

INTRODUCTION*She Wants the World to See*

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2019

16" by 12", mixed media on canvas

Ginger Danz, Fayetteville, W.Va.

www.gingerdanz.com**Keywords:** Gender; patriarchy; femininity; masculinity; body image

She Wants the World to See, 2019. 16" by 12", mixed media on canvas. Ginger Danz, Fayetteville, W.Va. www.gingerdanz.com.

Women over fifty become invisible. For the first time, I'm consciously making art about what it means to be a woman in our society. In my former career as a mental health counselor, I paid particular attention to other people's stories. As a wife, mother, and community volunteer, I have felt compelled (and often content) to play a supporting role. I felt a strong discomfort when asked "What do YOU want?"

Following several recent milestone events (my father's death, my daughter becoming a teenager, and my fiftieth birthday), I've started to pay attention to my own interests, desires, and moods as well as to explore personal themes like body image, relationships with other women, and motherhood. I feel like I'm waking up from a long nap, seeing something in myself that I want to see more of! I'm increasingly shrugging off internalized patriarchal messaging, voraciously collecting stories of women artists who

have been edited out of our collective history, and listening to their voices as well as my own.

She Wants the World to See is from a body of abstracts that grew out of these internal shifts. The biomorphic shapes are inspired by the female body. I build textures with collage and graphite, then layer fluid acrylic paint to create vibrant color combinations. While I paint I am conscious of socially prescribed gender-based dichotomies (feminine vs. rational, emotional vs. intellectual, weakness vs. strength), and the necessity of challenging gender roles, traditional notions of femininity and masculinity, and engaging in meaningful conversations about our differences and similarities as human beings.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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