JEN MANN: BIOGRAPHY

Jen Mann (b. 1987 in Mississauga, Ontario) is a Toronto-based artist working in large scale hyper-realistic portraiture. She graduated from Ontario College of Art and Design in 2009 with a BFA in printmaking. She works primarily with oil paint on canvas, exploring ideas of relationships, the self, and existence. In 2015 Mann won the Kingston Prize, Canada's national award for portraiture, for her painting "Self Portrait as a Reflection," and has exhibited in numerous shows across the US, Canada, and the UK.

"Disillusioned with the art world's emphasis on commercialism, Jen Mann views her paintings as physical and visual manifestations of ideas rather than as products. Within her work Mann toys with color saturation and hue to expose previously unseen details and challenge conventional notions of beauty and intimacy, revealing the hidden magic in otherwise awkward images.

An important aspect in Mann's work is her deliberate cultivation of imperfections. Mann prefers the off-shots, the pictures where the subject is blinking, or making a funny face, or looking away from the camera. "I think that there is something special about images that capture awkward or perhaps non-beautiful or posed moments. There is something beautiful in the honest moment." Mann then heavily Photoshops her images to give them a washed-out look, and to insert various digital "glitches" that most of us would consider undesirable.

Mann uses color as a storytelling technique, evoking elements of identity and interpersonal relationships in her paintings. Using imagery and symbols we are familiar with along with her dry and self satirical humour as a unifying force weaving her works together, Mann addresses our society's hypocritical and flawed projections of love and desire."