

THE UNIBROW



DAILY BROWS

Rebecca Ness On How To Deal with “Inheritance”

AHEAD OF A SURVEY AT OGUNQUIT MUSEUM OF ART IN APRIL 2027, MORGAN PRESENTS EXHIBITS A NEW BODY OF WORK IN NEW YORK

By Evan Pricco

"Inheritance is a slippery concept." Boom, Rebecca Ness's new show gets right to it. I think this is an interesting topic to speak about as a figurative painter, as Ness is probably one of the great painters of her generation, with incredibly skillful and observational details about daily life and the romance of past experience. I was trying to think about what the title of Ness's new show, Inheritance, opening September 10th at Morgan Presents in New York, could mean. There are the human qualities we inherit from parents and youth, there are socio-economic inheritances, and there are cultural inheritances of what we like and dislike and the things we deem important. Inheritance is also, by its nature, a fraction of the whole, as the writer Cat Dawson notes in their essay on this show: "What is inherited is never quite the same as it was at its source; and it is only ever a small fraction of all that has come before."

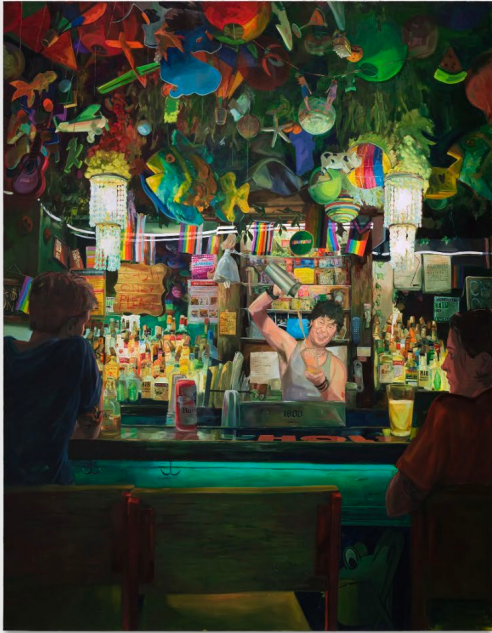
I immediately started thinking about this in terms of art-making, or art history, or the things an artist takes as inspiration or influence from generations before. You tend to inherit art history, don't you? It comes to you from curators, from the past, in a museum, explained to you, influencing you. Each generation gets something new to inherit, too, as more curators and directors look through history to forge new pathways to understanding the past. Right now, in 2026, there is a lot to inherit in making art today.

Maybe a painter inherits art history the way anyone inherits a language: fluently, and without ever having agreed to it. By the time you can hold a brush with any intention, you're already carrying someone else's decisions, that shadow falls this way because Caravaggio decided it should, that a face reads as three-dimensional because a nineteenth-century atelier drilled its value structure into a hundred students so it could be drilled into you, secondhand, generations later. But none of it arrives whole. What survives the transmission from history to now isn't just the source; it's a story of inspiration.

Rebecca Ness to me is one of the most contemporary painters I can think of because of these ideas I was throwing around last night as I was trying to process this show. The works are part of a history that is included in the works of queer artists Paul Cadmus and Fairfield Porter, and as the author notes, the great portrait and world building works of Salman Toor and Kerry James Marshall. Two brilliant works in this show, *Transfer* and *Abe's winning punch*, are elegant, cinematic, historic works brought through to the world in Ness's signature lens, one where all details are considered and history understood. For *Abe* is Ness inheriting the history of George Bellows, *Transfer* also captures the spirit of George Tooker's own masterful *The Subway* work. But what is my favorite part of looking at these works is Ness creating a universe by which others will inherit her craft, where she is placing herself into art history and understanding the dynamics of how we inherit an aesthetic and how we present that to the world. It's a moving series. —*Evan Pricco*



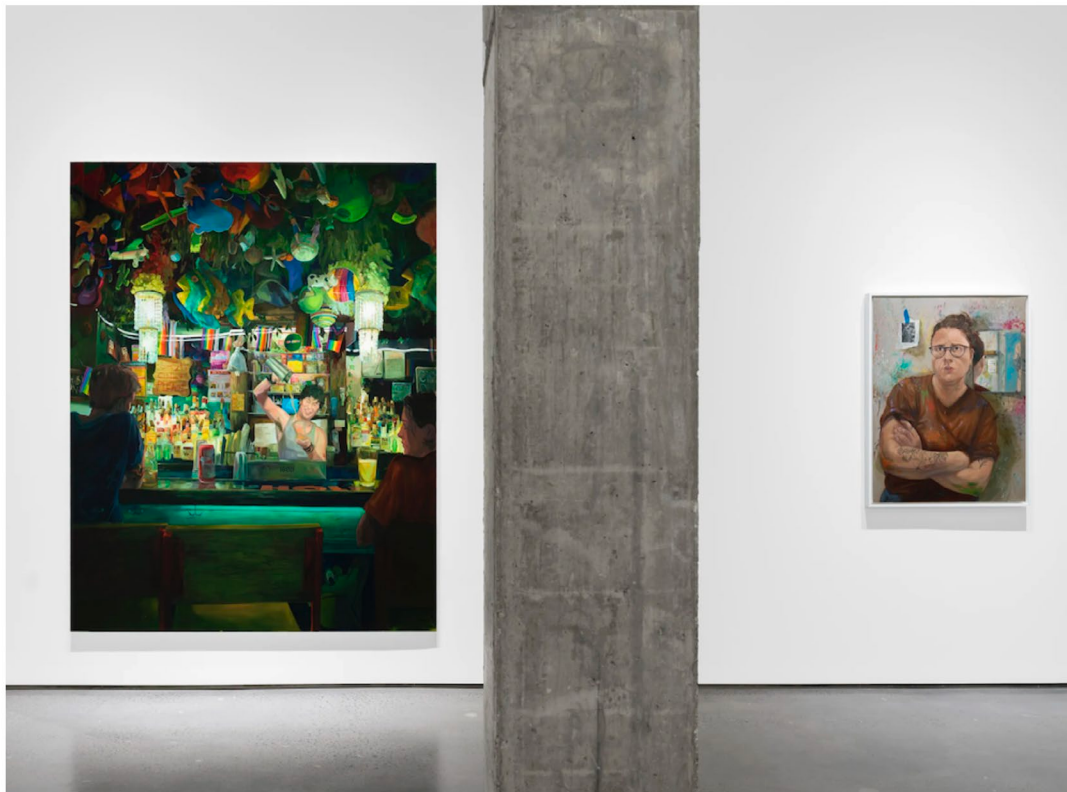
Abe's winning punch, 2026 Oil on linen 90 x 80 inches



A seat at Cubbyhole, 2026 Oil on linen 90 x 70 inches



Red Wall, 2026 Oil on linen 40 x 30 inches



Installation view of Inheritance, courtesy of Morgan Presents

Rebecca Ness: Inheritance will be on view 10 September-20 October 2026

Published on September 8, 2026