

Reba Maybury
'Ungainly Positions'
15.03 - 04.05.2025
LC Queisser

The Impressionist artist, Edgar Degas created a series of pastel drawings of naked women washing and drying themselves in late 19th century Paris.

'The nude has always been represented in poses which presuppose an audience. But my women are simple, honest creatures who are concerned with nothing beyond their physical occupations... it is as if you were looking through a keyhole at their innocence.' Degas.

These works by Degas were both applauded and criticised at the time for the originality of the 'ungainly positions' the women were depicted, the painter's perspective of the works, as if the viewer was looming over the women. This praise stemmed from an apparent inventiveness for the time in terms of their perspective, looking more like camera shots than classically composed figures posing in easily understood and conscious portraiture. In these paintings, there is a sense that the women's pre-occupied bodies were being zoomed into without their knowledge. Degas never painted these women's faces. His skill was applauded.

'Women can never forgive me; they hate me, they feel that I am disarming them. I show them their coquetry.' - Degas

Paint by numbers are self-contained painting kits designed to facilitate a pre-designed image. They generally include brushes, tubs of paint with numbered labels, and a canvas printed with borders and numbers. The user selects the color corresponding to one of the numbers then uses it to fill in a delineated section of the canvas, in a manner similar to a coloring book.

The act of ordering my submissive men to complete a paint by number kit for me is a way for them to have an experience of art without being the artist, a relaxing activity for adults that bears no demands for creativity but instead relaxation. This is not unlike a john visiting a sex worker or a tourist visiting a city - a consumable experience of leisure that takes no responsibility for the culture, politics or wellbeing of the place or the person you pay to visit.

It is widely understood that the women who posed for Degas were sex workers. Washing is one of the unseen labours of the sex work profession and women's work, regardless of their labour, is often to clean up after men.

I have tried to discover the exact amount of works by Degas of women washing themselves but I cannot find a number, it is however - a lot. Does this classify as an obsession?

There is a bland innocuousness to these images of women's faceless, naked bodies being spied upon, the ordinariness of their naked bodies now fades into art history. And I suppose that is what is most insidious about abuse - its banality.

Who watches the watcher?

Reba Maybury, 2025



1. Reba Maybury
 'Note to Mistress Rebecca from Masterpiece', 2024
 Postcard of Jacob and the Angel by Sir
 Jacob Epstein from the Tate Gallery.
 Indian ink.
 21 x 14.8 cm

2. Reba Maybury
 'Work tally for Mistress Rebecca by Yet to be Named 4', 2024
 Paper and pen
 29.7 x 21 cm

3. Reba Maybury
 'Francis Bacon, German, Junior Art Advisor, 28 ,London.', 2025
 24 colors, acrylic paint on printed canvas
 40 x 40 cm

4. Reba Maybury
 'no hobbies, German artist, mid-40s, Berlin'., 2025
 36 colors, acrylic on printed canvas
 50 x 50 cm

5. Reba Maybury
 'Used Man 2003', 2025
 Submissive's t-shirt, socks, underwear, shoes, watch, golden chain, keychain, cap,
 bracelet, sunglasses, ring
 Dimensions variable

6. Reba Maybury
 'Minute, Italian Web Developer, Giantess
 Fetishist', 42 years old, Tuscany, Italy.,' 2025
 36 colors, acrylic on printed canvas
 40 x 30 cm

7. Reba Maybury
 'Used Man 1954', 2025
 Submissive's sneakers, pants, underwear, socks, shirt.sweater.
 Dimensions variable

8. Reba Maybury
 'Yet to be named 4, 22, British, recently graduated english graduate teacher/social-
 ist and in chastity.North East England.', 2025
 24 colors, acrylic on printed canvas.
 40 x 50 cm

9. Reba Maybury
 'White Album, Danish Business Student, 25, Copenhagen, Denmark - unfinished, ' 2025
 36 colors, acrylic on printed canvas
 50 x 50 cm

10. Reba Maybury
 'Amanda, British retired civil servant and cross dresser, 60s Blackpool UK' 2025
 36 colors, acrylic on printed canvas
 50 x 50 cm

11. Reba Maybury
 'Used Man 1983', 2025
 Submissive's sneakers, socks, shirt, pants, t-shirt , underwear. 2025
 Dimensions variable

12. Reba Maybury
 'Amanda, British retired civil servant and cross dresser, 60s Blackpool UK,2.,' 2025
 36 colors, acrylic on printed canvas
 60 x 40 cm

13. Reba Maybury
 'Masterpiece,61, British Online Content Creator and boot fetishist, London, UK,'
 2025
 24 colors, acrylic on printed canvas
 40 x 50 cm