

NIGHT GALLERY

2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021

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Artsy Editorial, "20 Artists on the Work They Made in 2020," *Artsy*, November 20, 2020.



20 Artists on the Work They Made in 2020

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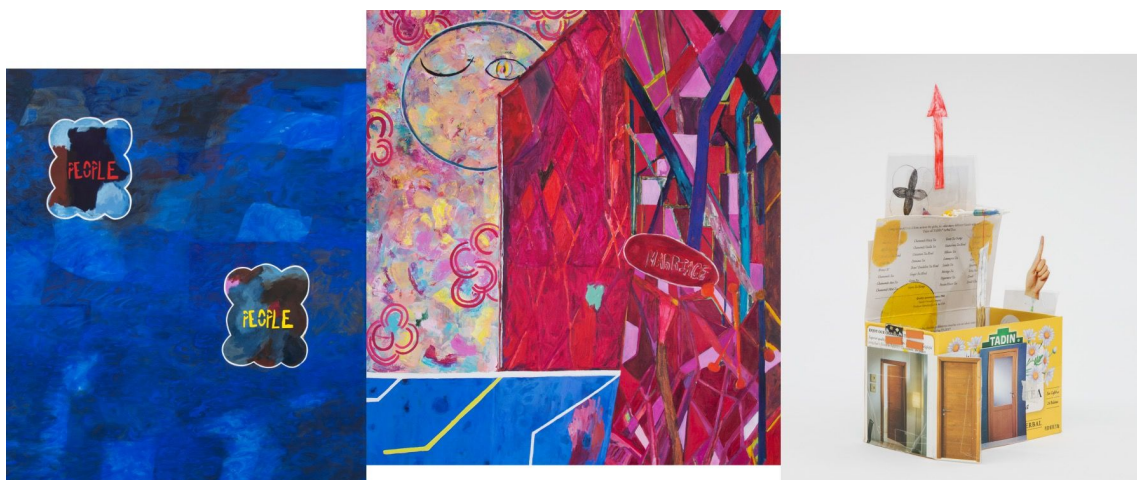
For centuries, artists have responded to pain, grief, loss, and injustice through their art, at times to brilliant and cathartic ends.

Even so, it would not be fair to assume that contemporary artists come out of the tumultuousness of 2020 with a masterful new body of work. Yet, in a testament to the deep resilience of the artists working today, many did.

The 20 artists here tell us about the work they made this year and how the COVID-19 pandemic and social upheaval of 2020 affected them personally. Some endured deep disappointment as their exhibitions were postponed or canceled; many buckled down to meet work deadlines despite the crumbling state of the world. Some found solace in new mediums or a slower approach; others navigated childcare and processed loss. While several did admit that their day-to-day lives didn't look so different this year, all of the artists we spoke to touched on the grief they each endured. And yet they all kept creating fresh, new work.

Marisa Takal

B. 1991, Montclair, New Jersey. Lives and works in Los Angeles.



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Can you tell us about the work you made in 2020?

Ironically, 2020 has been the year that I've made the least amount of work. This year was one of deep marinating and then some simmering before I began to make much. I had a show right before quarantine called "Sharing." It was in a very intimate space, where everyone was allowed to touch the work and investigate it. In hindsight, it was a very bittersweet sendoff into isolation.

The work that I have made this past year is about connectivity through our behavior and patterns, how we relate to one another, how we can feel less alone and disconnected, how we organize ourselves, systems of organization on micro and macro scales, deep investigation into the self, into otherness, into the other, the viewer, people, fear, etc., etc.



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I was actually driven to make this work as a direct effect of *not* working in my studio for months on end. I volunteered with the National Empowerment Center to learn how to facilitate emotional CPR (E-CPR), which teaches the principles of how to lovingly communicate to individuals during mental health crises and teaches individuals how to communicate through open-hearted, non-judgmental listening. For me, a way to radicalize or change systemic injustice at the ground level is learning how to directly communicate and listen to people in an open and compassionate way, where people feel seen and heard and cared about.

How did the events of 2020 impact you as an artist? Did your outlook as an artist change?

My day-to-day life didn't change too much this year. If anything, what changed was how I paced my days and what I decided to focus on. I got to face pains and fears that I had been pushing down, while the world did, too. I surrendered to everything that I couldn't control. I've become a lot slower in my studio, I let things sit for longer. Now I am very excited to be making work at a pace that feels natural and loving.

In the beginning of the year, I definitely had a "What is this world? Where is my place in it? Why are artists important? What is the art world? Who do I want to help? How can I be of service to humankind as best as possible? Should I become a therapist?" spiral. And I still go there and want to pursue that. I would like to figure out how to be of service to others in a larger, more generous way. But over the course of this past year, I have realized how important making things and sharing them with others is for me, how powerful it can be to relate or be curious and learn about one another through various forms of connection.