

GQ

Four Artists Whose Work You've Just Gotta See

By Helen Holmes, September 1, 2021.



In the second installment of GQ's Fresh Paint series, we visit the studios of four visual artists who are making the art world lively and engaging right now.

Andrea Marie Breiling
Brooklyn

"Eyes to the wind," Andrea Marie Breiling's 2021 exhibition of layered, sweeping canvases at Broadway Gallery in New York, represented a departure in line curvature from the crosshatched paintings she showed a year earlier, which themselves were strikingly dissimilar to the more traditionally Abstract Expressionist pieces she was making before that. Such rapid evolution could be attributed to the American painter's sharp instinct for recognizing, and transcending, limitations. An expired passport leads to a new studio in New York; a returned box of spray paint becomes an entirely new artistic direction. In turn, her colorful work, on view at upcoming shows at Almine Rech in London and Night Gallery in L.A., offers transcendence to others.

GQ STYLE: How has your recent move to New York impacted your work?

ANDREA MARIE BREILING: When I got here in 2020 and I made the show for Broadway, I started adapting and learning techniques with all the different tips of spray paint cans

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and all the different things that they can do. I was able to really create some interesting depth and atmosphere with just that alone. It really made the work more airy and kind of floaty, and it was presenting itself to me in this really fresh way.



Just making one key change in how you apply paint to canvas could change how the final piece turns out?

Yeah. Because there weren't any big philosophy shifts I was going to make. My work is emotional. It's really about transcendence. And for me, it's a form of poetry, so it's not like I was going to go in and do anything different about the way I was approaching the work, because that wasn't the problem. People were into the energy force and how much of my body was being thrown onto the work and how physical it was and almost violent in ways. I was attacking the canvas. I knew that that wasn't an issue and that was also something that I wasn't going to reject. I wanted that to stay sacred; it's something that I enjoy and get pleasure from.

How would you say your day-to-day life relates to your time in the studio?

I'm starting to wonder if there are two different kinds of painters. There are the painters that operate out in the world very seriously, and then they get in their studio and a lot of it is almost comedy, where they go in there and they get to poke fun at society or the things that are hurting them or make commentary. And I think for me it's the opposite. Outside in the world I'm much more lighthearted and fun and not taking it all so seriously, but I don't believe in irony in the studio. I don't even think there should be irony in art, period. I've never really heard a good love song or any great album that has irony to it. But I do credit the studio for the fact that I can exhale and have a good time outside of it. Recently, [New York Times critic] Roberta Smith shared my painting on her Instagram, and I was like, "Well, that's the coolest thing that's ever happened to me." You can quote me saying that.