

# THE BROOKLYN RAIL

ArtSeen

## Jackie Saccoccio: Femme Brut

By Barbara A. MacAdam | February 2020



*Tempest (Concave)*, 2019. Oil and oil pastel on linen, 130 x 94 inches. Exhibited at CHART. Courtesy the artist and Van Doren Waxter.

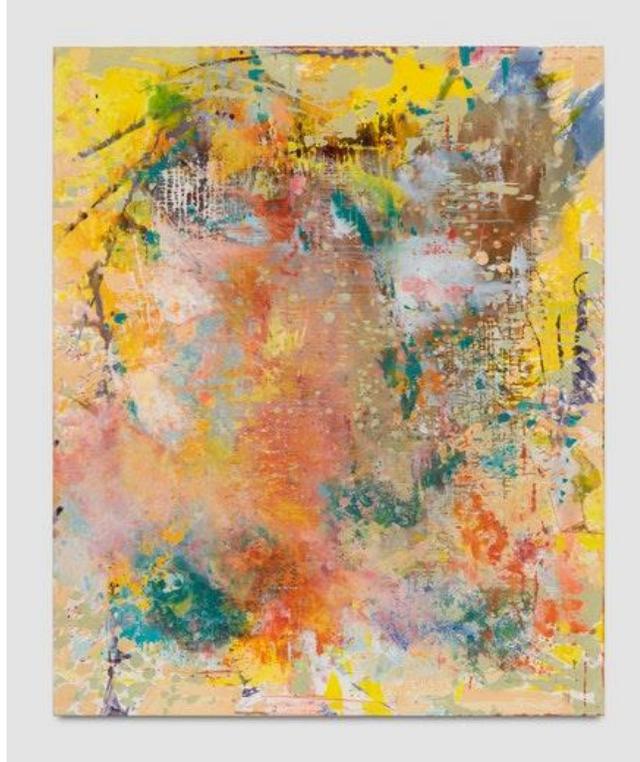
Layers of texture and materials—paint, oil pastel, and mica—supported by pattern upon pattern in shaky thin lines set the foundation for Jackie Saccoccio’s forceful, physically and emotionally self-reflective paintings. Characterized by a massiveness that insists on domination and a spontaneity and assertiveness that evokes the raw, unrefined style of Art Brut, Saccoccio’s huge paintings at CHART Fine Art in Tribeca and at Van Doren Waxter on the Upper East Side, stake a nuanced feminist stance against blunt masculinity. It gives and takes, pressing into play layers of brightly colored poetic passages held in place by a scrim of dark, web-like grids that call to mind fencing or scaffolding, electrical connections, and all manner of detritus.

Saccoccio often tops this architectural conglomeration with rich, steamy gestures that threaten and obfuscate as they create profound depth by means of fiery bursts of orange with yellow and red, green, and blue. They offer a cautionary tale for the moment, suggesting the polluted atmosphere, the dark ocean, the molten earth.

The paintings are remarkably dependent on scale. They project the seductive power of Gustave Courbet’s forests as well as the dripping grandeur of French Romantic painter Gustave Moreau’s dramatic mystical paintings marked by forceful veils of color.

Throughout, there’s a tension between all manner of opposites—masculine and feminine, city and country, nature and the manmade, accident and intention. Compound emotions are locked in among the layers and offer a glimpse of Saccoccio’s thought processes. The artist refers to her paintings as portraits of a sort, and while they are decidedly abstract, with no clearly defined

human figure or even attitude detectable, they do contain fragments of shapes—a faint shadow of human head, struggling to emerge, the curve of an ear, perhaps, the outline of a partially bald pate.



*Source (Concave)*, 2019. Oil and mica on linen, 79 x 65 inches. Exhibited at Van Doren Waxter. Courtesy the artist and Van Doren Waxter.

Where Pollock and or Krasner might affix fragments of discarded canvases to new paintings, Saccoccio presses or drips paint from completed works onto new ones. The process perpetuates a material narrative, rendering her art production one whole piece—a compositional fabric, a running narrative, an autobiography in a palimpsest.

Among the layers of visible art history are allusions to Courbet, especially to his *La Source de la Loue* (1864) in her 2019 paintings *Source (Convex)* and *Source (Concave)*, with its dark voids and sexual provocation. Also in the mix are Paul Cézanne's progressing and receding cubistic rock formations and underbrush. We see the pushing and pulling of nature and surface. There are as well the forbidding woods of Caspar David Friedrich and, more recently, the mark making of Cy Twombly.

The paintings are theatrical and stagy—paying homage, most notably, to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, as in her 2019 *Tempest (Concave)* and *Tempest (Convex)*—and cinematic as they portray the passage of light, its variations, as well as motion. The slow broad gesture calls into play time, acknowledging its progression, and the time involved in creating the paintings. They are both physical and introspective, the layers holding it all together as best they can, aided by the presence of the viewer, which constitutes another layer.

In their self-involvement as a function of the reflective process, the paintings are hermetic and particularly modern—even narcissistic—as they reflect the body as well as the history of former paintings. As such, we might even regard them as selfies, showing off as they conceal.