

A MICROCOSM OF MAXIMALISM: THE WORK OF BOBBIE BURGERS

CHIARA NONNI DECEMBER 13, 2020 VISUAL ART

A ten-foot high painting was being hung above the staircase at my childhood home. Deceptively simple, of golden flowers in a vase, executed in oil paints, the painting took up the majority of the wall. I craned my neck to take it all in. Its yellow petals seemed to glitter as the late afternoon sun broke through the trees behind me. At first, I thought the painting was illuminated by that sun but the longer I stared, the more the painting itself beamed.

Bobbie Burgers is a Canadian artist whose work straddles the line between botanical and hypothetical. She paints memories of florals, not necessarily the actual florals. It is as though she is imagining how flowers should look. Her work is vaguely abstract, a mess of color, brushstrokes, texture. It could almost be involuntary in its design. But the closer you look, the longer you look, the nuance and intention of each fragment reveals itself.

They are larger-than-life depictions of the small, overlooked simplicity of a flower, reflecting naturalistic maximalism through a minute lens.



Bobbie Burgers in her studio
Photo by Kyrani Kanavaros

I want to know the woman who made the flowers beam. Who made me look inside the pistil of a flower when I was young, my eyes squinting to see precisely the colorful swirls of wisdom that she'd seen. I've grown accustomed to recognizing her work across British Columbia. I'll walk into an office or a house and see a massive canvas, taunting in its proximity to both naturalism and the abstract, and I'll know. I want to know how she creates something I've looked at but never properly seen. I want to know how she re-invented the flower.

For now, I still crane my neck and stare, my thoughts lost in a wonderment of swirling luminous petals.