

Advertisement

Art Market

How Avery Singer Became One of the Most In-Demand Artists Working Today

Veena McCoolle

Oct 10, 2023 5:34PM



Portrait of Avery Singer. Photo by Grant Delin. © Avery Singer. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

On October 11th, the American ultra-contemporary artist Avery Singer will present her first U.K. solo exhibition, "Free Fall," at Hauser & Wirth in London, which runs through December 22nd.

Known for her recognizable paintings that combine computer-rendered airbrushing and 3D modeling software, Singer's distinctive practice unifies technological influences and pokes fun at bohemian artist tropes. While her paintings nod to Cubism and Constructivism, her use of digital software creates a new way of engaging art historical references, which has earned her a reputation as a major, highly sought-after artist.

"Free Fall" is a poignant reflection of the artist's memory of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, which took place when the artist was 14 and home alone in her parents' Tribeca apartment nearby. The immersive show features large-scale works that build on Singer's storied visual language, characterized by a complex layering of digital renderings, airbrushing, computer editing, and masking.

Most striking is the exhibition's layout, which mirrors the interiors of the World Trade Center offices, recreating a corporate office environment faithful to the original architectural elements of the

Related Stories



What Auction Results Do (and Don't) Tell Us about the State of the Art Market
Veena McCoolle



How Raghav Babbar's Pensive Portraits Have Captured Collectors' Attention
Veena McCoolle



Tania Marmolejo's Wide-Eyed Portraits Are Capturing Collectors' Attention
Veena McCoolle

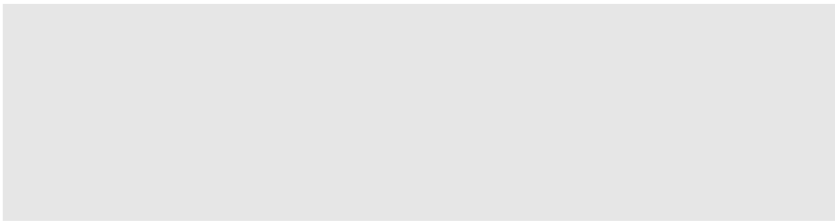


Advertisement

building. Singer selected “banker gray”-colored walls; scattered shredded paper across the dull-toned carpets; and installed a façade of elevator banks at the show’s entrance, which, according to gallery staff, have been occasionally mistaken for real lifts by those passing the gallery.



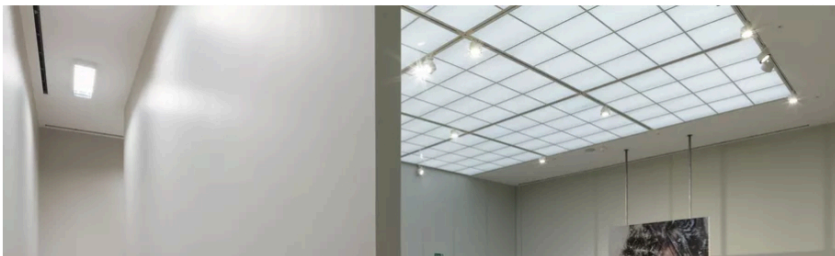
Avery Singer, installation view of “Free Fall” at Hauser & Wirth London, 2023. © Avery Singer. Photo by Alex Delfane. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth.



Advertisement

Singer also created a narrow corridor through which visitors enter a part of the show, recalling the confined spaces she traversed while visiting her mother, who worked in the towers. The second half of the show is housed in a windowless room that Singer installed with cheap office partitioning, akin to the one her mother worked in. The gallery’s bookshop was also transformed to reflect the artist’s fond memory of the Borders bookstore at the World Trade Center, which Singer filled with pre-2001 titles spanning genres from self-help to philosophy, and which are available to purchase.

While the show’s layout juxtaposes quotidian office life and senseless tragedy, Singer’s works themselves evoke the multidirectional chaos that ensued after the explosion. Portraits in the exhibition are called “deepfakes,” seemingly a nod to the propensity of artificial intelligence to fabricate imagery—though the artist notes they have not been manipulated in this way. Instead, details like dust, makeup, and jewelry have been added to computer-rendered avatars taken from original photographs of victims that fuse real source material with the artist’s imagination to reflect—and reconstruct—her own memories.





Avery Singer, installation view of "Free Fall" at Hauser & Wirth London, 2023. © Avery Singer. Photo by Alex Delfane. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

"When I thought about how to approach my experience of 9/11 in my mid-thirties, I wondered how I could filter these fragmented images through the lens of making art," Singer wrote of the show. "I wanted to use art as a kind of conceptual mediator, to create an emotional landscape of this history for the audience to enter into and define their own experience."

Obscured details, heavy layering, and the use of digital processing in Singer's work demand forensic attention from the viewer to recognize and comprehend the fallout—and human cost—of the 9/11 attacks. For example, a closer look at the glassy eyes of portraits like *Deepfake Stan* and *Deepfake Rachel* (all works 2023) reflects the details of the "office" that they are installed in, including reflections of computer screens and the shredded waste paper on the floor.

Another jarring work, *unk-righthand.obj*, depicts a severed right hand that Singer's friend found on her windowsill upon returning to her Manhattan apartment after 9/11. The artist prepared the canvas using between 50 and 70 layers of gesso paint mixture to achieve a completely flat background. She then art-directed a video game designer to construct the hand with a photograph-like quality, mangled at the wrist and featuring a chipped manicure. Finally, she added details like blood and dust, and manually spattered liquid rubber on the canvas using a dish sponge, the latter of which she described as "a foil to the highly constructed nature of the image."



Avery Singer, *unk-righthand.obj*, 2023. © Avery Singer. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

"I have a bit of a fear of the 'white cube' space of a gallery and accepting it as it is, and I wanted to create different ways to hang my work," Singer said. "The immersive installation was a bit of an experiment for me." Next, she hopes to find a disused office space in

the city's Financial District to explore the idea of a site-specific installation to address these themes further.

The daughter of artists Janet Kusmierski and Greg Singer, New York-born and -raised Singer has experimented with various mediums including performance art, photography, carpentry, and videography throughout her studies in Frankfurt and New York. She then began to refine her signature approach to modernism with SketchUp, a tool used to render virtual models of exhibition spaces. Now, Singer is known for deftly blending technology with industrial materials, often removing all visible remnants of human intervention from her work.

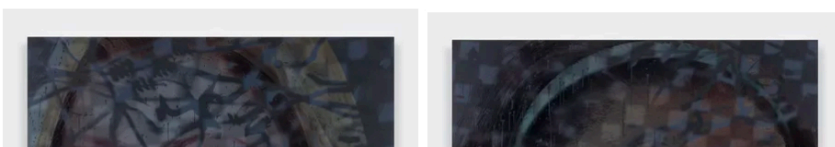
In 2019, her works were featured at the 58th Venice Biennale's central pavilion, alongside the likes of [George Condo](#) and [Anthea Hamilton](#). The same year, then-32-year-old Singer became the youngest artist to be signed to Hauser & Wirth.



Avery Singer, *Blackout (study)*, 2022. © Avery Singer. Photo by Lance Brewer. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

While this is Singer's first solo show in the U.K., the artist's work already features in the collections of global institutions like London's [Tate Modern](#), Shanghai's [Yuz Museum](#), and New York's [Museum of Modern Art](#) and [Whitney Museum of American Art](#), among others. This year alone, she's been featured in group exhibitions in Italy, the Netherlands, the U.S., and Germany. Her work is currently also on view in a solo exhibition, "Avery Singer: Unity Bachelor," at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Miami until October 15th. It features a more fictionalized take on 9/11, exploring a love story between characters set in the "collective trauma" and aftermath of the tragedy.

Works by the 36-year-old artist have been met by strong secondary-market demand over the past few years. In May 2022, the artist set a new [auction record](#) of \$5.2 million at Sotheby's New York for her acrylic on canvas work *Happening* (2014), which beat mid-estimates by 75%. At the time, it was the second-highest auction result of all time for an artist under the age of 35, behind [Raqib Shaw's](#) *Garden of Earthly Delights III* (2003), which sold for \$5.5 million in October 2007.





Avery Singer *Deepfake Rachel*, 2023. © Avery Singer. Photo by Lance Brewer. Avery Singer *Deepfake Marcy*, 2023. © Avery Singer. Courtesy of the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

Several of Singer's strongest sales were made in Hong Kong. This year, *Untitled* (2016), a large-scale acrylic work on canvas, sold through Christie's Hong Kong for just over \$4 million in a May 28th evening sale.

"*Untitled* was met with huge excitement and very competitive bidding, resulting in it more than doubling its low estimate," said Jacky Ho, senior vice president and head of evening sale, 20th and 21st century art department, at Christie's Asia Pacific. "[Singer's] own visual vernacular reinterpret[s] a classic and historic theme, a woman with a guitar, studied by many masters like Braque and Picasso."

Ho noted that Christie's has sold works by Singer in Hong Kong, New York, and London, with her 2021 Christie's debut in Hong Kong setting her world auction record at the time. "Singer's digitally generated and often ambiguous forms give a universality to her work that speaks to collectors from all over the world," he added. ■

Veena McCoole

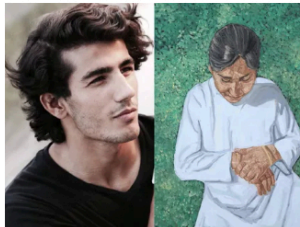
Further Reading in Art Market



Art Market

What Auction Results Do (and Don't) Tell Us about the State of the Art Market

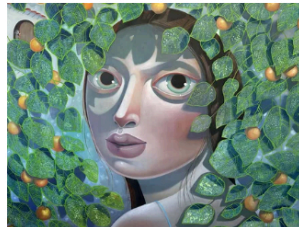
By Veena McCoole
Aug 4, 2023



Art Market

How Raghav Babbar's Pensive Portraits Have Captured Collectors'...

By Veena McCoole
Jun 23, 2023



Art Market

Tania Marmolejo's Wide-Eyed Portraits Are Capturing Collectors'...

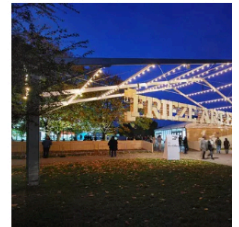
By Veena McCoole
May 31, 2023



Art Market

5 Latin American Artists with Market Momentum

By Maxwell Rabb
Oct 11, 2023



Art Market

20 Years since Frieze Debut, Gallerists Refl the Evolution of Lond

By Reena Devi
Oct 6, 2023

Advertisement

Art

10 Must-See Shows during Paris+

Related Stories



10 Must-See London Shows during Frieze Week 2023
Edmée Leberco