

# GENIEVE FIGGIS INTERVIEW

Interview with artist Genieve Figgis

by Jessica D. Wessel



all images Courtesy of Harper's Books, Half Gallery and Almine Rech Gallery

Irish artist Genieve Figgis has had solo exhibitions at Harper's Books, Half Gallery and Almine Rech Gallery. Her work, featuring abstracted figures in lush settings, is collected by contemporary art cognoscenti.

**Romeo and Juliet is your second collaboration with the Met Opera. How did that occur? How is this type of collaboration different than preparing for a gallery show?**

Dodie Kazanjian asked me if I would like to make a short film based on the opera Roberto Devereux. I love all music, and history is one of my obsessions. I love a new challenge so I said, "Why not?" The film short was aired during the intermission of the opera's live performance across 200 theaters worldwide. It was my first live opera experience, so that was exciting. The film was made specifically about the story of Roberto Devereux and his relationship with Queen Elizabeth I. I was asked shortly after if I would like to put on an exhibition at Gallery Met based on Romeo and Juliet at the Metropolitan Opera.

**Who are you looking at now? Is there an artist you would love to collaborate with in the future?**

I'm looking at a hundred things at the same time. There is so much to do.

I would, at some point, like to direct a film. I love film and drama. I have many favorite actors and directors who I would be only too delighted to work with.

**Figurative painting has recently had a resurgence. What do you make of this change from an interest in the abstract to the representational?**

Figurative painters have been a favorite of mine all my life because I love people. I like to look at them. What better way to say that than to use paint. It's also all about paint and I also enjoy just looking at the artist's journey and process.

**Does Instagram impact your work?**

I don't know if it impacts the work, but it gives me a way to see what others are doing and people have been very kind to me in what I do and choose to show there.

**What do you want people to take away from your work, and who is your ideal viewer?**

My work is for everyone to look at and hopefully to enjoy. I'm happy if that makes others happy.

Genieve Figgis: Romeo and Juliet is on view at the Metropolitan Opera's Gallery Met until 21 January 2017.

— edited by William J. Simmons

