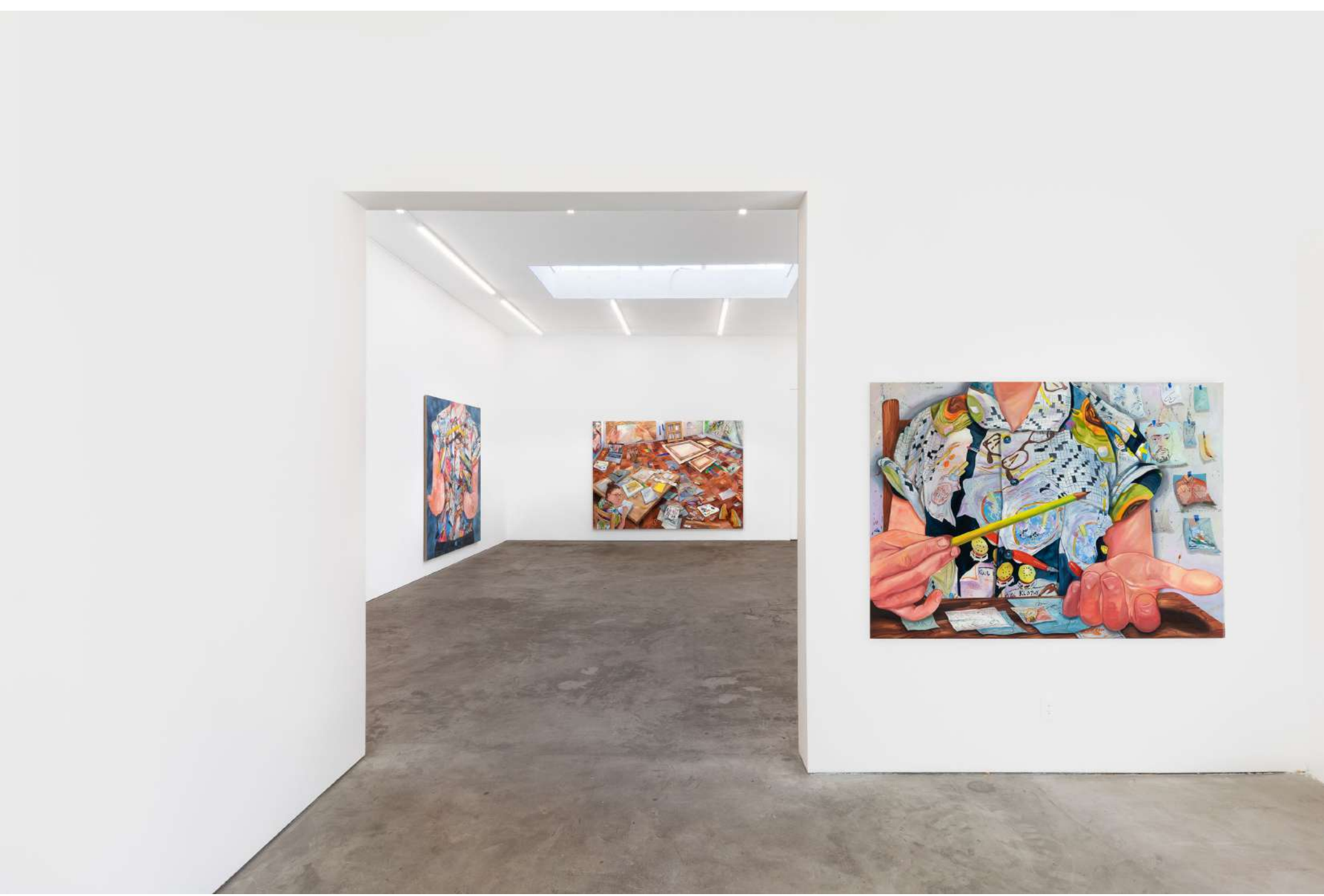
In this work Ness uses a distinctive, legible hand that can be both precise and cartoonish. With its strange cropping and downward cast point of view, *Holly Coming Home* recalls Sylvia Plimack Mangold's unique spatial perspective, her peaceful domestic austerity filled up with hysterical clutter. The action, so to speak, of the painting is confined to its upper edges--two figures seen only below the knees. One stands near a pile of sneakers in paint covered Birkenstocks, and the other, having just crossed the threshold into the apartment, is casting off bright blue scrubs. In its composition, energy, and overload of visual information, the work resonates with many of the Ness's previous works, but the scene it so quietly depicts--of Ness's girlfriend, a surgery resident, coming home from the hospital where she has worked throughout the COVID-19 crisis--offers an exact timestamp of the spring of 2020. The past several months have been marked by sickness, death, anxiety, and uncertainty--all the more so for medical personnel and others deemed essential workers. This obliquely portrayed ritual of stripping down at the doorway points to the newly introduced circumstances of Ness's life sheltering at home. This sentiment is echoed in a work on paper that shows a man in a Matisse-inflected shirt pouring over *The New York Times'* frontpage feature from May 24, which lists the names of the first 100,000 people in the United States who have died from COVID-19. Ness's intimate, observational, and self-referential style has lent itself well to the newly introduced circumstances of this moment, when, for many, engagement with the outside world has largely been reduced to a response to its periodic intrusion into the small spaces we have created.

The delineation between subtle and profound is a slight one for Ness. Her work keeps a tight focus literally and metaphorically, showing us figures or partial figures with limited ground and just enough information to suggest the possibility of a site, or honing in on detailed depictions of interior settings. Recurrent motifs within these genres--torsos in wildly patterned button-down shirts, elaborate studio scenes, images of hands gesturing or at work, and modest still lifes--are complemented by paintings that pinpoint this period and by moments of sweet tenderness--faces kissing in a mirror, figures embracing, and hands extended and interlocking. The repetition in subject and form within these works--variations on a theme--and their visual density allows a kind of studied revisiting that keeps a painter's painter always expertly painting and learning to paint in each work.

Ness belongs to a group of figurative painters including artists like Jordan Casteel, Raffi Kalenderian, Arcomonoro Niles, and Jonas Wood whose stylized and similarly self-referential portraits index their social world. These artists embed their own art historical lineage into their works and are interested in the art historical tropes that lie in the details of settings and especially textiles, signifiers of representation, and the communicative possibility contained within images of others. Ness likewise wears her references on her sleeve and thinks of each object in her dense horror-vacui-like interior images and the gestures within her portraits as biographical details, constructions of identity, and iconographies of information for the viewer to read.

The first half of this year brought the artist inside and all the more reflective of herself in her work. The title of this show, *Pieces of Mind*, relays that inward turn, a life described in large, bold images of small things. As the world around us erupts into a new era of civil rights, Ness will turn outward again, but in the meantime, she has offered a concise glimpse into her life in a moment when the world seemed close at hand but strangely distant.

Diana Nawi



Installation shot of Rebecca Ness: *Pieces of Mind* (July 10–August 31, 2020) Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA



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*Holly Coming Home*, 2020  
Oil on canvas  
85 x 120 in, 215.9 x 304.8 cm  
(RNE20.008)













*I See You, 2020*  
Oil on canvas  
85 x 120 in, 215.9 x 304.8 cm  
(RNE20.009)













connecticut  
still revolutionizing

KERRY JAMES MARSHALL  
Mastry

KERRY JAMES MARSHALL Mastry

Norman Rockwell

APRIL 2020  
DEVELOPING

I see you





*Time Together*, 2020  
Oil on canvas  
83 x 90.5 in, 210.8 x 229.9 cm  
(RNE20.010)

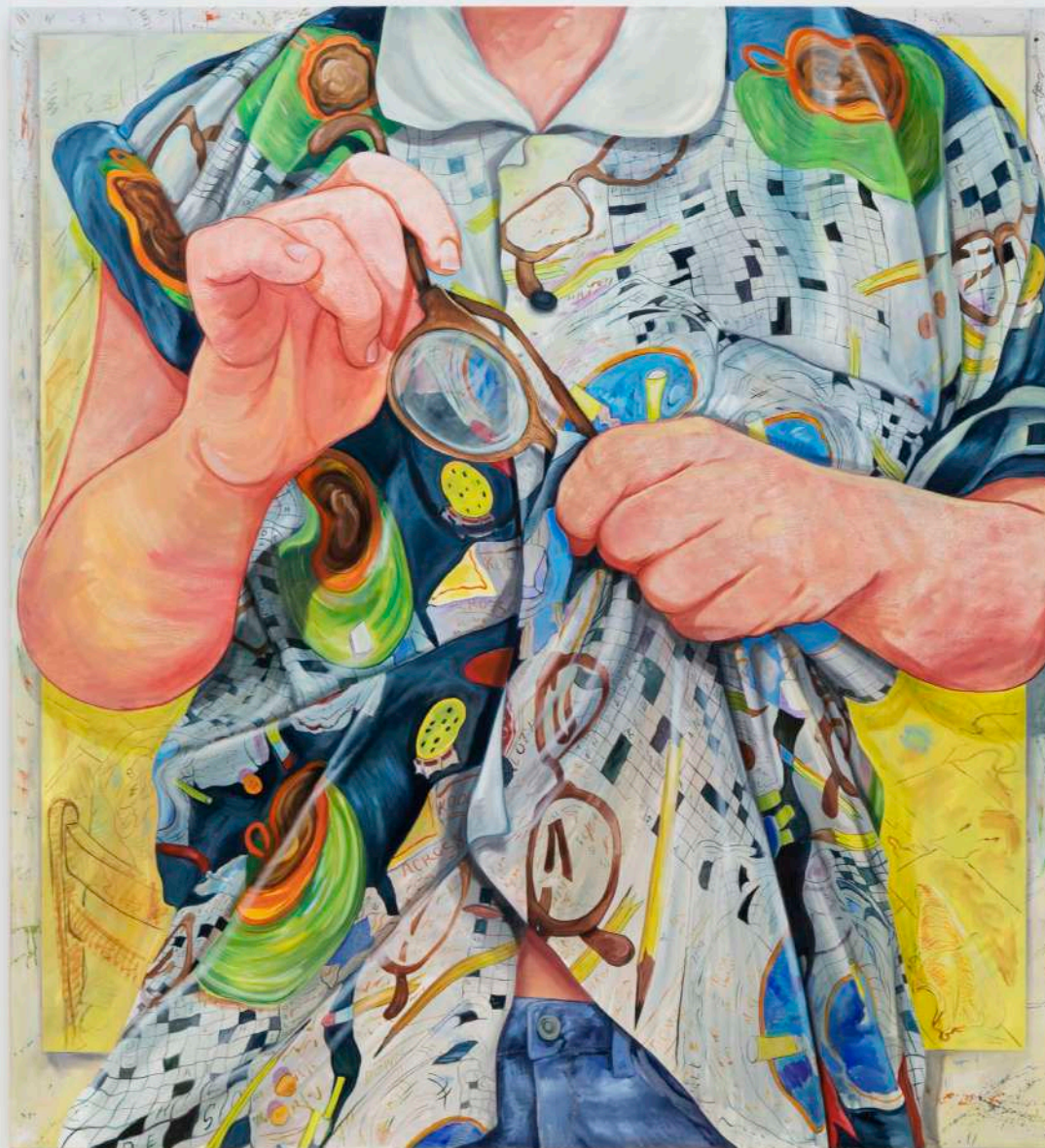












*Schmutz, 2020*  
Oil on linen  
83 x 90 1/2 in, 210.8 x 229.9 cm  
(RNE20.011)











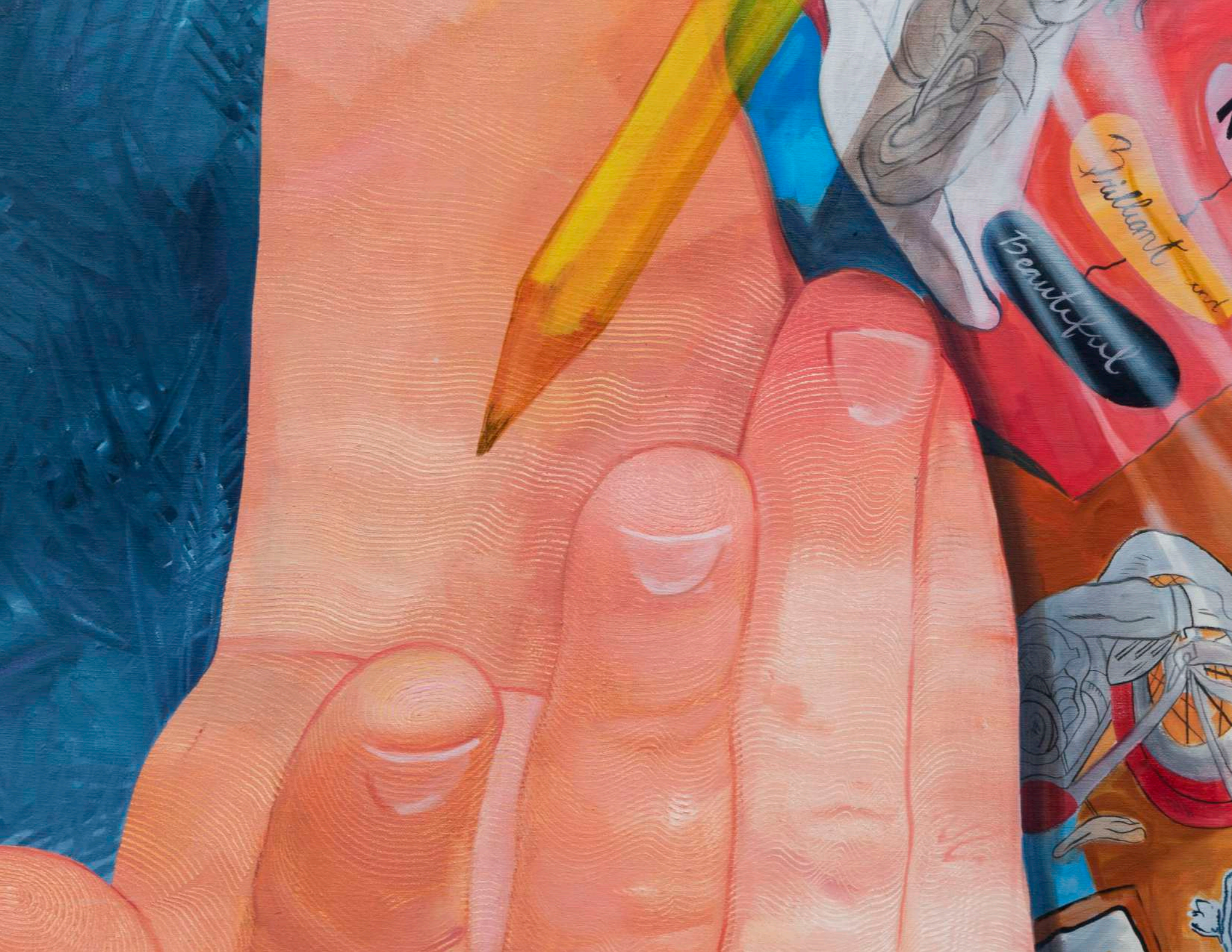






*Pencil Flipper*, 2020  
Oil on canvas  
83 x 90.5 in, 210.8 x 229.9 cm  
(RNE20.012)

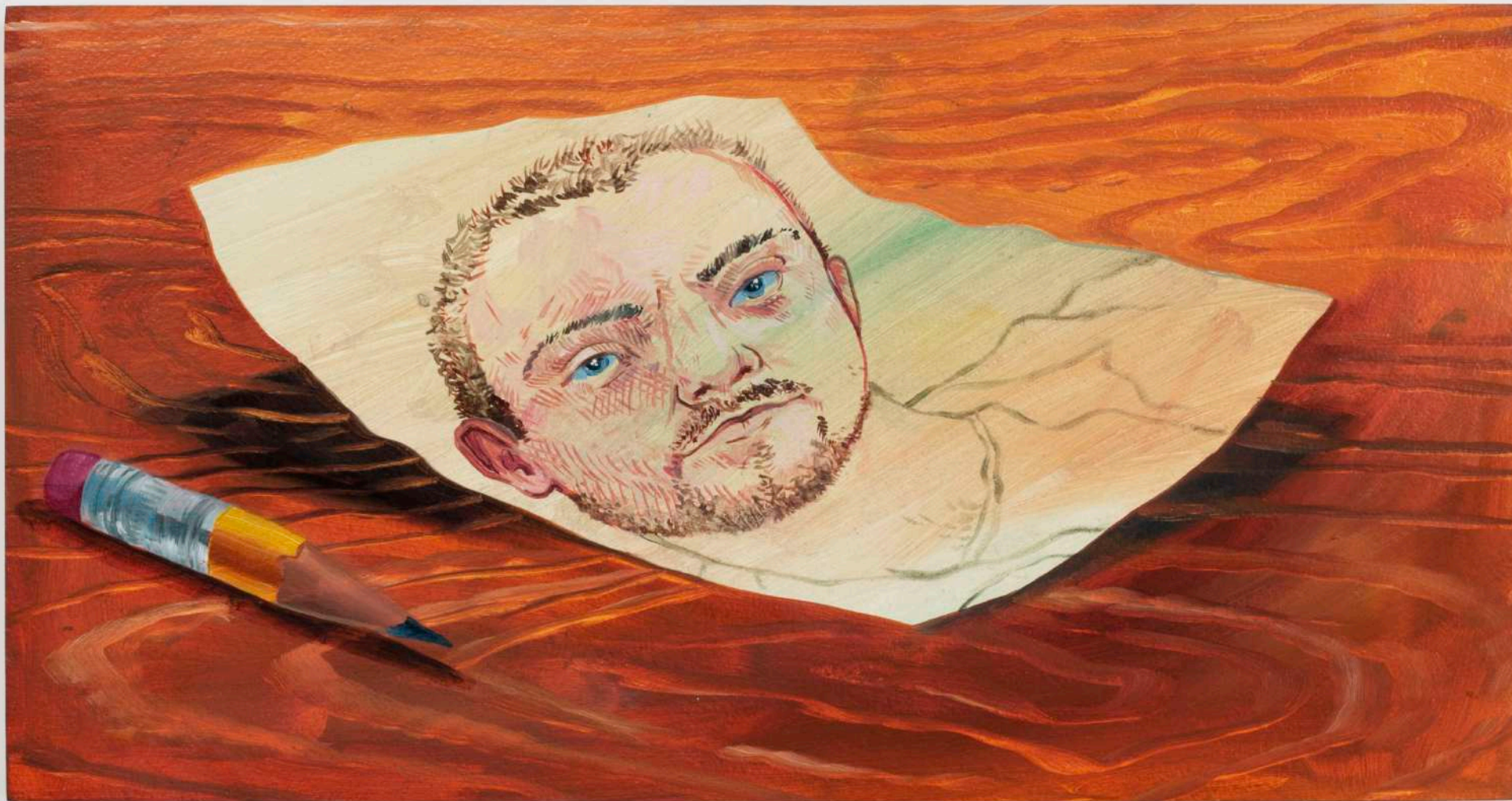






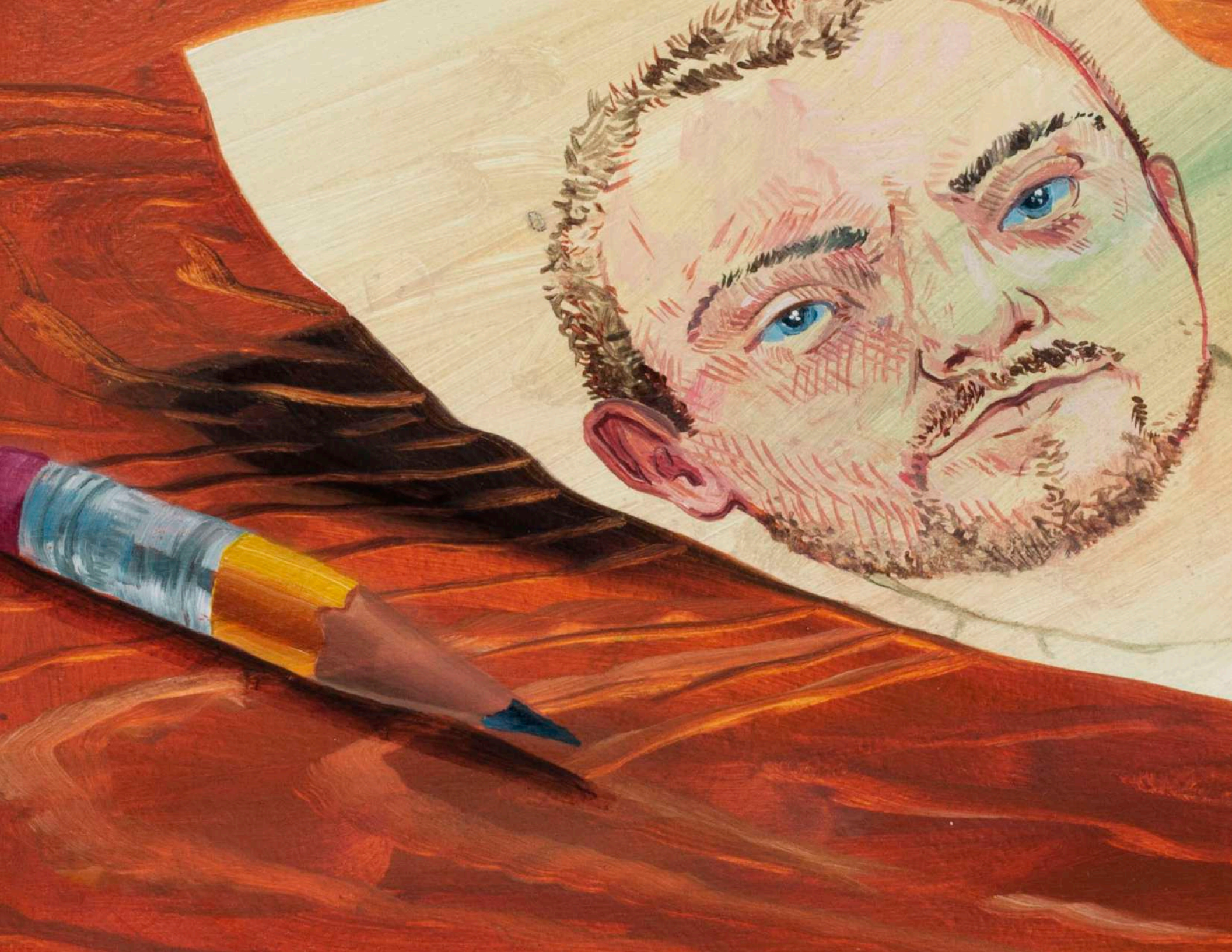






*Little Sam*, 2020  
Oil on canvas  
6 x 12 in, 15.2 x 30.5 cm  
(RNE20.013)









*Put the pencil down my love, 2020*  
Oil on canvas  
60 x 80 in, 152.4 x 203.2 cm  
(RNE20.014)

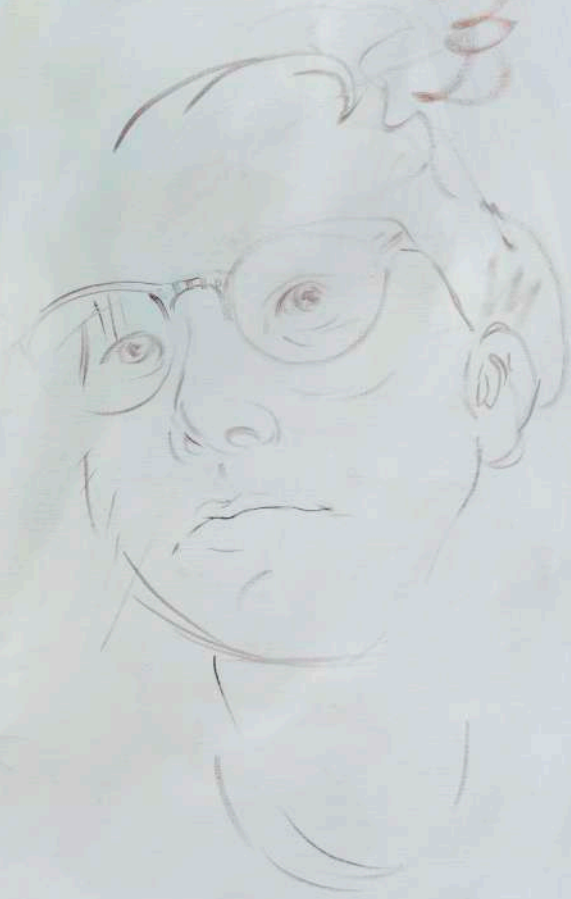




JUNE 22

500  
74

3



isolated moments of interaction  
continuation of  
the infinite  
repeating and returning to  
a point of comfort

This is a painting about  
identity, love





*Thinking*, 2020  
Oil on canvas  
51 x 70 in, 129.5 x 177.8 cm  
(RNE20.015)













*What a Painting Sees*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
25 x 40 in. 63.5 x 101.6 cm  
(RNE20.016)









*Us*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
25 x 40 in. 63.5 x 101.6 cm  
(RNE20.017)









*Football Shirt, 2020*

Gouache and pencil on paper

22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm

24 5/8 x 32 3/4 in (framed), 62.5 x 83.2 cm

(RNE20.018)









*Ian*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
30 x 22 in, 76.2 x 55.9 cm  
32 3/4 x 24 5/8 in (framed), 83.2 x 62.5 cm  
(RNE20.019)







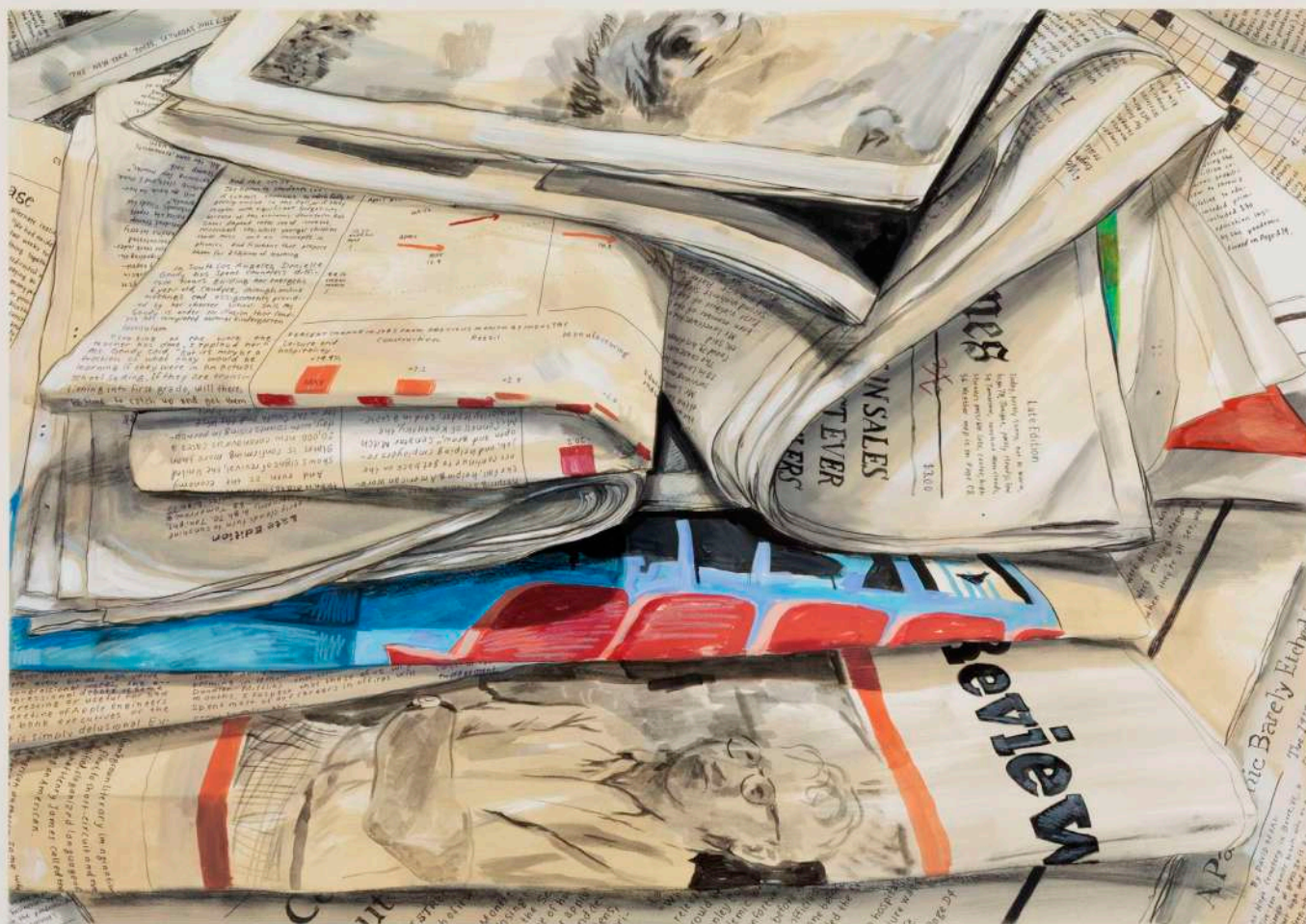


*Newspapers II*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.020)









*Newspapers I*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.021)











4-11-2020

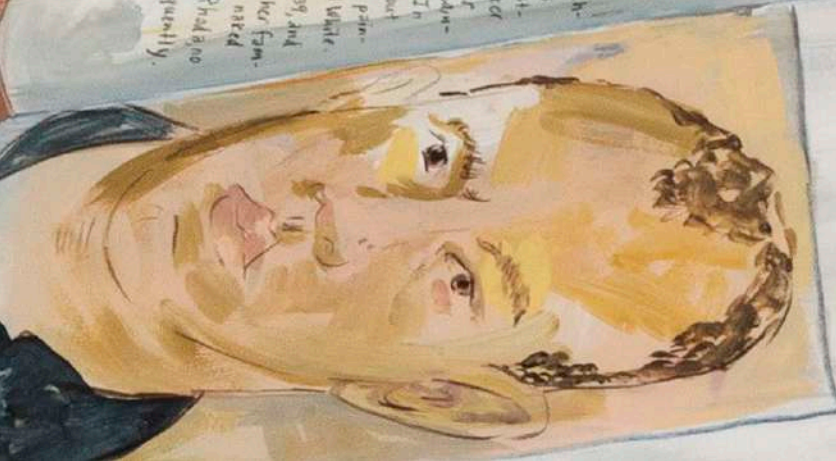
my comfort keeping me sane at this  
face that I always have  
a part of me and I go long  
different than my medical real-  
because to fight against loneliness and dis-  
I'm living away from home because my girlfriend  
is a nurse at Yale New Haven Hospital. Drawing allows me  
to escape this and live with me all over.

### Max White, 1935

oil on canvas, 91.4 x 66 cm  
Smithsonian American Art Museum  
Washington, DC. Museum purchase  
(detail)

Max White was the son of painter of Ch-  
arles William White, born in 1906. His  
looks tended to be set in the artist-  
ic when and included Anna Becker  
(1937), the poorly selling Tiger Tiger  
(1940), a story of a fictitious pan-  
ther in Paris, John Martin, and In  
The Blazing Light (1945), about  
Goya, one of White's favorite paint-  
ers. Gertrude Stein admired White.  
Her portrait White in 1935, 1939 and  
1941. Other than members of her fam-  
ily portraits, and the early nudes  
one was painted more frequently.

92 Smithsonian Magazine



PLAY WITHIN A PLAY





*Pencil Flipper*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.024)







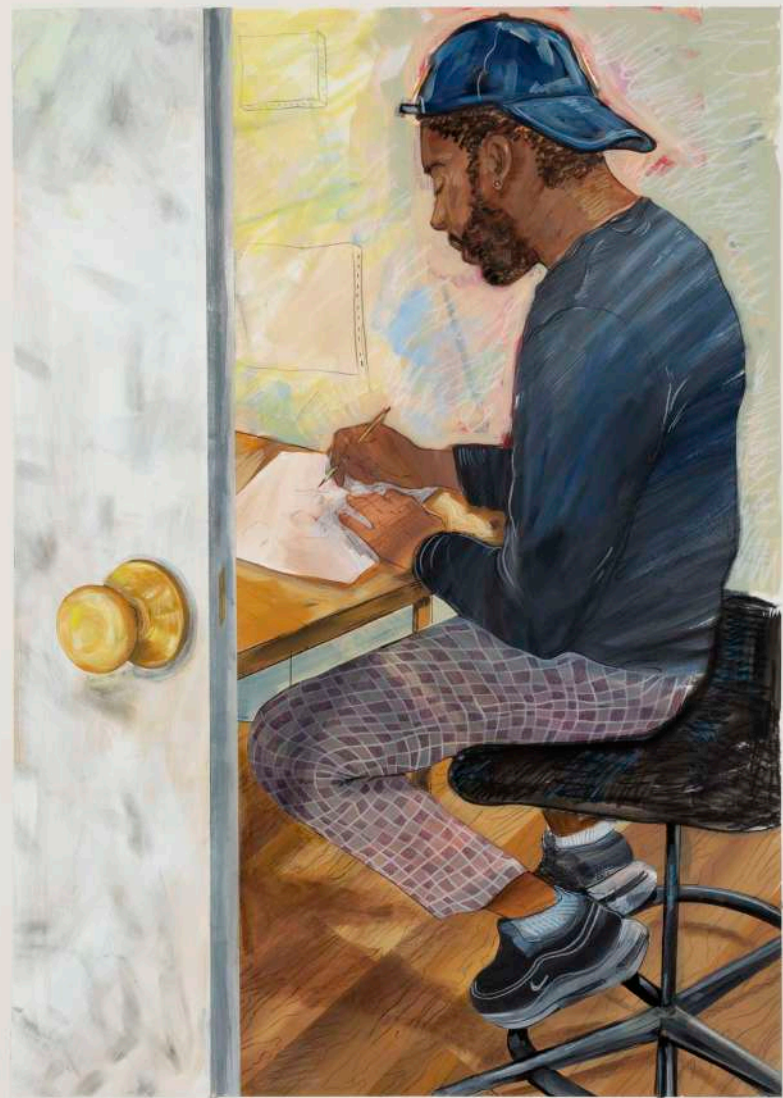


*Morning Kiss*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.025)







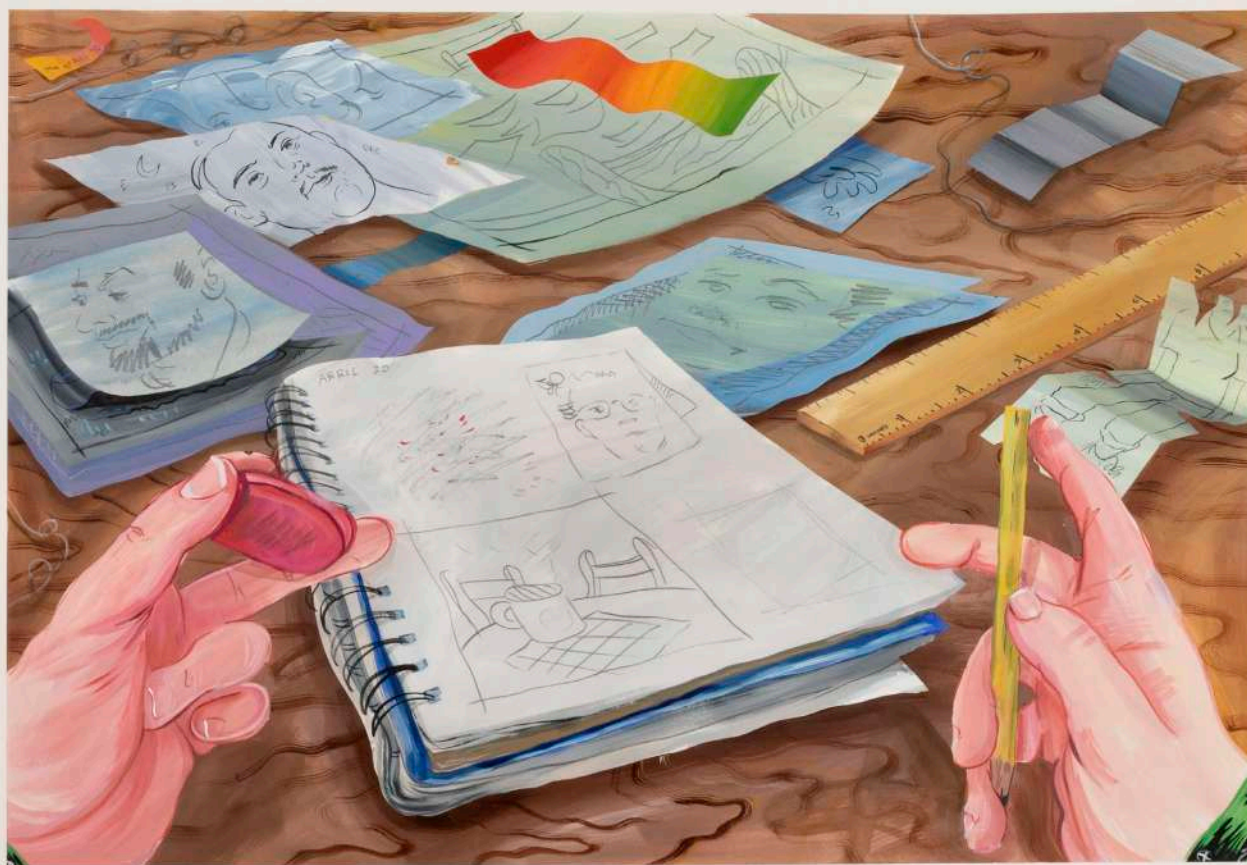


*Dom in his Studio*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.026)









*Desk*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.027)









*Critique II*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.028)





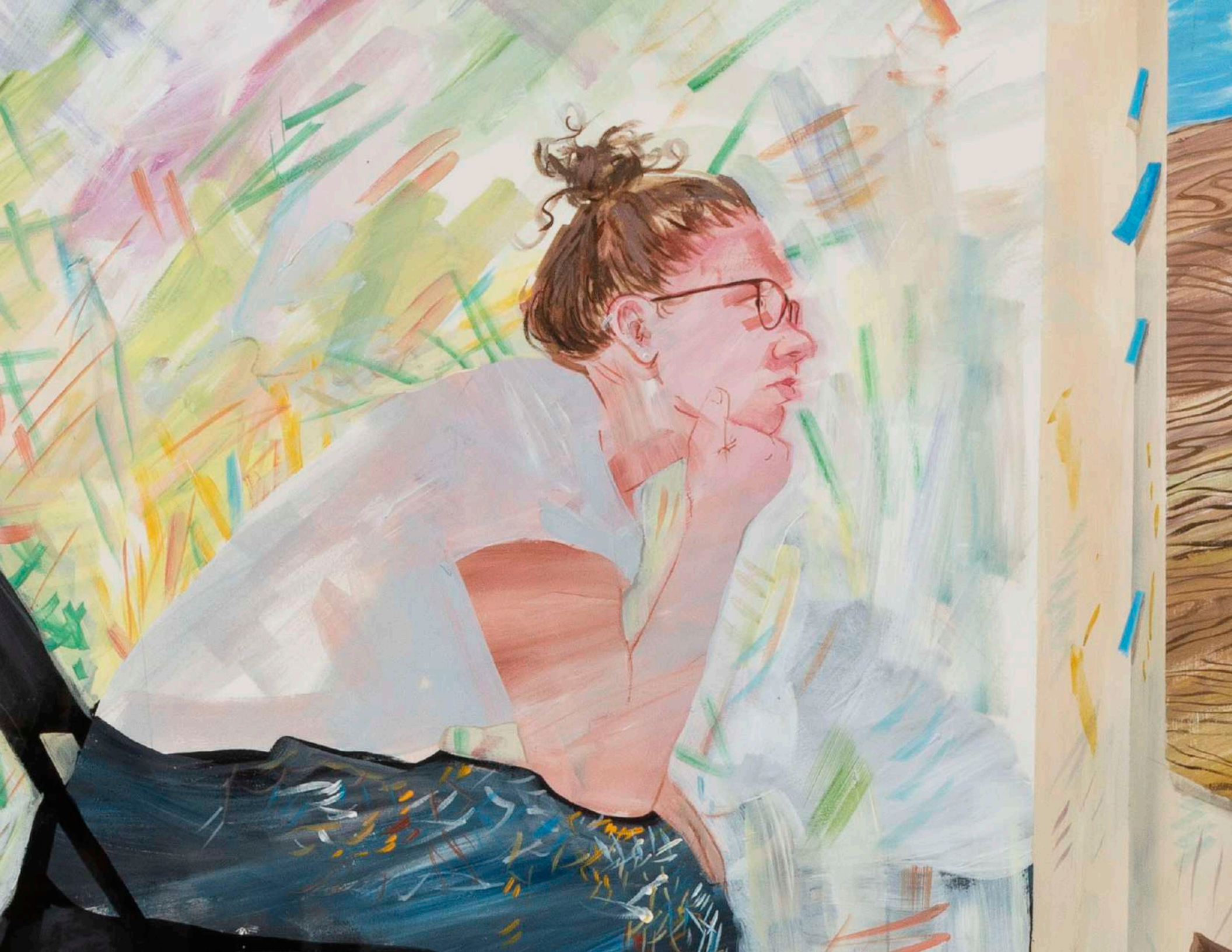




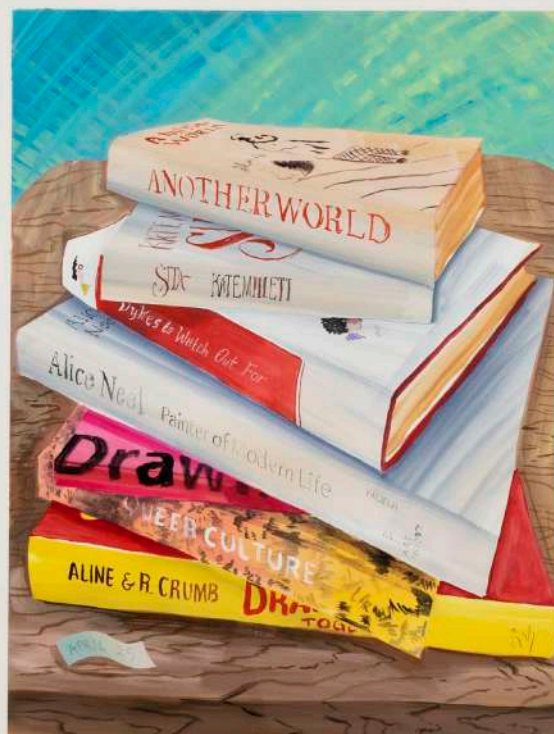
*Critique I, 2020*

Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.029)









*Book Stack*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.030)



ANOTHER WORLD

KATE MILLET

STX KATE MILLET

Dykes to Watch Out For

Alice Neel

Painter of Modern Life

Drawn

QUEER CULTURE

YALE U

M

ART  
10297



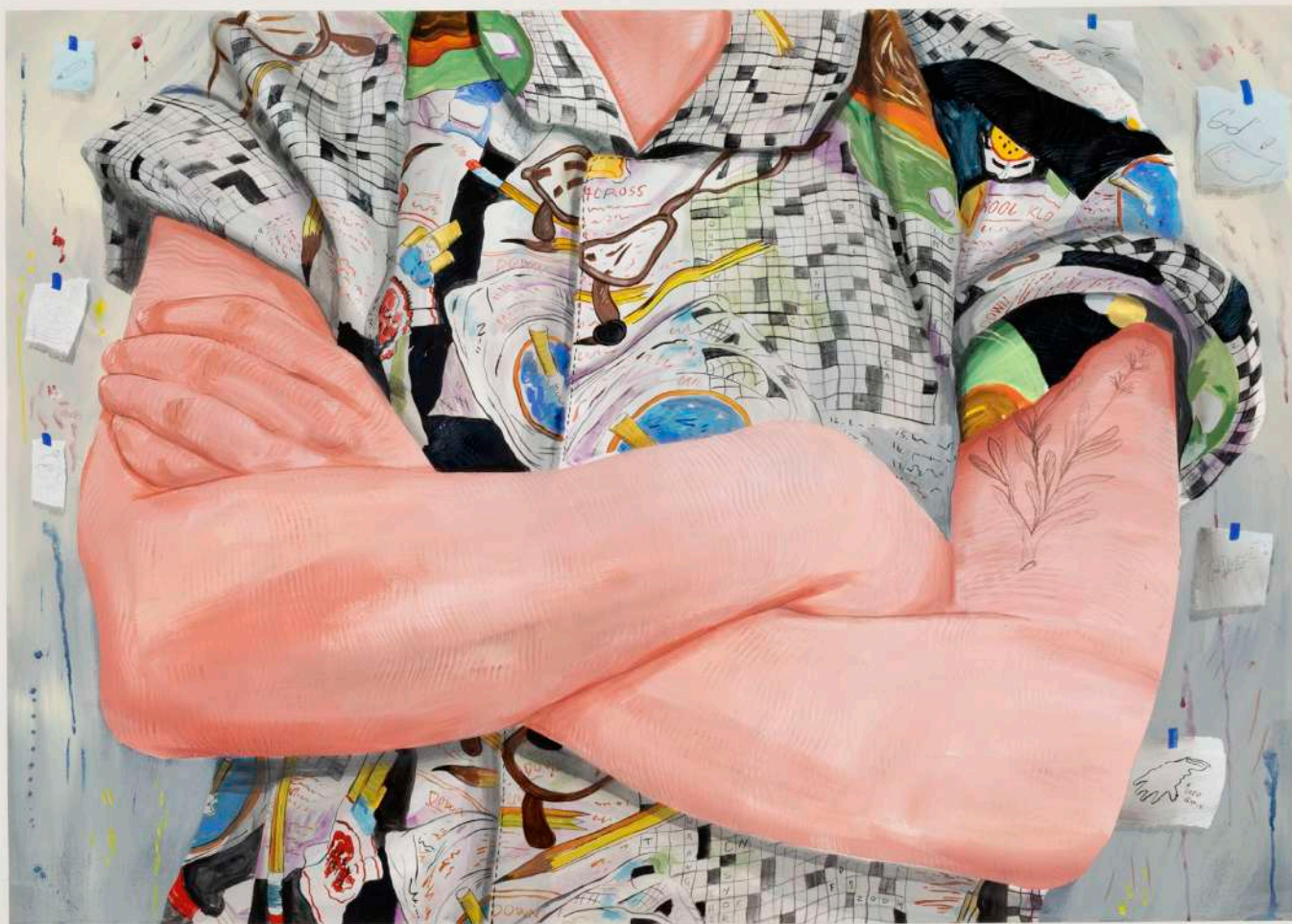


*Baseball Shirt*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.031)









*Arms Crossed*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.032)







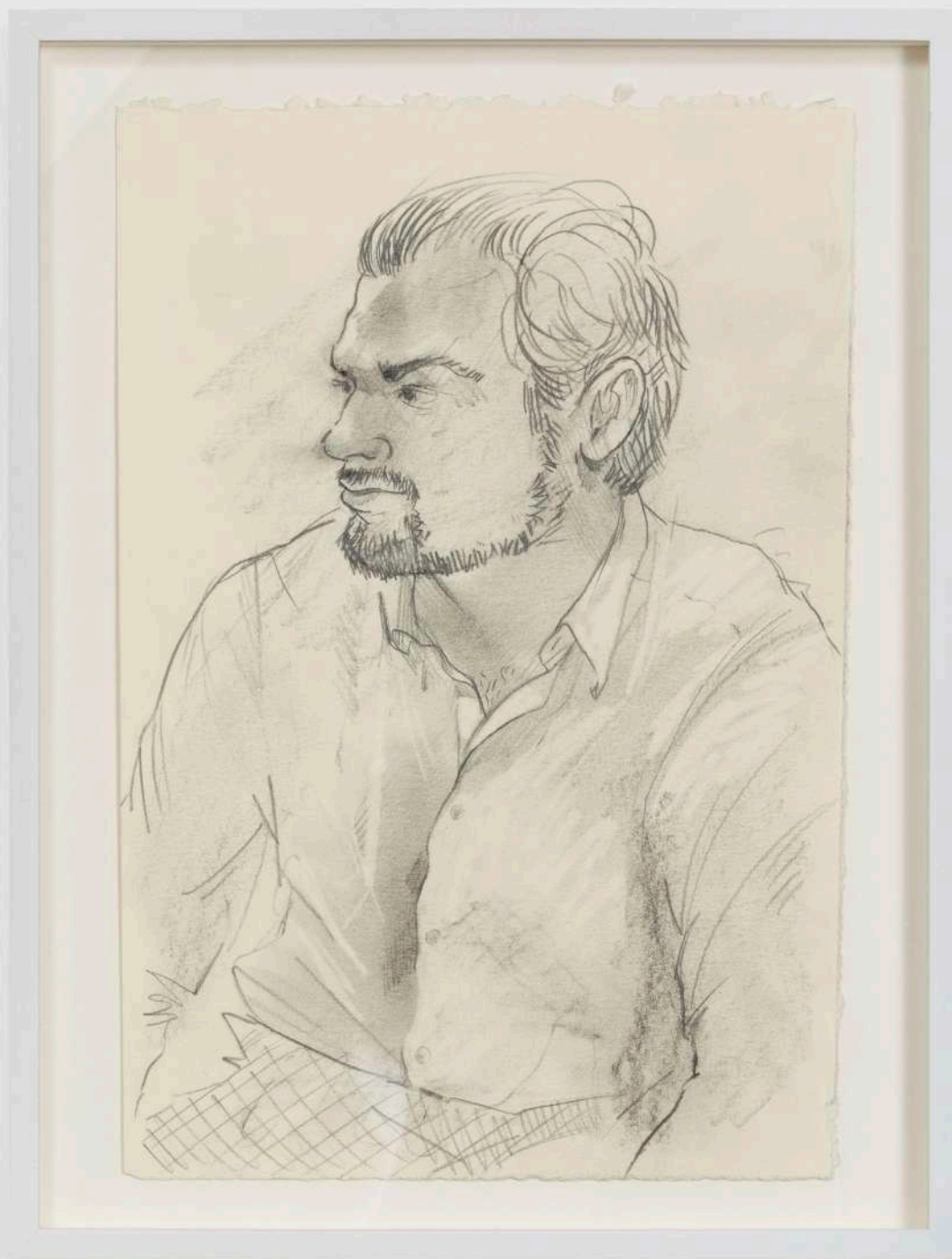


100,000 Dead, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.033)



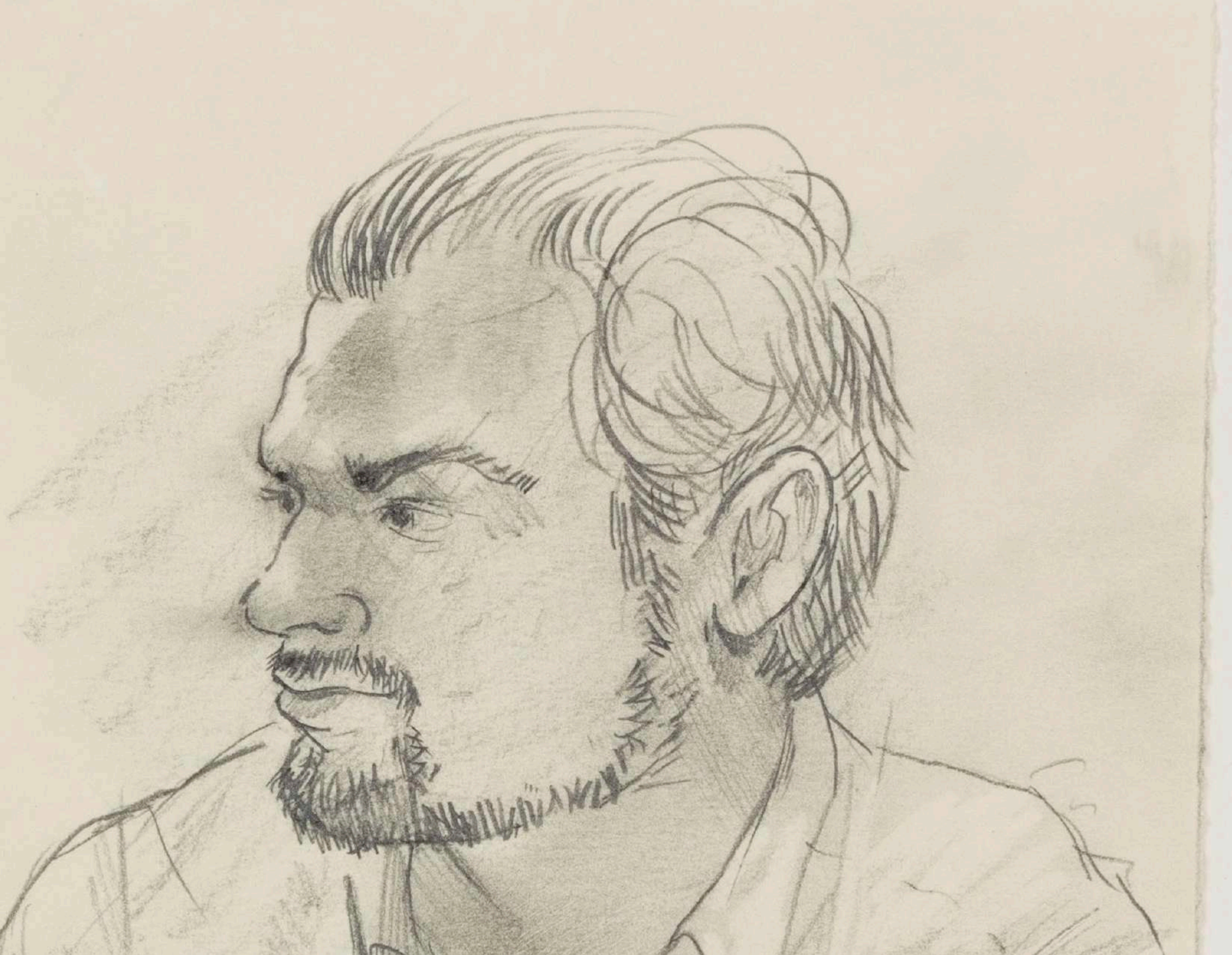






*Morgan*, 2020  
Graphite on paper  
7 x 10 in, 17.8 x 25.4 cm  
(RNE20.034)









*Studio isolation self portrait study, 2020*  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
9 x 12 in, 22.9 x 30.5 cm  
(RNE20.035)









*Glasses*, 2020  
Gouache and pencil on paper  
22 x 30 in, 55.9 x 76.2 cm  
(RNE20.036)



