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At 92, Audrey Flack Has a Juicy Memoir, a New Art Show, and a Lot to Say

BY SARAH SHAHIN
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Audrey Flack, Self-Portrait with Glowing Heart, 2022.

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In the early 1970s the artist Audrey Flack traveled to the Basilica de la Macarena in Seville, Spain, to see the famous sculpture of the Virgin Mary—a wooden figure in Baroque fashion of a weeping Virgin adorned with jewels, crystal tears, and false eyelashes. Flack is known for the way we lets everyone by the Hieronimus' ornamental splendor. There was a mother shedding tears for her child—Flack could relate—but she was also regal, proud, beautiful. Flack photographed the statue and, years back home, used it as a model for photorealistic paintings based on her pictures, capturing each emphasis should in high definition.

One of these paintings, *Homage of Miracle* (1972), was included in the 1972 Whitney Biennial. Critics thought Flack was pushing her at the center (much—for the added the commonly man as some ironic commentary on femininity. They loved it. When Flack clarified and said that, actually, that work was meant for, instead, the critics retribution their press and labeled the piece vulgar. The artist was 40 years old, married, and a mother of two young children. Flack felt the trade-laws was mentioned, not feminine, nudity. But Flack was undaunted.

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She will, a. "I'm usually very ahead of the times," Flack, a sprightly 92, tells me, when I visit her home studio on the Upper West Side of Manhattan in January. She hops from Abstract Expressionism to the 1970s to photorealism in the 1970 to the public sculpture in the 1980s. She has been a teacher, a writer, a musician, and, crucially, a mother to two girls. When I visit, she is about to publish a memoir, *Painting Life: Memoirs of a Woman Artist*, and a retrospective of her work. Flack traces her emerging career as an artist as well as the entire genre of her personal life, including an abortion her marriage and the challenges of parenting a child with cerebral palsy. Her memoir is juicy, and it is, in a way, a manifesto. Flack, whose 10 years younger than the women she wrote about in the women-lib 70s, feels it's time to shed the be-subject of *Parade for Women* celebration (the full.)

"It's about the transitions," Flack says of her new paintings for the Halle, Zagreb show, which pitch of an historical show influence the Dress, Elizabeth Taylor La Dress, and Jackson Pollock, where she learns, as well as a series of Parade-style colour and religious Jesus, Charlton Dances as Moses, Queen Elizabeth I, Marcel's Dracula Dancing with Dracula. "I'm saying, 'Look, I'm not just a photorealist painter, I'm a Baroque Art magazine'. Are very, the show was originally from years left. In my 92 years, a lot, year-up."

Audrey Flack, *A Bouquet with Dignity*, 2022.

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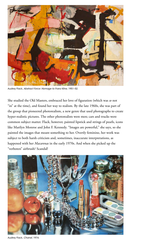
Flack was born in New York City in 1931 to immigrant parents, growing up among other Jewish families in Washington Heights. Her father's young age, she pursued art. She attended the High School of Music & Art, a precursor to Manhattan's LaGuardia High School, and, at 17, left home for Cooper Union, the top-ten school based Albers formal for a scholarship to fully help and to cover grade-edge in the schools design department. "Oh, I'm not the first." Flack writes in her memoir.

Flack was a member of the Artists Club and hung out at the Speakeasy Cafe Tavern on the late 1940s and '50s with Ad Reinhardt, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, Wolf Kahn, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, and William de Kooning. Her memoir is riddled with secret-boss-free-for-all-sex-and-drinking-and-drinking-and-sex-and-drinking-and-sex-and-drinking. Yet the memoir detailing and debauchery the crowd was known for the sexual group in the Cedar Tavern (daughter after Pollock, or after the several, decadently-mentioned affairs, Elaine de Kooning, Lee Krasner, Ruth Kligman, Joan Mitchell, arranged Ben and Esther Gottlieb's wedding in part of the latter). Flack remembers, "All Abstract Expressionist, working more intensive and unlikely to hook her arm and hit. But it was here." I paid a heavy price by observing myself."



Audrey Flack, *Homage to Marcel Duchamp*, 1972–73.

Flack studied the Old Masters, embraced her love of figuration (which was or not "of" at the time), and found way to realism. By the late 1960s, the man part of Abstract Expressionism was dying, and Pop Art was ascendant, and photorealism was hyper-realistic pictures. The other photorealists were mostly men and studio-men continent subject matter. Flack, however, painted Spanish and vertigo of pearls, roses and, later, Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, Jackson Pollock, and Jesus. Flack painted the images that women-making-a-live Dorothy Dinnerstein, the work on subject to both female criticism and, sometimes, vituperative interpretation, as happened with her Marymoor in the early 1970s, Bad when she pulled up the "inclusion" artwork Scandal.

Audrey Flack, *Scandal*, 1973.

Flack's work, Flack's work, Flack's work,

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