



Danielle Mckinney, "*Dreamer*," 2021 (acrylic on canvas, 20 x 16 inches / 50.8 x 40.6 cm).
© Danielle Mckinney, Courtesy the artist and Night Gallery

Danielle Mckinney's Portraits are Self-Reflective: 'Sometimes They're Me. Sometimes They're an Emotion I'm Feeling'

By: Victoria L. Valentine
June 2, 2021

INTIMATELY SCALED PORTRAITS by **Danielle Mckinney** are on view in "Smoke and Mirrors," her first solo show at Night Gallery in Los Angeles. The artist serves as her own muse, inspiring a series of tightly cropped scenes, solo portraits of female protagonists captured during moments of introspection. Her subjects are self reflective and represent fictional characters.

“Sometimes they’re me. Sometimes they’re an emotion I’m feeling. Sometimes they’re a story that my best friend told me. Sometimes it’s an observation of a feeling inside me that I’m processing,” Mckinney said in a recent interview with Alison Gingeras for Mousse Magazine. She later added that they are, “Every person, regardless of color or gender.”

Alabama-born, New Jersey-based Mckinney has a BFA from Atlanta College of Arts, studied painting for two years in France, and then earned an MFA in photography from Parsons School of Design in New York. After focusing on photography for 20 years, the artist took up painting again during the pandemic. She had always painted, but what was previously a side interest, became her primary creative outlet.

“I’d try to force myself to make photographic work, to follow those educational and conceptual ideas I’d been trained with formally in grad school, and I just had an anxiety attack. I was, like, I can’t do this anymore. I can’t shoot. I can’t keep looking at the world,” Mckinney said in a conversation with Kristin Farr that appears in the Summer 2021 issue of Juxtapoz magazine.

“And then my cat passed away, and I was stuck in the house, and I was going to break down if I didn’t do something creatively. So I went to Michael’s, bought a whole bunch of canvases, and I just painted.”

The decision has worked out well, in short order. In the weeks before her current exhibition at Night Gallery, Mckinney presented “Saw My Shadow,” a solo show of her paintings at Fortnight Institute in New York. Later this month, a solo exhibition with Marianne Boesky Gallery opens in Aspen, Colo. Then there is the magazine coverage. In addition to the Q&A with Mckinney published inside Juxtapoz, one of her paintings (“The Secret Garden,” 2021) graces the cover.



Installation view of *Danielle Mckinney: Smoke and Mirrors* on view at Night Gallery, Los Angeles (May 22 – June 19, 2021).
Courtesy the artist and Night Gallery