

# Rebecca Morgan

## “Over the Hill”

September 7 - October 21, 2023

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 14, 2023, 6-8pm



**Asya Geisberg Gallery** is pleased to present “Over the Hill,” **Rebecca Morgan’s** fifth solo exhibition with the gallery. In Morgan’s oeuvre, self-portraiture crescendos to deeper themes that resonate across art history, feminism, and art-making mythology. A four-year timespan between Morgan’s solo shows encompasses an arc of collective post-pandemic personal and professional reassessment, prodding the themes of the show.

The exhibition’s title is typical for the artist as it plays on several levels: tongue-in-cheek, as approaching 40 the artist is hardly “over the hill.” And yet, an authentic reckoning: with Morgan’s role as a teacher a tacit acknowledgement of being an older wiser mentor, combined with battling the ever-ticking biological clock. As the artist has recently begun a new career move in the Hudson Valley, the title could be a nod to the Hudson River School’s history of landscape painting, or perhaps, fourth, a hint to the rural themes of much of Morgan’s work.

Each artwork in “Over the Hill” charts artist archetypes and phases of the exhibition’s making - from nervous beginnings to elation at completion. The pithy focus of the show nonetheless sets the stage for a baroque explosion of allegory and symbolism. In “Self-Portrait at 100 Still Doing All My Favorite Shit,” Morgan’s wrinkled self is the opposite of a sad crone: instead an idealized wish fulfillment, wearing the same uniform as today, surrounded by the tools of her trade and a bacchanal of Ur-American Oreos and Coke. On the shelf above is an R. Crumb “Mr. Natural” alluding to existential grief, the touchstone of much of Morgan’s work stylistically and attitudinally. Nearby book titles include members of the artist’s pantheon - Artemisia Gentileschi, Norman Rockwell, Lisa Yuskavage, as well as Rubens and Courbet. In effect, the painting eviscerates the title of the show by reclaiming the power of (artistic) aging.

Similarly, “Self-Portrait Getting Back on the Horse (After Delacroix)” shows the artist grimacing as she grabs the mane of a horse painted in the style of Delacroix, after his watercolor of a horse agitated by a storm. The title suggests the phrase “back in the saddle” as Morgan has rebuilt her studio practice from a highly laborious and exacting process of multiple glazings to a looser, faster, and more fulfilling style. The primal, untamed, writhing animal symbolizes the artist subduing her inner demons, wrestling competing violently-moving ideas and emotions into a cohesive body of work.

“Self-Portrait as Romanticized Painter” encompasses the whole spectrum of Morgan’s painterly craftsmanship and stylistic allegiances, from cartoonish to naturalistic. The artist’s hillbilly alter-ego smiles unwittingly as her paints tumble off her palette. Despite the unschooled backwater implied by dirty bare feet, she paints a perfect alla prima small canvas en plein air - while the depicted landscape extends dreamily behind her. The actual “Hudson Valley Plein Air (May 12, 2023)” painting sits in the exhibition next to its mimetic forms within “Romanticized Painter.” The landscape painting’s soft rendition of the Hudson River School’s romanticism serves as an ouroboros, perfectly summarizing the looping referentiality of the show. Similarly, a centrifugal spiral of references and artworks swirls in “Self-Portrait Painting Myself Painting Myself.” We see the artist’s point of view, her unshaved legs and a socked sandal balanced by a delicate vase of flowers. A Judith Leyster self portrait faces the viewer, and is mirrored in the pose of the artist in the depicted painting. Lists of titles or sketches for artworks surround the tortured artist, as the R. Crumb cartoon and the “Hudson Valley Plein Air” painting each make their third appearance within the show. The R. Crumb character asks “What Does it All Mean?” as he wretches - a moment of exaggerated panic, in Morgan’s world a heartfelt collective angst that all artists share in the process of creation. The question remains unanswered, but gloriously expounded in the ever-winking “Over the Hill”.



Rebecca Morgan  
*Self-Portrait as Romanticized Painter, 2023*  
Oil on linen  
40h x 30w in



Rebecca Morgan  
*Self-Portrait Getting Back on the Horse (After Delacroix), 2023*  
Oil on linen  
20h x 16w in



*Rebecca Morgan received a BA from Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania and her MFA from Pratt Institute, NY. Press for her work includes The New York Times, Time Out New York, Hyperallergic, ARTnews, Whitehot Magazine, Beautiful Decay, Arslant, Juxtapoz Magazine, The Huffington Post, Paper Magazine, and Berlin's Lodown Magazine. She is the recipient of residencies at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center, the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, The Watershed Center for Ceramic Arts Residency, a Vermont Studio Center full fellowship, and the George Rickey Residency at Yaddo, among others. Morgan has exhibited widely in the United States and abroad, with recent exhibitions at BravinLee Projects New York, NY; Mother Gallery, Beacon, NY; Oakland University Art Gallery, MI; Western Exhibitions, IL; Mana Contemporary, NJ; Greenpoint Terminal Gallery, NY; The Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada; The Hole, NY; MRS Gallery, NY; Marinaro Gallery, NY; Hashimoto Contemporary, CA; Woodstock Byrdcliffe Guild, NY; Fisher Parrish Gallery, NY; Woskob Family Gallery at Penn State, PA; Knoll Galerie, Austria; Richard Heller Gallery, CA; Children's Museum of Art, NY; and SPRING/BREAK art fair, NY. She recently joined the painting and drawing faculty as an artist in residence at Bard College, New York.*