



About the Artist

Jennifer Moses lives and paints in Boston, MA. She has been included in exhibitions across the country and throughout New England and is currently represented by Kingston Gallery in Boston. Her work has been reviewed in *Art New England*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Boston Herald*, *Sculpture Magazine* and *The Roswell Daily Newspaper*. Her work has been included in the Northeast edition of *New American Paintings*. In addition, Moses' paintings were published in the book *Making Abstract Art* by Dean Nimmer in 2014. She has been a visual artist resident at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and twice at Yaddo Artist Residency in Saratoga Springs, NY. In 2010–11 Moses was a fellow at the Roswell Artist in Residence, in Roswell, NM. This yearlong experience culminated with a solo exhibition at the Roswell Museum of Art. Moses is a Professor at the University of New Hampshire.

www.jennifermosespainting.com

Wall Collage, paper, mixed media collage, 79 x 68", 2016



Gray Cloud, oil on wood panel, 33 x 30", 2016



Better Angel, oil on wood panel, 48 x 42", 2016

COVER IMAGE *Elbow Room*, oil on wood panel, 33 x 30", 2016

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JENNIFER MOSES ELBOW ROOM



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Kingston Gallery
Boston, MA

THIS DOUBT WHICH MOVES AND LOCATES EVERYTHING

by Mary Bucci McCoy

Exhibited together for the first time, the panel paintings and paper wall collages comprising Jennifer Moses' solo exhibition *Elbow Room* reveal the collage work as a key component of her painting process. While many of her long-term concerns — puzzles, fitting together forms, comics, humor, historic and contemporary painting — remain intact, these paintings feel dramatically different from those in her last solo exhibition, which were a response to the western landscape she experienced during a year-long stint at the Artist-in-Residence Program in Roswell, New Mexico.

In this new work, the compositions have in a sense simplified — they are often an agglomeration situated within a frame, a central composition muscling towards the painting's edges. And Moses' palette has shifted to intensely saturated, high-key colors jostling for attention, the former earthy inflection taking an occasional turn as the straight man. The forms in these paintings, often an uneasy negotiation between sensuous curves and geometric angles, carry on lighthearted conversations, bantering back and forth in voices of color, shape, orientation, and situation. Clearly, in the collage work Moses has found the means for a deeper investigation of the roles of humor in her work.

She began experimenting with wall collages in 2012 when she was invited to participate in a group exhibition of wall drawings at Kingston Gallery. She knew that the small-scale, framed collages she had been making no longer served her painting, and a well-timed residency at Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, New York gave her the opportunity to prepare for the exhibition by exploring the possibilities opened up by a scale shift combined with a new mode of working directly on the wall. This process involves assembling and rearranging

cut-out chunks of pattern, photo printouts, color, and texture, a process facilitated by familiar blue repositionable painter's tape. She could attach the completed work invisibly to the wall, but instead the blue tape remains as deliberate evidence of her process, suggesting impermanence as well as a compelling intimacy — at any point the artist might reach out and change the arrangement, again and again, as if in her studio.

As the collage work developed, Moses discovered that this way of working loosened up her painting process by largely taking the painterly hand out of the equation. The paintings and collages have become mutually generative as she works back and forth between them. At times the collages provide visual information that is a starting point for a painting. Or she might directly transfer the arranged forms of the collage onto the canvas, using the collage as a cartoon in the art historical sense. Either way, the collages offer possibilities that are ultimately realized in paint. The paintings, teetering on the edge of their hard-won balance in every way, suggest that like the collages, they remain negotiable, that they too may change. But in the case of the paintings, the tension is heightened by the conflict between our expectation that a painting would remain fixed and the precariousness of the paintings' resolution.

Moses has long been interested in forms derived from comics, in particular the clichéd forms of speech balloons or thought bubbles. Emptied, decontextualized, reoriented, refilled and recontextualized, they take on multiple personas. Yet regardless of reading as its original form or as a cloud, in her hand the form becomes just another combatant for her to use as the painting demands.

While these forms are the most obvious and longstanding expression of humor in Moses' work, her work is increasingly suffused with comic devices of exaggeration, incongruity, disruption and even timing. Frequently humor arises in her paintings through the disruption of the painting's internal logic. In the past she has described her painting process as solving a self-created puzzle of integrating multiple visual languages. Now she has focused her language, only to disrupt it with a wayward form or other singular incursion. The puffy pink stylized, vaguely humanoid cloud form that lounges in one painting inserts itself between the viewer and what we might imagine to have been a complete painting before it arrived. It settles in and gets comfortable, at once character and punch line.

And yet, underlying the humor of this work are the forces that subtly drive much humor: anxiety, frustration, and doubt. Moses' paintings sit at the intersection of the painter's and the viewer's anxiety — the painter's anxiety about successfully resolving the work, the viewer's anxiety, perhaps subconscious, about what may happen next. There is tension, however pleasurable, between the expected fixedness of the painting and the evident latent mobility of the painting's forms. Among her influences Moses cites Philip Guston and Renaissance painters, so it is not surprising that the conclusion of Guston's July 1965 *ARTnews* essay "Piero della Francesca: The Impossibility of Painting" offers us a key to her new work: "Is the painting a vast precaution to avoid total immobility, a wisdom which can include the partial doubt of the final destiny of its forms? It may be this doubt which moves and locates everything."

Mary Bucci McCoy is a painter based in Beverly, MA who exhibits nationally and frequently writes about art.



Wall Collage #3, paper, mixed media collage, 37 x 27", 2016



Red Cloud, oil on wood panel, 33 x 30", 2016



Me Myself and E, oil on wood panel, 48 x 42", 2016