

# Time Out

## Read our interview with artist Jessica Stockholder

By **Paul Laster**

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Blurring the line between painting and sculpture, Jessica Stockholder mixes found and bought objects with constructed and painted elements to a compelling effect. Although currently based in Chicago, Stockholder has exhibited frequently in various New York galleries, as well [museums](#) like the [Whitney](#). Over the course of a 30-year career, she's become one of the most influential artists of her generation, setting the stage for the hybrid style of sculpture and installation that dominates the art world today. Recently, the artist chatted with Time Out New York to discuss her new [gallery show in Chelsea](#) at Mitchell-Innes & Nash featuring, colorful assemblages, drawings and a large-scale, site-specific installation.

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**Do you consider yourself a sculptor or a painter?**

I suppose I consider my work a kind of picture making. I'm interested in the idea of framing—the notion that artworks need to be set off from the rest of the world so we can focus on them. The pedestal serves that same purpose, though it's a less compelling convention. I love the way painting is so full of illusionistic possibilities.



**Your work is often described as playful. Do you consider it that?**  
I always get a little bit uneasy when I'm asked that question, since play is immediately associated with children—who, like women, aren't ordinarily empowered within our culture.

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That said, yes, aspects of my work are akin to “play.” I’ve been thinking about how, when you plan a party, a vacation or a dinner, you want everyone to have fun. So you fantasize about how it will work out, but of course, you never know. Maybe the word play implies a known set of actions intersecting with unknown consequences.



## **You use a lot of color. How does it factor into your work?**

I've always loved color because it's a little bit like music. I love that it seems to be both physical and ephemeral and engages us as a metaphor for our feeling lives. But you can't quantify everything you do with color. That's not to say that thinking about it isn't valuable, but it's like eating: It's one thing to enjoy the food and another to sit down and figure out what the recipe is.



**How do you source the found materials you use in your pieces?**

I look everywhere you can think of. Some things are my own stuff that I'm done with. I also salvage castoffs from the street. If I have no idea what I need, I might go to Costco or Goodwill or Home Depot. I might google a little or search on eBay. The same thing if I know exactly what I need, like something of a particular size or color. But it's not like shopping for groceries or anything. I feel a bit like a magpie attracted to shiny things.

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# MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

## **How do you know when something is done?**

I start to feel bored, like there's nothing left for me to do. The work can develop, be turned upside down or cut in half or left alone for six months and then returned to. Whatever the case, I don't want to get too comfortable with the result, even if I'm generally satisfied.

*"Jessica Stockholder: The Guests All Crowded Into the Dining Room" is at Mitchell-Innes and Nash Thu 25–Oct 1.*