



REBECCA ALOISIO • JANUARY 11 TO MARCH 1, 2019



Rebecca Aloisio is a professor of art and design at the Rochester Institute of Technology. She has a BFA from Cleveland Institute of Art and a MFA from Syracuse University. Aloisio works in a variety of media including painting, drawing, digital printing, and serigraphy. Her work has been exhibited internationally and nationally, including Leeds College of Art, UK, Agora Gallery, NYC, Memorial Art Gallery, Ithaca Print Shop, and Schweinfurth Art Center. Aloisio is the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Grant and has been published in ACS Magazine and Studio Visit Magazine. A native of central New York, Aloisio lives and works in the Finger Lakes Region.

images, front to back: *Totem*, 2018, mixed media, collage, and paper, 62 x 58 in • *Cast suspended*, 2018, mixed media, collage, and paper, 44 x 57 in • *Suspended*, 2018, mixed media, collage, and paper, 44 x 57 in • *Dirt and Oil*, 2018, mixed media, collage, and paper, 62 x 58 in • *Backdrop No. 2*, 2018, mixed media, collage, and paper, 44 x 57 in • *Backdrop No. 3*, 2018, mixed media, collage, and paper, 44 x 57 in • *Conquered No. 1*, 2018, mixed media, collage, and paper, 62 x 58 in • *Angry Girl*, 2018, mixed media, collage, and paper, 62 x 58 in • *Totem*, 2018 (detail)



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Entering the studio of Rochester artist, Rebecca Aloisio conjures an alchemical vibe, the impression of an enchanted scientist in the midst of unfettered experimental research. The remnants, by-products, and manipulations of her many physical processes in various stages of completion cover most of the available surfaces.

Some of the applied methods are practiced and enduring, like Aloisio's commitment to the multi-step process of making an object in order to create an image, which is merely one component of a final artwork. A plaster casting of some banal object with cascading ridges sits next to its photographic double, a cut-out duplicate, its color inverted. Handmade ceramic tiles with textured surfaces lay across from a couple of finished pieces which contain small sections that appear to be digital scans of physical prints made by those same tiles, having been treated like wood blocks—the raised features covered in paint and transferred onto paper. Other brushes and tools—including a paint spreader that mimics wood grain—are evidenced by the transparent sheets covered in painterly marks. Some have landed aimlessly across the tabletop, having either already served their purpose in being converted to another medium via photographic means while other abstractions are still at play, determining their cohesiveness amongst other layers of colors and form. The table's surface, Aloisio explains, are where ideas are more certain and formal decisions have crystallized.

This laboratory table is where Aloisio's maturing experiments bubble contentedly and completed works rest serenely. These works contain deft elements that follow previously perfected guidelines—not so much formulaic as they are proven strategies that have withstood the rigors of her trial and error. In the same way a chef would purposefully stock a pantry with a variety of ingredients that can be called upon when the moment arises, Aloisio has developed numerous sources of imagery—both hand-rendered and appropriated—that yield the necessary components for the assembly into a complete composition.

A series of seemingly figurative works are pinned along the left-hand side of a corkboard wall and read like ambient ghost portraits. The source material—photographic portraits from historical digital archives—feels familiar despite no trace of the portraits' subjects who have been cut out of their shallow backdrops. Their silhouettes are poised in traditional postures, replaced with painterly marks that

rest close to the surface of the image. The distance between the surrounding atmospheric space and the shadow of the figure itself, centered in the frame, is very shallow—the interiors of the silhouettes are layers that all reside on the same plane. Aloisio's mark-making and active use of color fills the window left by the eradicated form and begins to adopt the character of individual identifying features.

To their right hang her most recent experiments, the flat-test of all three distinctive series. A variegated white plane sharply broken by a crevice of visual noise and colorful distortion, they could almost be a paused moment of VHS glitch. Tenuous lines, like rural routes on a road map, occasionally cross the chromatic gap. The idea of "image" is sacrificed for the rhythm of that plays across the surface. A jut or a bulge in sterile space. Aloisio talks about her fascination with paper puppets and how they are suspended, their joints fully articulate. The distance between the inspiration and the forms that cut and trail across the surface is somewhat disjointed, but as with everything in Aloisio's world, the source and the application undergo multiple phases of distortion and manipulation. Hers is a process of reproduction and mimicry without unnecessary preciousness.

Most satisfying are the final collages lined up next to each other in one corner of the workspace, cut and arranged so deliberately, and then fixed in place with scotch tape. A gesture which seems inconsequential at their letter-sized scale and could appear haphazard—the transparency of the tape, stray particles of dust, the moments when the scanner captures the shadow between layers of paper—become theatrical in their enlarged and exaggerated final state.

The layers of distortion in both Aloisio's process and in a given physical work are dizzying—even elements that seem to be honest are involved in some level of illusion that the viewer cannot detect. There are forms and images that seem to be straightforward, pulled from one source or another. The fact that her manipulations don't pull the original image too far away from recognizability is a deliberate strategy, a careful walking of the line in between easy and aloof.

Rebecca Wing
Curatorial Assistant

