

WILLIAM HOLMAN GALLERY



# REBECCA BIRD

“The thing I find endlessly compelling about painting is that it’s a method of stopping time, or encoding it in material. An image of violent motion frozen makes that explicit.” [Rebecca Bird]



Flood, 2015, Acrylic and oil on panel, 30 x 40 inches

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### **BIOGRAPHY**

Rebecca Bird is a painter, printmaker and animation artist born in Washington State, but based in Brooklyn, New York.

She received her BFA from Cooper Union in 2000, attended Yale Summer School in 1999, and in 2001 she was a Fulbright Fellow to Japan where she learnt the calligraphy technique which had a strong influence on her use of materials, especially paper, wood panels, and ink.

“It was really important to me to go. I wanted to learn about painting from a different perspective, you know? We have our history of painting, it’s like a straight line, and I kind of wanted to approach it from a different angle. It didn’t have to necessarily be the Japanese history of painting, but at least one other history of painting.” [Rebecca Bird]

Working for the Metropolitan Museum as an illustrator on site for some archeological digs, Bird made several trips to Egypt preceding the Arab Spring (2008-2011), and these inspired a series of her watercolors.

Rebecca Bird’s works are in private and public collections in the US and abroad, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York. She has been awarded residencies at the Vermont Studio Center as well as the Lower East Side Printshop Keyholder Residency. Her work has been reviewed positively in the New York Times, the Whitewall magazine and ArtSlant.

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Rebecca Bird's universe -whether depicted by pencil or watercolor on paper or by oil on canvas or panel- is a world of sensorial perceptions rooted in primary experience, in life memories and in an accurate observation of everyday life and nature. These are the point of departure for a personal re-elaboration of everyday subjects or landscapes, drawn or painted in an exquisite and almost hyper realistic manner. However, while linked to the everyday human experience, Rebecca Bird's works often digress into a surrealist dimension, the one of the subconscious, where no preconceived narrative is told and the viewer is directly engaged, being allowed to let the mind engage with the images.



Sour Grapes, 2015, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 72 x 72 inches

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"This image is based on a photo I took in Cairo, near where I was working. This is a typical sight to see in the city, an area where a building has fallen down and has been converted into an ad hoc dump. I'm interested in garbage because in America our garbage disappears, we tend not to see the results of our habits of consumption, while in other places it might stay around, your poor shopping decision or the bag it came in. The composition is a deposition, such as the one by Rembrandt, where the body of Christ is removed from the cross. The pile of shoes seems to come from above and is somehow a stand-in for a body or a sacrifice". [Rebecca Bird]



Descent, 2015, Oil and Acrylic on canvas, 72 x 72 inches

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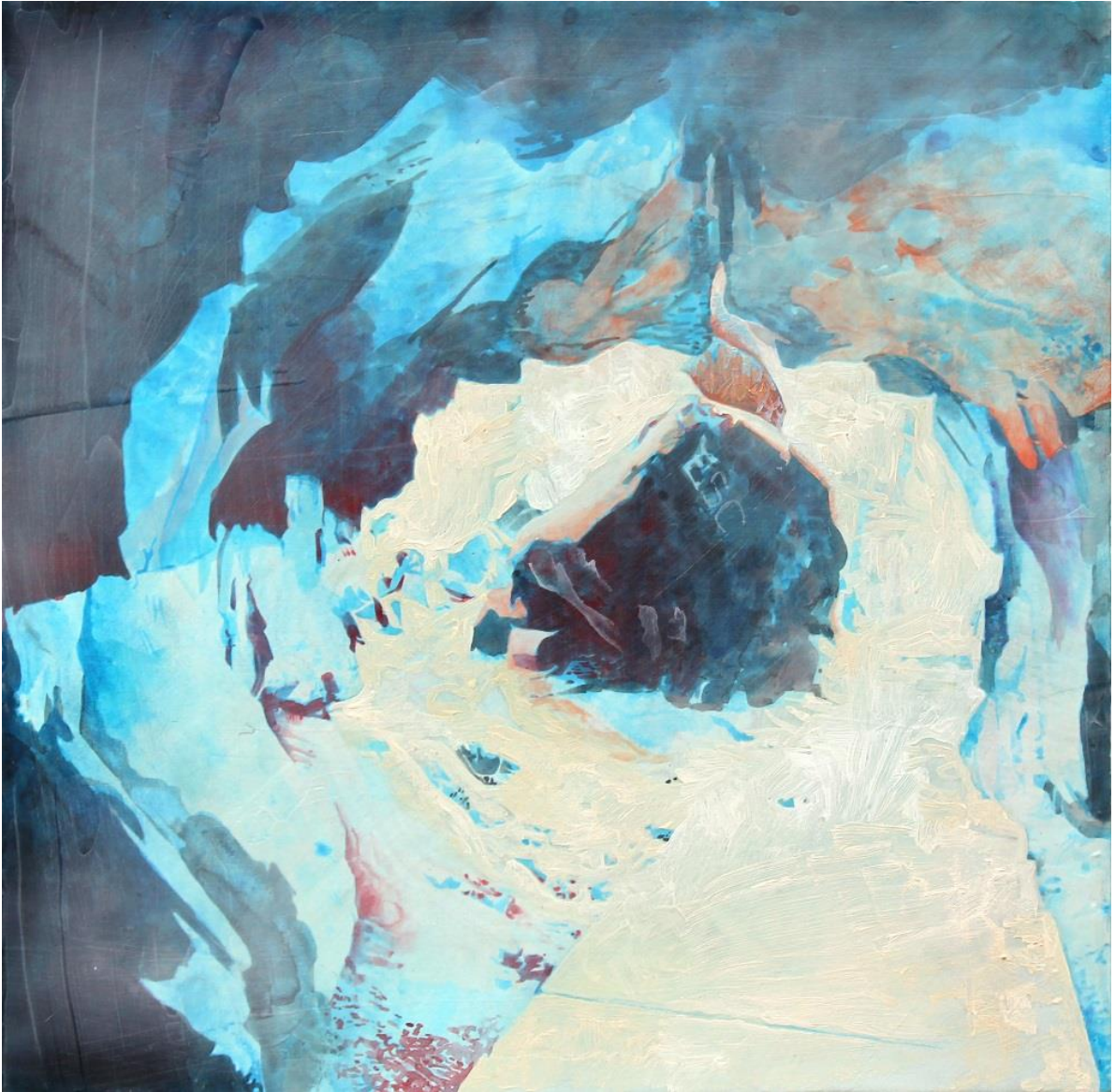
Seeing, 2011, acrylic and oil on wood, 12 x 12 inches

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East, 2014, Acrylic on panel, 30 x 40 inches

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Barrier, 2014, Acrylic and oil on panel, 12 x 12 inches

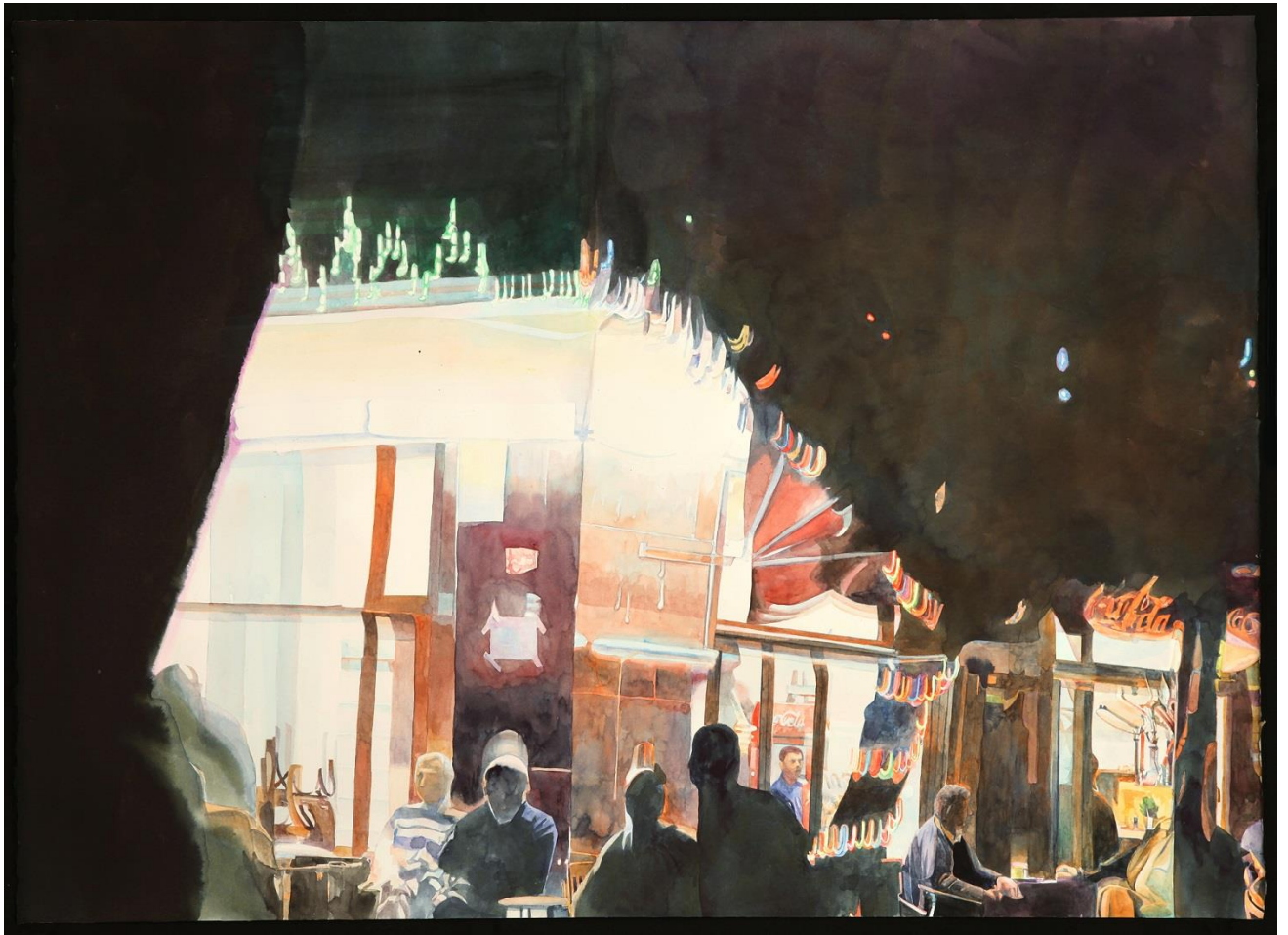
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Boulder, 2013, Ink on paper, 30 x 22 inches



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Cafe, World of Men, 2012, Watercolor on paper, 22 x 30 inches

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“When I was a child I knew exactly two things about Niagara Falls: that you go on your honeymoon there, and that you might go over the falls in a barrel. I felt both of these events to be practically inevitable. Since no one I knew had ever done either of those things, I assume I got these ideas from Looney Toons cartoons. My ideas about Niagara Falls had connotations of an uncertain rite of passage. One possibility was the ideal romance leading to a honeymoon, and the other was the kind of desperation that compels risking a ride over the falls.” [Rebecca Bird]



Frozen Falls, 2014, Acrylic and oil on wood, 16 x 16 inches

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“Niagara Falls had cropped up in my work a few times, as an ironic image, and then I found an old 1910 book of photos of the falls, and eventually began this series of works based on photos of Niagara Falls. But they aren’t my photos; they’re old, even familiar photos that you could find anywhere.” [Rebecca Bird]



Pinnacle (Niagara series), 2014, Watercolor, 30 x 22 inches  
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“Several of my works center on imagery of Niagara Falls as a locus of romance and risk in my childhood imagination. This image becomes a window into expectations for my adult life that I absorbed as a female child- either the dream honeymoon or a ride over the falls in a barrel. The idea of this place, which I had never seen but was familiar with nonetheless, contained a coded message of the precariousness of my situation – that things could go perfectly well or terrifyingly wrong. Niagara Falls is both a sentimental domesticated notion of the beauty of nature and a violent uncontrollable force; as such it is an apt metaphor for the rites of passage that lead to adult womanhood - often marriage or sex.” [Rebecca Bird]



Falls, 2014, watercolor on paper, 17 x 21 inches

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So White, 2011, Oil on panel, 16 x 16 inches

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"I'm interested in symmetry as an ideal of perfection that can't actually exist in reality, the disconnect between the archetype and the actuality. My recent paintings are interior landscapes; abstractions of real or historical sites that become cognitive or emotional locations. Their symmetry indicates that they are illusory constructions." [Rebecca Bird]



Natura Morta, 2015, Acrylic and Oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches

# WILLIAM HOLMAN GALLERY



## **Rebecca Bird**

Born Lynnwood, Washington; lives in Brooklyn, New York

## **EDUCATION**

**2000 - 2001 Fulbright Fellowship** in painting to Kanazawa, Japan  
**2000 BFA, The Cooper Union**, Concentration in painting, New York, NY  
**1999 Yale Summer School**, Norfolk, CT

## **SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

**2015 Rebecca Bird: Symmetry**, William Holman Gallery, New York, NY  
**2015 Rebecca Bird: Niagara Falls**, Kopeikin Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
**2011 Rebecca Bird: Interiors**, Kopeikin Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
**2009 Rebecca Bird: Everything that ever existed still exists**, Kopeikin Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
**2008 Rebecca Bird: Extracting the Exquisite**, The Hebrew Home at Riverdale, Bronx, NY  
**2003 Rebecca Bird: Other Taxonomies**, Wave Hill House Gallery, Bronx, NY  
**2001 Rebecca Bird: Matter and Fecundity**, Cooper Union Humanities Gallery, New York, NY  
**1997 Rebecca Bird: 13**, Collusion Gallery, Seattle, WA  
**1995 Rebecca Bird: Peculiar Objects**, Co-motion Studios, Seattle, WA

## **TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS**

**2014 Rebecca Bird & Tom Judd: Homeland**, William Holman Gallery, New York, NY  
**2008 Rebecca Bird & Matthew Thurber: Anti-Matter Alma Mater**, Southfirst Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
**2008 Rebecca Bird & Matthew Thurber: Anti-Matter Alma Mater**, Fumetto, Luzerne, CH  
**2005 Rebecca Bird & Ellen Takata: Winter Indoors**, Southfirst Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
**2005 Rebecca Bird & Thad Simmerly**, Bucheon Gallery, San Francisco, CA

## **GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

**2015 Summer Exhibition**, William Holman Gallery, New York, NY  
**2015 The Third Bronx Biennial**, The Bronx Museum, Bronx, NY, curated by Hatuey Ramos-Fermin  
**2015 Synthetic Zero**, The Bronx Art Space, Bronx, NY, curated by Mitsu Hadeishi  
**2015 Cardiovascular**, Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington, MA, curated by Sue Knoll  
**2015 Winter Drawing Show**, William Holman Gallery, New York, NY,  
**2014 D-Day 1944**, The Everhart Museum, Scranton, PA, curated by Nezka Pheiffer  
**2013 Draw Gym**, 247365, Brooklyn, NY, curated by Brian Bellott  
**2013 Reunion**, Annex, Cherry Valley, NY, curated by Molly Welch  
**2013 Stars in My Pocket Like Grains of Sand**, L. E. S. Printshop, NY, curated by Jayson Keeling:  
**2013 New Artists**, William Holman Gallery, NY  
**2013 Part of the Story**, Lower East Side Printshop, NY, curated by Julian Kreimer  
**2013 ORGANIX**, Palazzo Querini Stampalia, Venice, curated by Diego Cortez  
**2012 You and Me**, C-space Gallery, Beijing, PRC, curated by Zhou Yi  
**2012 Pig Party**, New York City Gallery, New York, NY, curated by Gina Beavers:  
**2012 The Cat Show**, Tomato House, Brooklyn, NY, curated by Matthew Thurber & Rebecca Bird  
**2011 Ex Libris**, Adam Baumgold Gallery, New York, NY  
**2011 Synthetic Zero**, The Bronx Art Space, Bronx, NY, curated by Mitsu Hadeishi

**2009 Reaccessioned**, Flag Art Foundation, New York, NY  
**2009 Jupiter and Beyond the Infinite**, Sync Space, Los Angeles, CA  
**2009 Synthetic Zero**, The Bronx Art Space, Bronx, NY, curated by Mitsu Hadeishi  
**2008 Back to the Drawing Board: 17 Women Artists**, Michael Steinberg Fine Art, NY  
**2008 Road Works**, Adam Baumgold Gallery, NY  
**2008 Blank2008**, Beijing, PRC, curated by Zhou Yi  
**2008 Selected Works**, Southfirst Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
**2007 Micronauts**, Andeas Melas Presents, Athens, Greece  
**2007 Drawn to the Edge**, Adam Baumgold Gallery, NY  
**2006 Fine Line**, Adam Baumgold Gallery, NY  
**2006 New Views**, Gallery Joe, Philadelphia  
**2005 In a Series**, Adam Baumgold Gallery, NY  
**2004 Sadie Hawkins Dance**, Southfirst Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
**2004 Pretty Bird (not a love story)**, Bellwether, Brooklyn, NY  
**2004 The Watercolor Show**, Guild and Greyskull, NY  
**2004 Works on Paper**, Southfirst Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
**2002 Today**, Swiss Institute, NY  
**2001 Silent Pictures**, Oxidol Gallery, Kanazawa, Japan

## **PERFORMANCE**

**2014 Mining the Moon**, artistic director, theatrical play, the Brick Theater, Brooklyn, NY  
**2007 Ambergris**, Issue Project Room, Brooklyn, NY  
**2006 Ambergris: We Share a Happy Secret** Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA  
**2006 Landy Coloring Station**, The Armory Show, The Swiss Institute, New York, NY

## **CURATORIAL PROJECTS**

**2012 - 2015 Tomato House**, an art project space in Brooklyn, NY  
**2010 - 2011 "Interesting" Gallery**, apartment gallery in Brooklyn, NY

## **RESIDENCIES & AWARDS**

**2015 AIM Program**, The Bronx Museum, Bronx, NY  
**2014 Chenven Award**, Ruth and Harold Chenven Foundation, New York, NY  
**2014 Community Arts Grant**, Brooklyn Arts Council, Brooklyn, NY  
**2013 Emergency Grant**, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation/ Change, Inc., New York, NY  
**2013 Emergency Grant**, Max's Kansas City Foundation, New York, NY  
**2013 Community Arts Grant**, Brooklyn Arts Council, Brooklyn, NY  
**2013 Artist's Grant**, Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT  
**2012 Keyholder Residency**, The Lower East Side Printshop, New York, NY  
**2012 Triple Canopy Special Commission**, Triple Canopy, Brooklyn, NY

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**2015** Rosecrans Baldwin, "Rebecca Bird: A Perfect, Unattainable Romance", The Morning News  
**2015** Ellen C. Caldwell, "Frozen Time: Rebecca Bird's Niagara Falls", New American Paintings  
**2015** "Rebecca Bird: Niagara Falls", Artweek.LA, featured articles  
**2009** Christian Rattemeyer, "The Judith Rothschild Foundation Contemporary Drawing Collection Catalogue Raisonee", MOMA, NY, 92.  
**2009** Katy Donoghue, "New Artist Profile," Whitewall Magazine, September 2009  
**2009** Guillian Wolff, Live interview, Whitewall Magazine online  
**2009** Kimberly Brooks, "Rebecca Bird Paints the Explosion," Huffington Post  
**2008** The Ganzfeld #7, Picturebox, Brooklyn, NY  
**2008** "The Riddle of the Traveling Corpse" Triple Canopy  
**2004** Holland Cotter, "Sadie Hawkins Dance," New York Times online  
**2004** Elizabeth Schambelan, "Critics Picks; Works on Paper, Southfirst Gallery," ArtForum



## **TEACHING**

**2011 Adjunct Professor** Parsons, The New School for Design, Adjunct faculty, 2011

## **SELECTED INSTITUTIONAL COLLECTIONS**

Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

Lower East Side Printshop Permanent Collection, New York, NY

Capital Group Companies Collection, New York, NY

Jamaica Hospital Medical Center, Jamaica, NY

Fidelity Management and Research, Boston, MA

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