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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART

Aliza Nisenbaum



Courtesy the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York; © Aliza Nisenbaum

“Bodies, with their color and their nuance and their materiality, are so different in person than on social media,” the Mexican painter **Aliza Nisenbaum** told me last month, in her Harlem studio. She was putting the finishing touches on a group portrait of the staff at the Anton Kern gallery, where an exhibition of her taut and tender pictures, for which she spends hours painting people from life, opens on Sept. 13. This intimate process has social-justice roots: Nisenbaum met her first sitters in Queens, in 2012, while teaching English to immigrant women at a center founded by the Cuban artist-activist Tania Bruguera. Think of the kaleidoscopic “Jenna and Moises” (pictured), from 2018, as a portrait of entwined art and politics: Jenna is both a salsa dancer and an immigration attorney.

— *Andrea K. Scott*