

INTERVIEW

## Digital Drawing Room: MFA Fine Arts featuring Liz Ordway

Interviewed by Becca Chacon



Liz Ordway

Starting May 10, you can view work by students in the MFA graduating class on the website [2021.CCAMFA.art](https://2021.CCAMFA.art) and in the [Class of 2021 Showcase](#).

Works in this series were written by students in Glen Helfand and Maria Porges' respective graduate writing seminars this past fall and spring.



Mini Key, 2021. Inkjet on powermesh.

**Becca Chacon: Why don't you tell me a little bit about your work?**

**Liz Ordway:** Well, I'm a researcher and a scholar. A lot of my work comes from a combination of fat activism and emotional nourishment. I have a background in graphic design, but I am usually if not solely working with fabric these days. I've been an artist and a maker my whole life.

Last year I took in so much—I consumed so much information and feedback. Now, in the time of the pandemic and isolation, I'm starting to slow down my whole process.

**BC: When you think of the viewer and how you want them to experience the piece, do you want them to think about their own body or yours? Or are they connected?**

**LO:** It's connected, absolutely. The way somebody sees my body says everything about how they see themselves. That's what I want to talk about—that is visible fatness. When I see it, I feel seen; I feel joy; I feel less alone. I actively know that the world is constantly telling me to hate it. But, I can't get rid of it, right? There's so much shame in being fat: showing your fat body can be some of the most painful work you ever do. This work is another form of fat representation. I have to do this to stay alive.

**BC: Right, your vulnerability is asking the viewer to look inward as well.**

**LO:** That's the whole point, to tell people it's totally okay to be fat. There is a ton of sensuality and sexuality in my work. Eroticism plays a part too because when you are isolated and can't connect to others, self-love and internal eroticism become your cornerstone for affection. Because you don't trust other people, taking naked



Untitled, 2020. Inkjet on paper.

pictures of yourself is one of the most intimate things you can do with yourself. Putting these images in my show in my MFA show is me standing in solidarity and also contributing to fat studies and fat visibility. I'm very focused on authenticity, because that's all I know. Everything I do is always coming back to how I'm trying to cope with recovery. My practice is really centered around fighting the demons.

**BC:** Do you find that it's challenging to love your body?

**LO:** Absolutely. As Sonia Renee Taylor tells us, body positivity has been taken over by diet culture— it has been consumed, digested, and shipped back out. So, we're not talking about body positivity. You don't have to feel positive about your body to think that you deserve everything: to think that you have rights; to think that you deserve love; to think that you deserve equal treatment. You don't have to look in the mirror and think, I love what I see. But we all still deserve equal rights. Which is where these issues become so violent. Because your body changes every day.



*Well Fed*, 2020. Inkjet on cotton.



*Untitled*, 2020. Inkjet on canvas.