

Artist Statement (2020)

*Women on the Verge* is a series of fictional portraits using contemporary and art-historical sources. I begin by painting small, water-based studies of self-portraits by women such as the German Expressionist Paula Modersohn-Becker and the contemporary British artist, Chantal Joffe. Artist's models like Edouard Manet's Victorine Meurent also serve as inspiration. Moving to larger surfaces and working in acrylic and/or oil, I transform the images further by creating varied facial expressions, clothing, and color palettes. Through this process, a specific presence emerges, rather than a likeness. The women wear brightly patterned clothing that often contrasts with their calm facial expressions, and are surrounded by a field of monochromatic color. Varied painted surfaces include areas scraped down to the bare wood panel next to passages of lush brushwork.

Although there are many sources of inspiration for this work, Pedro Almodovar's 1988 film, *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* is a significant one. The movie explores female identity through the filmmaker's striking use of color and pattern, as well as humor and empathy – elements I incorporate into my paintings. The deaths of my sister, mother, and best friend, as well as the current political climate, further contribute to the work.