

RILEY HOLLOWAY BIOGRAPHY

The American painter Riley Holloway is best known for his dynamic practice with text and image, his perspective of wandering thoughts, fears and struggle, and for speaking his mind with traditional drawing and oil painting techniques on canvas. Riley Holloway's portraits have the canny sense of representing us and not-us. He began to see the importance in life of taking emotional experiences and situations, often times difficult, repurposing them to process and speak with figurative painting. The images are an engaging mixture of rage and tranquility, motion and stillness, a distillation of the artist's contradictions.

The body of work, entitled 'Shook!!!', became a political standing for Holloway in 2013. With references from Frederick Douglass to Mobb Deep, Riley Holloway's mark-making images challenges the viewer to stop being "scared to death and scared to look." His images are often accompanied by text and other personal references, embedded within a dynamic work style and emerging gesture on contemporary painting. With his drawings and sketches of the embodied subjects, Holloway suggests his perspective of the generational struggle in today's African American generation, where Holloway uses bold painterly techniques to create his figurative portraits. There is a detailed delicacy in his work which he transfers into his images, accompanied with wild strokes and markings. His utilization of charcoal and hand drawing, in conjunction with his ability to control and manipulate oils in a traditional process is a counterbalance of 'unfinished' aspects of the image and the rawness and utilitarian nature of materials such as the canvas, panel, gesso and nails he works upon.

Holloway's aesthetics create subjects that combine the drama, the political history and familiar spaces of intimacy. 'The Language We Speak' shows the unseen material of the young painter's repertoire, concluding on the subjects of power, on self-optimisation, on grief, declaring subtle details in a personality's seemingly roughly painted image. Riley Holloway's work reads like an essay of thoughts, a moment of stillness in an aggressively impulsive, noisy and complex world of contradiction, of crisis and of self-doubt.

„My work begins with the individual. I've always been an observer of people and run into individuals who inspire me through their personality, fashion or conversation. I aim for creating pieces that are rich in storytelling, free from constraints, and true to the person I'm painting. This is accomplished by letting the individual's narrative drive my work. I use traditional drawing and oil painting techniques to articulate the qualities of each individual.“

Riley Holloway, born 1989 in Los Angeles, lives and works in Dallas, Texas. Holloway attended The Art Institute of Dallas and the Florence Academy of Art, where he focused on traditional drawing and oil painting techniques.

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