

Edy Ferguson



Edy Ferguson is a painter and video artist with a Master's degree in Fine Arts from Hunter College in New York City, where she lived and worked for 20 years before moving to Vienna. She is now living and working in Athens to develop her oeuvre, which takes found images and own images and combines them into compositions based on a grid system. The results are always exquisitely layered paintings that demand readings that extract multiple narratives determined by composition and audience participation. She has shown extensively in New York as well as Austria, France, Venezuela, and Greece.



1. Valentino Yellow oil on linen 180 x 200
2. American cinema oil on linen 152 x 200

Describe your work as an artist.

It's very necessary for me to feel free in the environment I work in. I make all my life choices based on my gut feelings of what I need for my work to grow. Moving to different places and working outside the US is an essential part of this, for now. I am not interested in making a product to sell; I am interested in investigations, experiments, doing things that I can't predict the outcome. I look for ways to bring differences together, to show how two different images can say the same thing and a third thing as well. It's a constant goal to broaden single perspectives to many-faceted ones. I avoid Renaissance perspective. Not interested. I don't think that is the world we live in now.

Why Athens?

I spent two summers on a painting residency in Mykonos, and that really did it. Before that, when I first visited Athens in 2002, I had the distinct feeling it would be a very interesting place to paint, to set up a studio. And that proved to be right. There is an intensity, a focus that I don't feel in other places when I put my hand to brush on canvas. I also came because of the light, I can see colour. The fact that it was outside the usual artistic haunts, like NY, Paris, Berlin, London, was very important. I wanted to be away from all that so I could see what comes out of me.

How does Athens inspire you?

There is a spiritual element here... a noble influence, it's very quiet sometimes but always powerful. One can feel things here, there seems to be a direct line to the cosmos (the gods?) at this particular latitude and longitudinal axis of the earth. If you focus on lofty things, they just come to you. Negativity creates its own never ending cycle as well. Either way it's a powerful pull. It's also a city where you constantly lose your bearings, nothing is sure or predictable. It is hard to make plans. It can be unnerving, liberating, frustrating, or inspiring... depends on your frame of mind. Whatever happens, things transform quickly, so it teaches me to be flexible.

Has the city been an influence in your work?

My content is basically the same elements that I was working with in New York, which usually involves the shady underside of the American Dream. How it all went wrong. It's not unlike the myths, the Greek tragedies. What changed for me was how to tell the story. I think Greece is an excellent place for writing, for telling your own story. All extraneous things fell off, and I embraced simplicity for the first time, and it was surprising to find out that the simplicity became more complex and sophisticated than I ever imagined. I think art needs to reach a level of complexity that allows it to be truly objective, so it can actually communicate something to others.

How would you describe your relationship with Greece?

After living here for over a year, I've developed a love/hate relationship... like most of the Greeks I talk to. But I appreciate the things that exist here which no longer exist in other European cities. Greece challenges me in a metaphysical way. I feel I can't hide behind the usual facades that people survive by in the West. You develop a more honest relationship with yourself, there is space for that here, and Greece demands that.

What keeps you here?

My studio. There's some work I want to do here. I hope to see Athens open up, to experiment more, try new things, new ways of expression, new and raw and emotional art forms. Everyone seems to be afraid of upsetting the status quo, even in the art world. Why not? There is no one to emulate anymore, not even New York. It's all falling apart. So there's nothing to lose.