

Notes on TIME MANAGEMENT

We are a society that is time-obsessed. Once it seemed there was never enough of the stuff, then the quarantines and lockdowns of COVID-19 brought with them nothing but. Time to pause. To think. To over-think. Time to feel fear, horror, and #gratitude. Some folks I know say they've never been busier, and they long for a different time, when a commute afforded them 40 minutes to listen to a podcast, when they could kill a little trading gossip with a coworker. Other folks say this glut is like torture. In the early days of the pandemic, as my friends and I fumbled to connect on Houseparty and Zoom, I found the myriad of reactions to this particular time surprising. Expansive and untethered, the time felt for me like a miracle. Alone in my tiny Brooklyn apartment, I examined my interior life, and I sat with the quiet of my solitude. The sensation was new, but not foreign—I'd experienced it vis-à-vis the interior paintings of Polly Shindler, paintings that came to be when she herself hit a pause button of sorts and left New York City. I will forever regard that time as one of great artistic growth for Shindler. The resulting drawings and paintings of tidy home offices with vast windows and swoon-worthy furniture, clean, colorful bathrooms, and living rooms that revealed themselves only as being lived in when I considered the "off-screen" characters who made their design choices were different and stirring. Yes, they were unmistakably by Polly Shindler, but these paintings had new purpose: they revealed the beauty in the modern quotidian, the heart-swell of a solitary moment in this age governed by motion.

In Shindler's more recent Masked Portraits, we meet some of the characters shaping her interior world. As good as the paintings themselves are her descriptions of these friends and family members, and read together they serve less as snapshots of their subjects and more as a timeline of the artist's own life. She recalls the birth of her "baby cousin" Polly, who we later see is a grown woman who's recently become engaged. There are classmates and coworkers, fellow artists and supporters. In exciting and remarkably sincere anecdotes and portraits, we meet her parents, go off to college, go off to grad school, wait some tables, and remember all of those times—much like we will certainly remember this one.

It's hard to imagine now that any of us will feel nostalgic for this particular moment, or any of its phases and stages, yet Shindler's TIME MANAGEMENT hums with an energy and spirit that suggests we are, in fact, moving forward. Please excuse me while I sit here a little bit longer; I'm enjoying the view.

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