

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black dress, is lying on her back on a blue and white striped fabric. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a solid dark blue color.

PA

Issue #100 | December 2018

#100 Figurative REALISM

Curated by Dirk Dzimirsky

FIGURATIVE REALISM

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Kelli Russell Agodon
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Nin Andrews
Grace Cavalieri
Denise Duhamel
David Lehman
William Stobb
John Zedolik

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Ryan Shultz
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Sharon Sprung
June Stratton
Vicki Sullivan
Anna Toberman
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Veronica Winters

PoetsArtists

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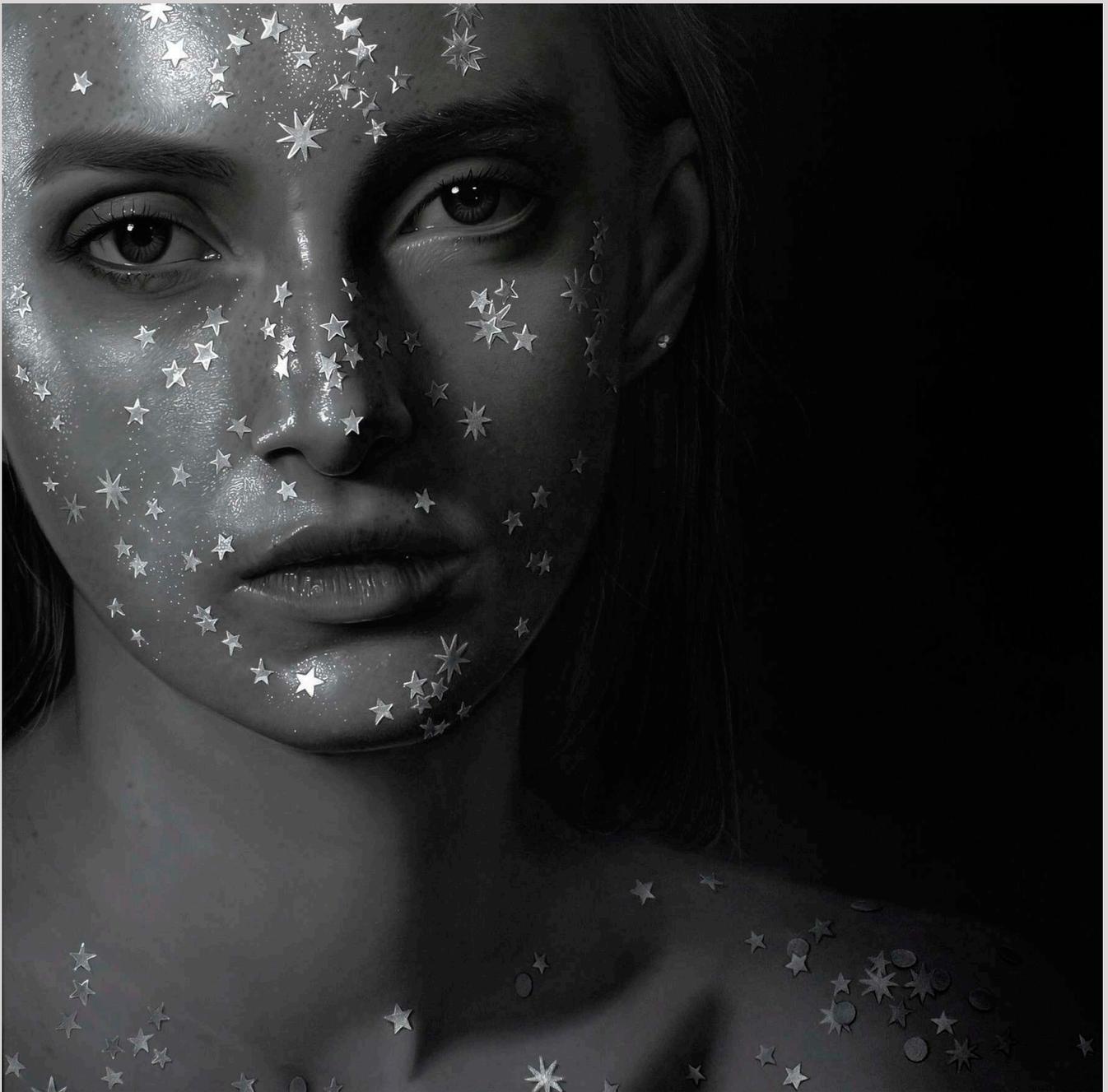
INTRODUCTION

Daniel Maidman

COVER ART

Sharon Sprung

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DIRK DZIMIRSKY

Lost and Found

39.4" x 39.4" charcoal & acrylic on canvas

One Hundred Issues

DANIEL MAIDMAN

Until very recently, it was plausible to claim that figurative painting was dead. All the mainstream art magazines, newspaper critics, university art departments, and museums agreed. Figurative painting was very much *passé*. Educated people mouthed the right appreciations of Rembrandt and Rubens when forced to. But nobody, or at least nobody with good taste, took new figurative painting seriously. And nobody who counted was painting it.

There was an astonishing degree of conformity to this position. I'm old enough to remember it. It was like a cloudy sky in winter. You can't see the clouds because the whole sky is one gigantic cloud.

The internet blew apart this fake consensus. It turned out that, while the arbiters, the gate-

keepers, and the investors all agreed, the artists themselves very much did not. Once it became possible for artists to communicate directly with one another, instead of having to pass through the filter of the press, it emerged that a lot of artists were unironically making highly-rendered figurative work. Thousands of them. Many quite good. There were even schools that taught it, schools you never heard of before. And magazines that published it, relegated to the ickier corners of the art periodical sections in the chain bookstores.

The internet revealed that we were not alone. Our sheer numbers, and our love for our work and the history of our art, instructed us that we were not wrong. The self-satisfied way that the mainstream told each of us that we were wrong,

when they could corner us individually, was especially galling. Now that they have to deal with a giant mob of us, they have retreated to a position that our work is simply bad. Well, that's fine. Much of our work is, in fact, quite bad. So is theirs. So is everything people make. People, by and large, aren't very good at things. But they still love making them, and they still work at getting better at it. Time takes care of the rest.

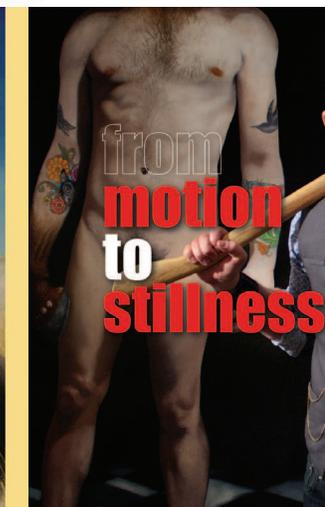
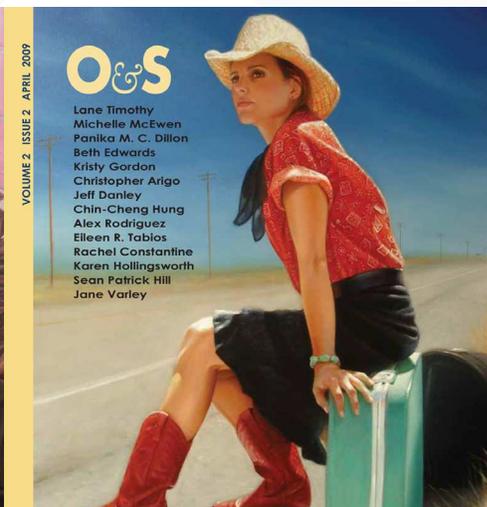
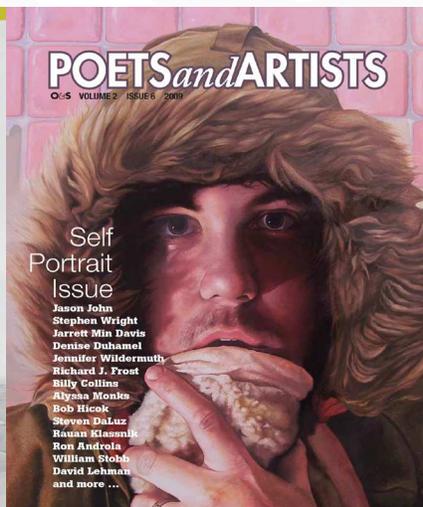
For those of us who were never able to get past our innate and very human drive to paint figurative paintings, the advent of the internet art community felt as if a choking, leaden smog began to dissipate. Before then, if we had to breathe, we breathed through narrow little snorkels that reached all the way to the valhalla of a living movement of figurative art. And one of the snorkels was *PoetsArtists*.

Founded by Didi Menendez under the title *Oranges & Sardines* in 2008, *PoetsArtists* provided a glimpse of what figurative painters were doing when you could hardly find their work anywhere else. Even at that time, there were distinct niches to be occupied in the figurative painting community. Most publications leaned toward showcasing work that pretended away the 20th century. Menendez focused on art that engaged with the present without abandoning the highly rendered figure. For a long time, she was alone in this.

Getting into her magazine was a big deal for a whole generation of figurative painters. I lobbied for five years before I had my first piece published. It was an early high point in my life as a figurative painter. I've been honored to have my work published in *PoetsArtists* on many occasions since, including two drawings in this issue.

As the internet changed the terrain, *PoetsArtists* adapted and anticipated changes. Menendez embraced social media early, broadening her talent pool and amplifying her voice. Once the problem of establishing any kind of beachhead at all for figurative painting was solved, she moved forward with an increasingly ambitious program of collaboration with collectors, museums and brick-and-mortar galleries. *PoetsArtists* never persists in one form. It continuously evolves in response to its broader cultural and technological contexts. As it arrives at this, its 100th issue, it does not resemble the print magazine which was once distributed to Barnes & Noble and Borders. In another hundred issues, it will not resemble this issue.

As expertly selected by master photorealist draughtsman Dirk Dzimirsky, this issue showcases some of the most capable figurative art emerging from the aesthetic sector represented by *PoetsArtists*. To the eye trained on contemporary art, it can seem bland and conformist.



This is the same problem people raised on rock have when they begin to listen to classical music. It all sounds half-hearted and similar. Each aesthetic region requires study before its specific qualities, intensities, and diversity of vision become available.

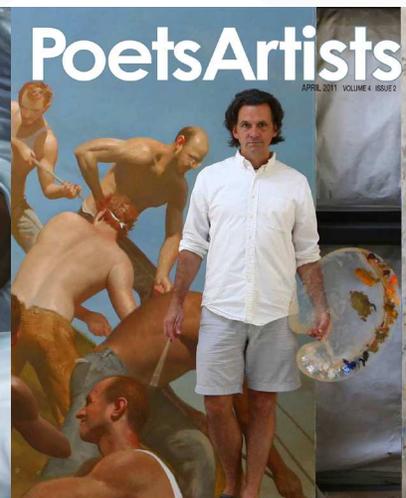
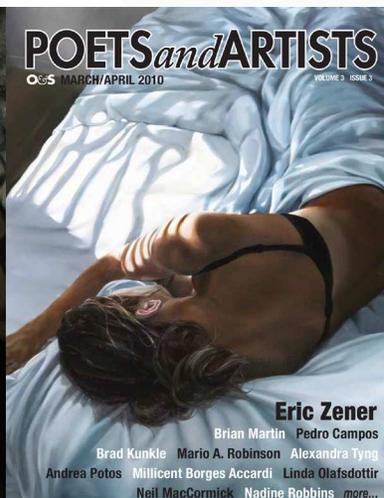
In this issue we see composition imposed by the formalist will of the artist, in Aixa Oliveras's "Resilience," and we see composition emerge by selection of scenario, as in Gustavo Ramos's "Winter Window." We see a novelistic interiority in Ryan Shultz's haunting and raw "Self Portrait (Pensive)," and a similar sense of elemental interaction divorced from space and time in Dáire Lynch's "The Call of the Wretched Sea." We see the figure begin to enter into narrative, as in the coldly daylight domestic drama of Daniela Kovacic's "Christina," or the Fellini-esque carnal excesses of Buket Savci's "BBBBB." We see the figure integrated into grand intellectual schemata in F. Scott Hess's "The Dream of Art History," which relies on extravagant lighting and set design to create its astonishing composition—and in Geoffrey Laurence's "Nightingale," which makes its point through moody perceptual distortions and the triptych composition, expressing a Hegelian model of meaning by way of Sergei Eisenstein by way of Vincent Desiderio.

There are too many images and stories con-

tained in this volume to describe them all here. Perhaps the best note to leave it on is Dzimirsky's own piece, "Lost and Found." It does not offer us a story or a psychology or a formal innovation. It is just a young woman with tiny foil star stickers all over her face. She is dimly lit, but the stars reflect the light more sharply, and they are brighter than she is.

The effect is one of magic: how did anyone do this? That magic, the ability to summon the figure out of inert matter—to sculpt form out of chaos—is always there at the beginning of figurative art, from the cave walls until now. Endowed with an inescapable sense that the wonders of life were Created, we seek to mimic their Creator, and make again the chief wonder of the world, ourselves. It is nothing short of miraculous that we can. Because we are human, we will never get tired of it, and never run out of ways to find in it our own unique means of expressing what we feel and think.

PoetsArtists helped carry that torch, and provide encouragement and hope, through a very dark and anti-human time. It is deservedly assuming a more prominent role in what is turning into a much happier period in the arts. Congratulations to Didi Menendez on one hundred issues. Here's to a hundred more.



Naturalised

I like people who've earned it.

That naturalised citizen,
taking in the chaos
of a city
she never thought
she'd ever move to.

A real wanderer, from her native land
to a land without
her native people,
landing
in the home
of the man she married.

Her children are now from her husband's country,
her current home.

I know she is introverted,
but she has gumption
and viewpoints
that she shares
quietly.

She hides out on the far bench at the playground.

I don't ask too many questions
because that would put her off.

She is sweet, so people like her.
Her energy does not dominate the room.

But I know why I like her: she is uprooted
and forced to be present
in a way a native
is not.

Yet she moves upstream.

And from what I can see,
is doing so with ease.

But I see her alertness,
and her current of sadness.
And her separation.

Her kids lean in on her, chatty.
They are smart and beautiful.
She knows she is lucky.

For Sue Lin

NICOLE ALGER

WHY POETRY?

Poetry is often the best option to express unbidden yearnings. Writing discursively is not always salve for that impulse. Poetry addresses the nut of an idea in sweet, rich bursts of thought. It's inherent brevity makes it an art form akin to a shot of espresso and a bite of chocolate: it clears the mind and opens the heart.

NICOLE ALGER has been writing poetry for 15 years. Her first published poem, "Long View," was included in issue #82 of *PoetsArtists* magazine. She is primarily a realist painter. A graduate of Duke University and the Florence Academy of Art, her portrait *Glasses* was a finalist in the Portrait Society of America's Members' show in the Self Portrait category in Fall 2017, and her still life *Bones* was a top ten winner. Her portrait *Play* was a February 2018 staff pick for the *PoetsArtists* publication *Collectors' Corner*. In August 2018, her multi-figure work *Magpie* was included in the juried American Women Artists show at the Haggin Museum in Stockton, CA.





AIXA OLIVERAS

Resilience

24" x 30" oil on linen

I paint the figure because I am fascinated by it. I am fascinated by the rich psychological themes that can be expressed through the human form. I paint the female figure because apart from being female myself, it is the form that I use to transmute my own personal experiences into a symbolic narrative. Through the figure, I can explore and express ideas about death, rebirth, loss and change. By pairing it with color and rhythmic pattern, the figures in my compositions echo the ebb and flow of life itself. I paint the figure because for me, it is the medium that allows me to transform the personal into the universal, and as a result, explore ideas that speak to our shared humanity.

AIXA OLIVERAS is a representational artist who creates symbolic narratives through the medium of the human figure. Her work explores psychological themes of rebirth and identity. She has participated in several group exhibitions in venues such as Abend Gallery in Denver, CO and Gallery 805 in Laguna Beach, CA. One of her paintings is also included in the Reyes-Veray Collection, a public collection of Puerto Rican artists. Her work has also been featured on the November/December 2018 issue of *Artists on Art*, as well as appearing on the cover. Born in Puerto Rico, Aixa graduated *magna cum laude* from the School of Plastic Arts and Design in 2007. She currently lives in the United States, where she is pursuing her MFA in Painting at Laguna College of Art and Design in Laguna Beach, CA.





VICTORIA SELBACH

Golden Taras

50" x 60" acrylic on canvas



THOMAS WHARTON

Who Will Know I Was Here

29" x 25" oil on linen



ANNE-CHRISTINE RODA

Caillou, ciseau, papier

20" x 30" oil on panel



ANNE-CHRISTINE RODA

Manya IV

27" x 27" oil on panel



VICKI SULLIVAN

Wild Thing

16" x 12" charcoal on roma paper

Learning to paint realistically is a long and difficult path. There are so many aspects to learn and absorb.

In the beginning, I painted mainly landscapes, which are quite forgiving in many ways because it is easy to change things around. Later, I painted still life which I still love to do and it was all about observing and understanding light and how it behaved. When I became reasonably proficient with still life, I launched into figures.

A famous portrait painter I know calls portraits and figures the “Rolls Royce” of painting. I think it is the most difficult subject and an incredibly challenging one. But sometimes the figure begins to take life on the canvas; it is indeed an incredible and rewarding feeling. It is such a buzz when this happens that it has become almost an addiction.

I find I am always noticing interesting faces and people wherever I go and thinking, “Wow, they would be great to paint.” Sometimes I am brave enough to ask them and sometimes they say yes.

VICKI SULLIVAN is an Australian contemporary realist painter specializing in portraiture and figurative work. She studied painting in Australia and at the Angel Academy of Art in Florence, Italy with Maestro Michael John Angel. Her paintings have won awards throughout the world, and in 2014, Vicki was awarded the title “Associate Living Master” by Art Renewal Centre.

Vicki’s work has exhibited and won awards in many international exhibitions, and her work can be found in collections in the UK, the USA, Europe, Africa, and Australia. She is a member of Portrait Artist’s Australia, The Melbourne Society of Women Sculptors and Painters, The Victorian artists Society, Art Renewal Centre, and The Portrait Society of America.

Vicki works in her Rye studio, Pomegranate Studio, which is open by appointment.

Photo by Meredith Langmaid





ANNA TOBERMAN

Undeterred

14.5" x 14" charcoal on paper

I study the figure to understand the unique qualities of each person and their relationship to the harmonies of nature. I find this connectedness through observing anatomy and the physics of light and color perception that, balanced with empathy, illuminate a deeper beauty. My art expresses these discoveries.

ANNA TOBERMAN creates portraits and figures in a realistic style from her studio in the Chicago area. She graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia with degrees in journalism and fine art, then became a graphic designer and art director of publications and marketing materials. She continued her education in fine art with classes at the School of the Art Institute, Palette & Chisel Academy, and private instruction with master artists. In recent years, she has won recognition through the BoldBrush competition, ArtMuse Contest, and Strokes of Genius book competition—as well as through participation in several group shows, which have led to portrait commissions. Anna recognizes the inner beauty and resiliency of people who are working through challenges in their lives and makes these qualities central to her art works.





VIKTORIA SAVENKOVA

Sandman

26" x 39" graphite & charcoal on paper



VIKTORIA SAVENKOVA

Tania

47.2" x 31.5" oil on canvas



BARBARA FOX

Parting with Illusions

21" x 10" charcoal & pastel on paper

I crave beauty, peace, and order, and paint subjects and settings that reflect this idyllic view of the world.

My working method pays homage to the Dutch masters and the tradition of academic painting. I work from life and photographs. Watercolor and oil paintings begin as detailed drawings to which a number of glazes are applied, building deep values and rich colors. The process of completing these works may take many weeks, so I usually have several paintings in process at once. Creating artwork is both a meditation and an adventure that opens my eyes to our beautiful world.

BARBARA FOX is a painter recognized for still life and floral subjects in watercolor and oil. Her meticulously crafted paintings are exhibited and collected internationally, have received numerous awards, and have been selected for publication in fine art books and magazines.

Her paintings have been featured in solo and group exhibitions in museums and galleries throughout the US, including the Phillips Museum of Art in Lancaster, PA, The Neville Museum in Green Bay, WI, and the MEAM in Barcelona, Spain.

Barbara's work has been published in three editions of the watercolor publication *Splash: the Best of Watercolor Painting*, and she has been a featured artist in the leading national art magazines *American Artist* and *Watercolor Magic*. She leads watercolor workshops around the country, teaching her method of layering washes and painting details.

Barbara also works as an illustrator and currently is a designer for the United States Mint. Twenty-one of her designs have been minted as coins and medals.



Bitchin'

(for Nicole Santalucia)

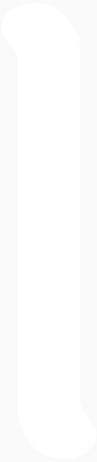
Some friends like to call themselves and friends “bitches”
For example Nicole Santalucia
Who may write a book someday called “Bitches’ Brew”
I hope she does

And I wonder what she, an expert on such matters,
Thinks of the word “babe,” a word I’ve always liked
As a signal of approval of a guy’s date:
Is it considered a strictly hetero term?

And as a student of linguistics I wonder too
Whether “tits” is the equal and opposite of “balls”
And whether “panties” is as femme a word as there is
Other than “femme” itself

Lifetime

I admit I’m a sucker for
“The Wrong Neighbor”
on Lifetime Movie Network
because deranged women
in boots wielding
a kitchen knife
are as diverting as
handsome fortune hunters
who turn psycho when they
marry the cruel stepmother
who blackmails the drunk dad
with selfies of them nude in bed.
The good wife saves
her sap of a husband
from the bitch next door
who gets sentenced
to an asylum but knocks
out the new orderly,
puts on her uniform,
and seduces the shrink.



The Bigamist

I saw *The Bigamist*,
 Ida Lupino's movie
 with Edmund O'Brien:
 one wife in Los Angeles
 (Ida Lupino, who has a baby)
 the other in San Francisco
 (Joan Fontaine, who wants a baby.)

Watching, you realize
 how hard it is to be a bigamist.
 Bigamy is a full-time job
 especially in 1953
 requiring
 two wardrobes with one or two overlapping suits
 enough money to pay the bills for both households
 an excellent memory to keep everything straight
 a poker face
 a creative mind
 a happy childhood but troubled adolescence
 no siblings
 deceased parents
 an active libido
 plus the ability to hold two contradictory ideas in the mind at the same time
 and continue to function.

Second Honeymoon

"Every day I see you naked is a great day,"
 the gentleman says and his wife puts on
 a black slip and it's like a second honeymoon
 plus caviar and champagne in the afternoon
 singing songs by Kern and Gershwin played
 in a florid manner by the piano player
 with the cosmetic face who went to Julliard
 never dreaming that he'd end up here,
 in the lobby of the Bellagio in Las Vegas.

Chanel Cuir de Russie

The man in the Paul Stuart jacket and tie is unaware of it,
 the scent of it nearby, though there was a time
 when the ape of appetite smacked him like a hit
 of subtle weed arousing a hunger that fed
 on the white fringe of a green honeydew. *Rhyme*
me, she sighed with a deep strategic breath
 amid fumes of Chanel Cuir de Russie: the answer
 lay in the reckless arabesque of a dancer.
 “Better,” she quipped, “to be wed than read”
 and renounced her early poems. She became the bard
 of love in the lazy afternoon, and death
 was something they did and did again, hard.

A Soliloquy for Edna St. Vincent Millay

Love, darts,
 And I die, —
 Oh, hearts!
 Yet lie
 Who thicken my hair.
 Day in, day out, your ominous arrows purr,
 Who still care,
 A fool and worshiper!
 I, fire,
 Lifted rain,
 Do Desire
 As Pain!
 (Now brave,
 Punish me, I crave!)

The Porn Seminar

In the picture the beautiful blonde nude, with her pubis shaved, is crouching beside a bicycle that needs a minor repair on a towpath in the woods some place where civilization is either an afterthought or a pipe dream. The class decided that the bicycle in the picture stands for the phallus. The bicycle and the beautiful blonde woman are the only alien things in the lush verdant landscape, where there are no other signs of civilization, no houses, no cars, just woods, a creek, and a meadow. The picture turned up again on the final exam. We were asked, with reference to it, whether the scene depicted was a version of pastoral, a fallen Eden, an allegory of the industrial revolution, a parable of female sexuality, or a chapter in a modern novel whose plot resembles that of *Moll Flanders*.

DAVID LEHMAN

WHY POETRY?

There is such a thing as poetic glory, and that is my answer in short. Poetry is a kind of magic. I fell under its spell in high-school when I read an anthology of poetry, and friends alerted me to E. E. Cummings and Don Marquis with their typographical innovations. Whitman was my first big influence. I was inspired also by Hemingway's prose and by James Joyce's. Then I discovered Frank O'Hara and the New York School of poets, and was hooked. I value charm, wit, humor, irony. Poetry needs no occasion but itself – every day yields a poem. Beauty is its own excuse for being, and a poet praises and celebrates creation in addition to whatever other things he or she does when writing poems. The craft you get if you have aptitude and you stick with it long enough. It is the sensibility of the poet, the soul of the poet, that is unique.

DAVID LEHMAN'S books include *Poems in the Manner Of...* and *Sinatra's Century: One Hundred Notes on the Man and His World*.





detail



VERONICA WINTERS

Echoes

18" x 36" oil & aluminum on panel

Often unable to express myself verbally, I began painting as a way to process my emotions. It's been a long road of self-discovery that helped me understand who I am and what I can offer to this world. My art is uplifting and focuses on positive feelings I want to experience more often in my personal life. Since I'm a woman, the female figure is central to my painting practice where I pursue emotions in vivid color, painting a part of me in every piece.

Russian-American artist VERONICA WINTERS received her BFA from Oklahoma State University in 2003 and her MFA in painting from Pennsylvania State University in 2005. The artist also took classes at the Grand Central Academy of Art and the Art Students League of New York. Veronica is known for her colored pencil drawing that culminated in a recent art instruction book entitled *The Colored Pencil Manual* by Dover. She works in her studio in Naples, FL.





CHRISTINA RAMOS

Maternal

24" x 18" acrylic on canvas

I have always loved to "people watch." The great variety and uniqueness of each individual person has always fascinated me. To try to capture not only the image, but the soul of that human being is the goal of every figurative artist. I can remember as a child, I would stare at the portraits in the museums and be in awe at the skill of the artist. How could they take paint and create something that looked so life like was just amazing to me. After years of working with T squares and rulers doing architectural drafting, I picked up a brush and started painting. Although I appreciate the landscape, and still life, I have never wanted to paint anything but people. No hard angles, no straight lines, just the freedom of paint on the canvas and the soul of the sitter.

CHRISTINA RAMOS is a nationally recognized artist from Southern California specializing in figurative realism.

Although she studied architecture and interior design during college, it was not until she was home raising her four children that she began focusing on painting. She refined her skills in figurative painting at the Los Angeles Academy of Figurative Art. Her innovative use of acrylic has made her a much sought after demonstrator and instructor. She is currently a Golden Working Artist representing Golden Artist Colors and a painting instructor at LAAFA.

Her work has been shown at many museums and galleries throughout the US.





CLAUDIA KAAK

Survivor

47.2" x 31.5" oil on canvas

Humans have always illustrated the human figure. Since the Renaissance and the intellectual and social upheavals of the 15th century, the content of artwork has changed as fine artists have gained increasing independence. Fine artworks are no longer exclusively of religious nature, and painters are no longer considered only as craftsmen, but as artists as well.

Art is always a witness of the times, and a painting is always a means of communication. The painter wants to communicate something to the viewer. The representation of the human figure can reveal a lot about the relationship of the represented figure to themselves, to the painter, and to society. A painting provides insight into the intellectual environment of an artist. The artist presents their personal identity to the public.

The advent of photography and experimental avant-garde movements may have contributed to the disappearance of figurative paintings. In the 20th century, the understanding of the representation of the figure changed. Figures can represent the depicted person but also symbolize political, social, or psychological views.

In the age of mass consumption, a painting of the figure constitutes a unique handmade craft product, and, in contrast to photography, the interpretation of the artist. Today, artists are no longer restricted. As a painter of today, I am free to paint any content in any way. With my figurative paintings, I want to show existential feelings, the inner strife of human beings, deep emotions to the extreme limit of pain, but also the complete reversal. I want to break the taboo to speak about and show feelings and emotional disorder.

CLAUDIA KAAK was born in 1987 in Heppenheim, Germany where she lives and works. In 2015, she graduated from Goethe University Frankfurt (a.M.).

Her first solo show was held at Galerie Pack of Patches in Jena (Germany), and her group exhibitions include shows for Art Innsbruck (Austria), Gallery Ewa Helena Ludwiggalerie Schloss Oberhausen (both in Germany), and RJD Gallery in New York City.

Claudia's work also has been featured in *MilionArt Kaleidoscope*, *The Guide Artists*, and *PoetsArtists*.





TERESA ELLIOTT

Arrival

47" x 33" oil on aluminum



DÁIRE LYNCH

The Call of the Wretched Sea

28" x 20" oil on panel



BRIANNA LEE

Evelyn

19" x 12" charcoal on paper

The Calm Within

36" x 36" oil on panel

I have always been pulled towards figurative representational art. When I was younger, I was constantly attempting to draw narrative portraits with accuracy and realism. Any other mode of expression really didn't speak to me, whereas figurative modes of expressing myself came naturally. It is how I explore my connection to the natural world and humanity as a whole. Empathy and beauty are of great importance to me, as taboo as it may be in some contemporary art circles. But I'm not speaking of purely physical beauty or sentimentality, but rather expressing the intrinsic and often profound beauty in our life experiences.

BRIANNA LEE was born and raised in rural Visalia, CA. She studied contemporary and traditional painting techniques at the Los Angeles Academy of Figurative Art (LAAFA) and in the private atelier of portrait artist Adrian Gottlieb. She received her BFA with honors from the prestigious Laguna College of Art and Design in Laguna Beach, CA.

Ms. Lee has taught for several independent art academies throughout California, while also running her own atelier in Orange County. She is a member of the American Women Artists Association and has been granted awards for her portraits. Ms. Lee has been featured in numerous publications and was selected as one of PoetsArtists's 50 Most Memorable Painters of 2015 and a Finalist and Honorable Mention Award winner in the 13th International Art Renewal Center Salon Competition.

She accepts international portrait commissions and has exhibited her work internationally in various group exhibitions in Toronto, Cincinnati, New York, and more. She is currently painting full-time in her North Visalia studio and travels occasionally for commissions and to offer workshops.



POEM FOR THE GGs

They read that GG stands for “genetic girl”
 but, for them, it has always meant “great grandmother.”
 What has happened to the world they knew growing up?—
 when a man wore a dress, maybe, but underneath
 kept his parts intact. When women lived with one another
 under the cover story that they were sisters or cousins.
 The GGs have outlived their husbands, many
 of their friends, and are now taking care
 of a third generation of little ones.
 Melanoma stitches cross the bridge of one’s nose.
 The other gives rides, one little boy at a time,
 on her walker. The great grandsons love the cane,
 snap and attack one another with “The Grabber.”
 They make a game of picking up the dead
 leaves and downed branches in each GG’s yard.
 When they see a GG carrying anything
 wrapped in tinfoil, they shout “Cake!”
 The GGs didn’t like how brazen their daughters dressed
 and now don’t like the way their granddaughters text.
 They used to bristle at jean-clad teens in church
 but now find themselves also wearing dungarees to Mass.
 They’ve given up heels for New Balance sneakers.
 There was a time they were shocked by curses
 but now find themselves saying, “Oh shit” or “Fuck it.”
 And why not “fuck it” when you have lived
 more than 80 years? Stick shift to automatic.
 Black and white TV to virtual reality. Recipes from books
 replaced by a Google search. They’ve survived
 diet plans and mastectomies, hernias, D&C’s,
 the fad of fake silver Christmas trees.
 They’ve survived recessions, jealousies, leaded paint,
 Watergate, family scandals that now seem quaint.
 They’ve survived ass slaps from their male bosses
 and the guilt of slapping their own children
 which was the way it was done, they say, back then.
 They’ve survived Vietnam, World War II, and Bill O’Reilly.
 (*Please don’t make fun of us*, they plead, when he is finally
 fired from Fox.) The lawlessness of this new world
 scares them—drones dropping bombs from the sky,
 drones delivering Amazon packages, police drones
 peering into windows. Is there more to fear? Or is it
 that they can’t run as fast as they once did?
 They’ve had one man each, both of those men now dead.

One great grandson asks if the GGs are married
to each other. They have a good laugh, but they will never
date again—men always want something and their GG bodies
no longer bend in a way that would be fun.
Sometimes the great grandchildren are a little wild
but they know not to ask the GGs to catch the soccer ball.
The GGs are stopped in the breakdown lane,
where no one sees them except for the AAA dispatcher
delivering a new battery with a five-year warranty.
I don't know if we'll need it to last that long, one GG
will say. She's the GG with a genetic girl's predisposition to joke,
the other GG with a genetic girl's predisposition to laugh.

DENISE DUHAMEL

WHY POETRY?

Poetry is about saying the unsayable, as they say! It eschews sound bites and easy answers. It is a place to dwell where emotion and intellect sing.

DENISE DUHAMEL'S most recent book of poetry is *Scald* (Pittsburgh, 2017). *Blowout* (Pittsburgh, 2013) was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Her first book of prose, lyric essays with Julie Marie Wade, is *The Unrhymables: Collaborations in Prose* (Noctuary Press, 2019). She is a Distinguished University Professor in the MFA program at Florida International University in Miami.





MIRIAM ESCOFET

Kathryn & Milo

29.7" x 24" oil on linen over panel

Portrait of Sophia

27.6" x 19.7" oil on linen over panel

When we paint the human figure we are always painting an aspect of ourselves, when we gaze at the human figure we see shades of ourselves reflected back at us. This is why it is such an enduring subject matter in painting, because through the figure we tell our human story and explore our psyche.

From the artist's point of view, it is the ultimate challenge. Our anatomy is incredibly complex and expressive. Skin in all its complexity of muted colour, transparency and reflectiveness is possibly one of the hardest things to capture in paint. The fact that we are all so intimately familiar with our own human bodies leaves the artist nowhere to hide, any inaccuracy or lack of subtlety in the depiction of the human form becomes at best gauche or at worst a glaring fault in the work.

Personally what really interests me about painting people is being able to explore the vulnerability contained in the human form. When I really study a person's face, I feel I can start to perceive all their hopes, fears, dreams and sadnesses. This personal inner hinterland will be contained in the line of a lip, in the shadows around the eyes or the gesture of a hand and it is to me infinitely fascinating. I am also interested in exploring the possibilities of allegory in portraiture, to create a connection or bridge from the particular to the universal.

MIRIAM ESCOFET is currently most involved in exploring the possibilities of portraiture and its power to communicate deep allegorical and archetypal themes. She was recently awarded first prize at the BP Portrait Award 2018 for "An Angel At My Table," a portrait of her mother which aimed to suggest a sense of space, perspective and time, as well as transmitting and idea of the "Universal Mother." Her work can be found in many private collections.





MIRIAM ESCOFET

Jose Escofet

19.7" x 15.7" oil on linen over panel



SUSANNAH MARTIN

Reservoir

20" x 20" oil on linen



MATTHEW QUICK

The Rules of Engagement

47.2" x 39.4" oil on linen

Utmost Respect

47.2" x 39.4" oil on linen

With their conscious symbolism, historical statues of once-acclaimed figures provide the foundation for a revisionist take on the notions of beauty, pride, and nationalism.

Punctuating an arc through triumph and failure, monuments map the rise and fall of Empires. But I subvert the associations of power and respect imbued in the original sculptures with the addition of ordinary objects. Robbed of their crowns, thrones and icons of deification, aura of emperors and gods dims to become altogether more human.

I reference individual freedom, social control, surveillance and the rulers who fail to act as they speak. In ridiculing them I supplant their initial grandiose affectations, prompting the viewer to see these objects anew and hold up a mirror to contemporary values.

MATTHEW QUICK always painted but managed to distract himself with a few alternative careers. He's worked as a lecturer, art director, and writer, with his first novel short-listed for the Vogel Literature Award.

He's lived in Australia, Europe, and Asia, including several months encamped beneath a grand piano. He's spent nights under stars in India, underground in Bolivia, under surveillance in Burma, and under-nourished in London. His scariest moment was having machine gun shoved in his face during Nepalese anti-monarchy riots, although crashing a paraglider into a forest was also something of a highlight.

Featured in BRW as one of Australia's top 50 artists, in the past few years Matthew has won, or been a finalist for, 80 national juried art awards. He's had 14 solo and more than 100 group shows.





BUKET SAVCI

BBBBB

48" x 48" oil on canvas



BUKET SAVCI

Istanbul Evening

20" x 42" oil on canvas



DIANNE GALL

I'll Be Perfect by Tomorrow

54" x 54" oil on linen – Courtesy of Bernaducci Gallery, NY



SHANE SCRIBNER

Ivet

16" x 16" oil on aluminum



SIMON HENNESSEY

Temporal

13.8" x 13.8" acrylic on layers of museum glass & wood

There's a long tradition of artists using the figure in art, dating back to our prehistoric ancestors who adorned their caves with interpretations of the human figure. I've always been drawn to figurative art and in particular the face... for me, it's the most easily relatable and symbolic thing that portrays our humanity.

As humans, we naturally assess a person and try to figure out their personality and temperament through their facial characteristics, the act of physiognomy, which is always configured within my paintings.

However, in my recent series of paintings, I go beyond the face and analyze the structure beneath it: the skull. I do so in forensic detail, mapping out the textures and shapes that help form our facial identity. The skull has many symbolic meanings within Vanitas art, and I'm using it to suggest memories of our life journey and as part of our existential being.

Born in Birmingham, UK, SIMON HENNESSEY (b. 1973) is a contemporary painter who creates meticulous realist paintings predominately of the human figure and the face.

In his most recent series, Simon is pushing boundaries through juxtaposing realism and abstraction, creating a harmonious balance of where the duality of these contrasting elements merge.

Simon has been working as an artist for almost 15 years and has shown in exhibitions around the world, including New York, Melbourne, Montreal, San Francisco, and London. He has also had his artwork featured in numerous publications, notably *Exactitude: Hyperrealist Art Today* and *Photorealism in the Digital Age*.

During 2018, Simon has exhibited his work in museum shows in Andorra and Brazil. 2019 will also be an exciting year with six scheduled museum exhibitions throughout Spain and Brazil.



When My Poem Was Made Into Film

Fantastic you might say
the soundtrack was an accordion sometimes low
Other times violent with a rusty blow
There's no dancing written in the script
Only reverence with
All the nuns in a row singing their song of innocence
Hold Hands the director shouts
Now they're praying in the snow
Suddenly a crystal ball comes through the sky
To the youngest nun
Showing the man she will leave her religion to love
I wanted to take that actor into my arms
But it was time for a break
In the trailer everyone I ever knew was there
A banquet just for me
See how poets are applauded in Hollywood
I didn't have to lift a finger
But back to work -and wait!
What? they want the nuns to kneel in the snow?
I whisper "Please that's not what I wrote"
"I just want them to stand in a circle"
The producer said there's no future in that
You have too much heart
And for that there's No defense
The director and producer conspired
And said the writer should go seven miles away
Maybe to the edge of a nearby cliff
Or better still go home
I said OK OK I'll write in a scene with dancing
Don't destroy my poem
But I never saw it happen.

THE WORLD IS SO EMPTY

I could fill it up
with buttercups
or cups of tea or
battered biscuits
or lists of buttered
cups or crumpled
Kleenex or suppers
sipping on napkins
or naps or lotioning
skin or how about
swimming or staying
trim or trimming the
bushes or fighting
rush hour or looking
at photos or booking
a flight or flying to
brooks and sitting
on slopes or listing
my house merely
in hopes of moving
back in to live in sin
by remembering him
or maybe applying for

a position depositing
a play in the mail
or thinking of snails
on the wall in
California or surfing
while searching for
whales or stalling
by saying *you all
have lied who
told me time would
ease me of my pain*
or thanking Edna
St. Vincent Millay
for that claim or
wearing dark glasses
to PhD classes.
Would that fill up
the world.



The Mazurka

From the marsh of human discontent,
from the grave of self-doubt,
came a spark of life, a long distance
phone call from
four young Rappers who
knew how I'd been
grieving from lack of fame.
They offered
me a Residency in
South America and they
spoke of my breaking the
mold with my work
in libraries.
They said I'd made quite
a splash on YouTube, but
when I asked if it was
because of my elevated
language, they said,
*to be honest, it's because,
when you danced
your nipples showed through.*
My husband said he'd come with me
and was so proud of my literary excellence.



The Way It Happened

I wanted 1000 candles
For his burial
Because this is
The American Dream
Making the outdoors
Look like the indoors
With extravaganza
But he was so cold
Although still a species
Of the once living
Some version of himself
Uncertain how to understand
What to do in cases like this
I closed his eyes
which once opened my heart.

1000
GRACE CAVALIERI

WHY POETRY?

Poetry is transcendent. It transcends life and death because we can always make something out of both of them, so nothing is lost.

GRACE CAVALIERI is the Poet Laureate of Maryland. Who would have thought this back in Trenton? She founded and still produces "The Poet and the Poem" celebrating 42 years on public radio, now recorded at the Library of Congress; and is the poetry reviewer/columnist for *The Washington Independent Review of Books*.





CONNIE KARLETA SALES

By the Skin of Her Teeth

65" x 48" ink, oil stick, pigment, graphite, charcoal & paper on wood

Killing Fields aka Contemplating Humor V

31" x 21" ink, pigment, graphite, charcoal & paper on wood

It takes courage to stand in front of a mirror and draw the reality of what you see. I begin each drawing in front of a mirror; observing my body. My physical form and mental state, as subject matter, have been offset—balanced if you please—within my art work. The materials I choose to work with directly inform and are informed by the imagery itself. For most of my life, I was a shadow; wrapping myself so tightly in the images of others, I sacrificed any dignity just to breathe. Voice was something unimaginable and frighteningly deadly. Today, my work is my voice. Interested in the oral traditions of story-telling; I draw and paint my own life as it relates to a greater story of the human condition; simultaneous tragedy and joy in perseverance. When a drawing becomes unfamiliar to me, I know it is finished and ready for others to feel and experience my work in relation to their own experiences.

Graduating from Southern Methodist University, CONNIE KARLETA SALES (b. 1973 in Dallas, TX) studied summers in Taos, NM and abroad at University College in Oxford, England. Currently represented by dk Gallery in Marietta, GA, her work is exhibited nationally and collected internationally. From an early age, Connie lived with the aftermath of rape, molestation, and psychological torture; taping her words and images underneath her clothes and discarding them in alleyway dumpsters. As an adult, she survived cancer and now lives within the new norm of a progressive autoimmune neuromuscular disease. Writing and drawing served to ask questions and seek answers. She is the house poetry built, where line quality is created out of experience, and composition emerges as the woven words of a heart's beat. Drawing her words within observation she finds truth, and in truth, Connie finds the transcendent stories of building beauty in our world.





SHARON SPRUNG

Electric Ocean

40" x 40" oil on panel

The figure is the most seductive, complicated, challenging and compelling human subject.

It's my way to connect to the living reality and the multifaceted dimensions of the other: a path to greater humanity and understanding. Gesture, anatomy, emotion, color and value are some of the technical demands that drive and unite this search. Singularly, the painting of flesh is an immersive, life-long task that incorporates the study of method and painting throughout culture and history, the exploration of modern art and the endless, intense observation of people.

How else am I to figure out the world?

SHARON SPRUNG attended Cornell University and studied at The Art Students League and the National Academy of Design.

Besides one-person shows at Gallery Henoah (NY) and O'Kane Gallery (TX), she was part of ACOPAL's "Exhibition of Contemporary American Realism," which traveled to eight museums in China. She was an invited artist in the Cecilia Beaux Forum's first exhibition honoring women whose work elevates modern portraiture and figurative art at the Butler Museum in 2010. She was invited to speak and exhibit in "Self-Portrait and Portrait of an Artist from the 18th to the 21st Century" at the Museum of the Russian Academy of the Arts in St. Petersburg in 2009. Her work has been included in exhibitions at Art Miami, International Art Exposition, Chicago International Art Exposition, Fitchburg Art Museum, Anchorage Art Museum, Rockwell College Art Gallery, and Knoxville Museum of Art. Ms. Sprung was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by The National Academy Museum and School of Fine Arts in 2012. She was appointed a member of the board of the Artist's Fellowship, Inc. in 2011, has received the Purchase Prize and William Bouguereau Award from Art Renewal Center, and won First Place in the annual National Portrait Competition of The Portrait Society.

Her work can be found in numerous private and corporate collections, including AT&T, Bell Labs, Chase Manhattan Bank, Hobart and Smith College, Packer Collegiate Institute, Princeton University, the University of Virginia, Scott Bennett, Shearman & Sterling, the Federal Court House in New York City, and the US House of Representatives in Washington, DC.





SUZY SMITH

Sound of Silence

30" x 24" oil

77

18" x 24" oil

I grew up in a small town in Wyoming, where the only art that was available to me when I was young, was the family bible with all the beautiful images of Jesus, Mary, and the Saints. I didn't know it at the time, but I was looking at some of the greatest painters that have ever lived! I loved the way these paintings made me feel, and I poured over the beauty, anguish, and agony in all the artwork. I decided then I wanted to be an artist, and paint the figure.

I learned to paint in watercolor, and began with still life, since I had two small children at home. But the call to paint the figure never left me, and some 20 years later, I returned to painting the figure. Although I occasionally paint a floral or still life, I feel I still have much more figurative work to do to explore the human condition.

SUZY SMITH is a Wyoming native who has lived in Albuquerque, NM for the past 20 years with stops in Utah and Northern California along the way. She started her career learning to draw and paint in watercolor at the local community college in her hometown of Casper, WY. Smith focused on watercolor still life for many years until she moved to New Mexico and decided to teach herself to paint in oil and get back to her first love: figure painting.

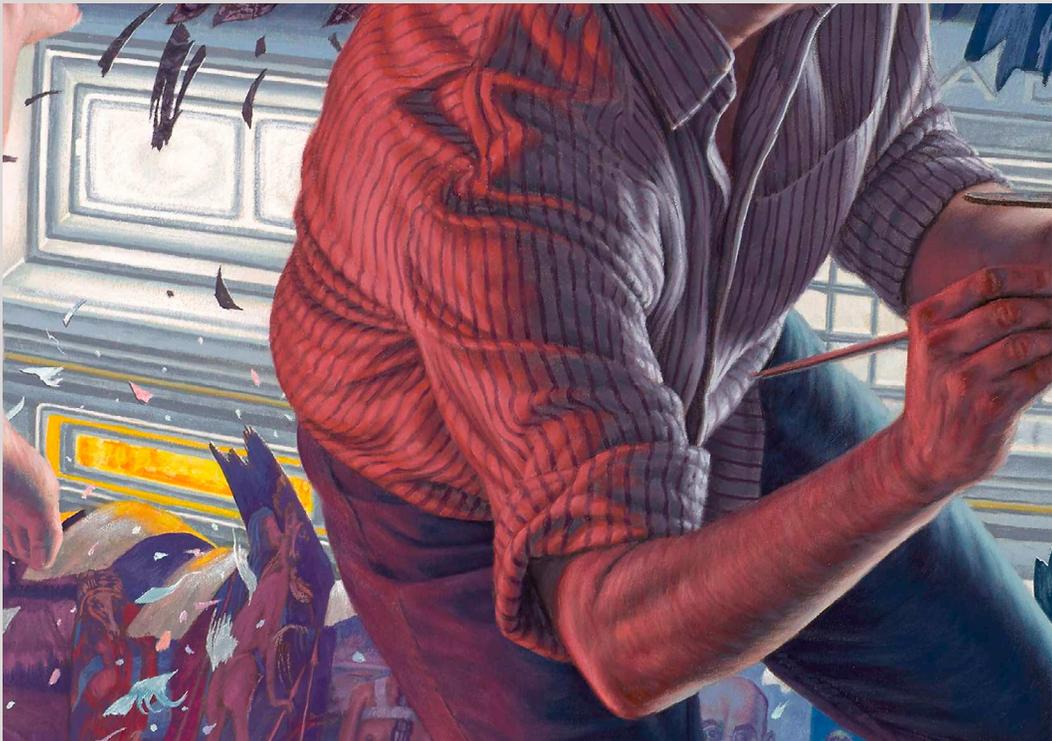
Smith was recently invited to return to her home state for a one-woman retrospective show, *Suzy Smith: Pop Realism*, at the Nicolaysen Art Museum; her work now resides in their permanent collection. One of Smith's most recent paintings, "Americana," was acquired by the Museo de International de Arte, in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Smith has exhibited her work internationally, and her paintings are included in many private and public collections, notably Howard Tullman collection, Dreyer's Grand Ice Cream Corporate Art Collection, and the Kaiser Foundation Art Collection. She is a signature member of the National Watercolor Society.





detail



F. SCOTT HESS

The Dream of Art History

96" x 54" oil on canvas

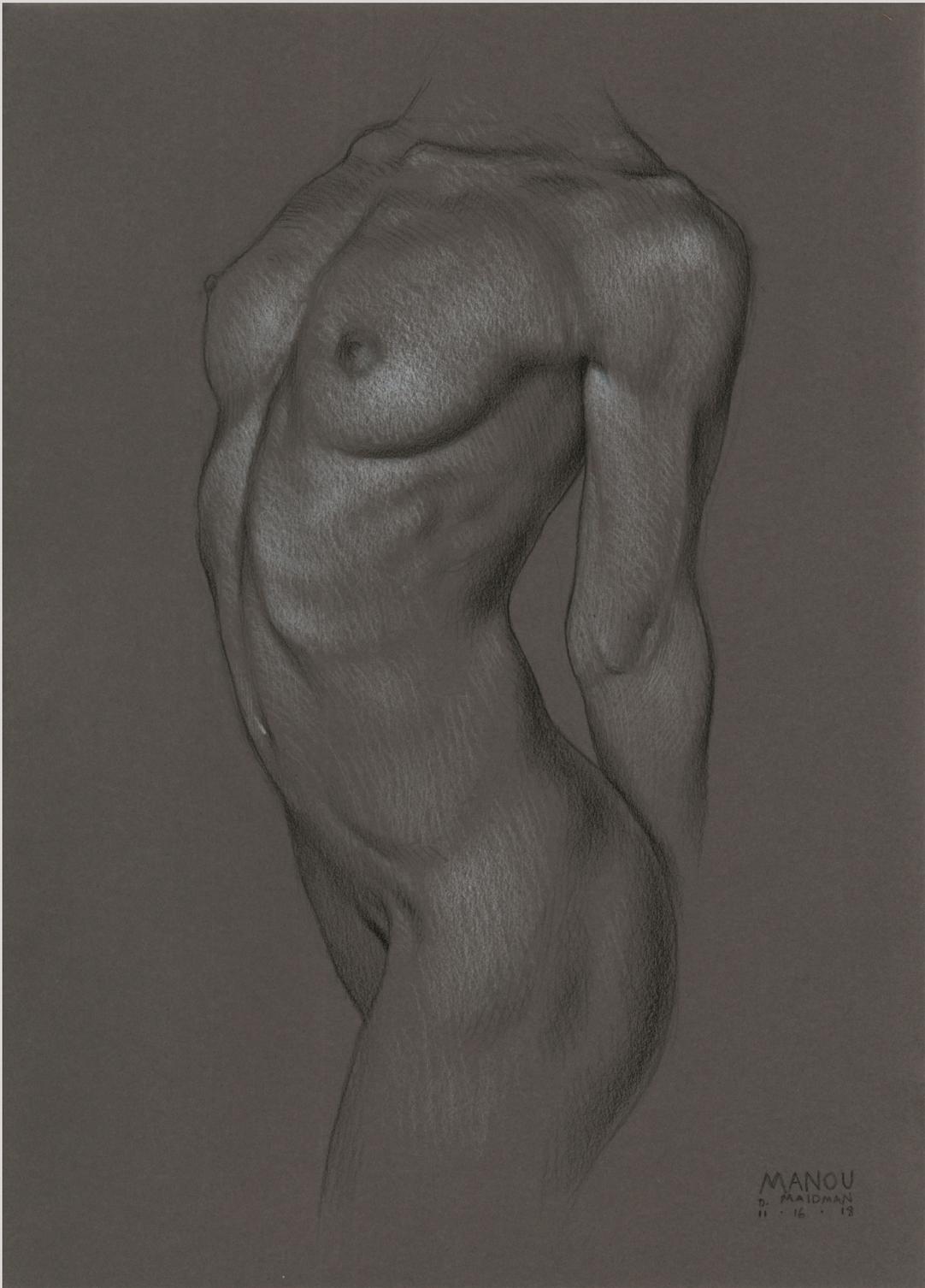
I've always used the figure in my art. Only depictions of the human figure are capable of expressing the psychological and emotional range of subjects that inhabit my head. It is not the body's beauty that I wish to convey, but instead utilize its ability to directly transfer very complex meanings to my audience.

F. SCOTT HESS (b. 1955) was born in Baltimore, received a Bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and studied five years at the Vienna Academy of Fine Art.

In 1979, Hess had his first solo exhibition in Vienna, quickly followed by exhibitions in Austria, Germany, and France. In 1981, he received one of Austria's most prestigious awards for artists, the Theodor Koerner Award. In 1984, Hess moved to his current home of Los Angeles and, in 1985, had his first American solo exhibition, followed by over 100 group and solo exhibitions, including venues in Europe, Taiwan, and Iran. His work is in the public collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Orange County Museum of Art, Long Beach Museum of Art, San Jose Museum of Art, the Crocker Art Museum, and the Smithsonian Institute, among others. In 1990, he received a Western States Art Federation award, and, in 1991, a J. Paul Getty Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts Visual Arts Fellowship. In 2014, a retrospective at two venues—Begovich Gallery at Cal State Fullerton and Municipal Art Gallery of Los Angeles—featured selections from 40 years of Hess's work. His massive family history project, *The Paternal Suit*, toured the country with venues at the Halsey Institute (SC), Mobile Museum of Art (AL), Long Beach Museum of Art (CA), and Knoxville Museum of Art (TN). A one-hour documentary by Shirin Bazleh, *F. Scott Hess: A Reluctant Realist*, was released in 2018.

Hess is represented by Koplín Del Río in Seattle.

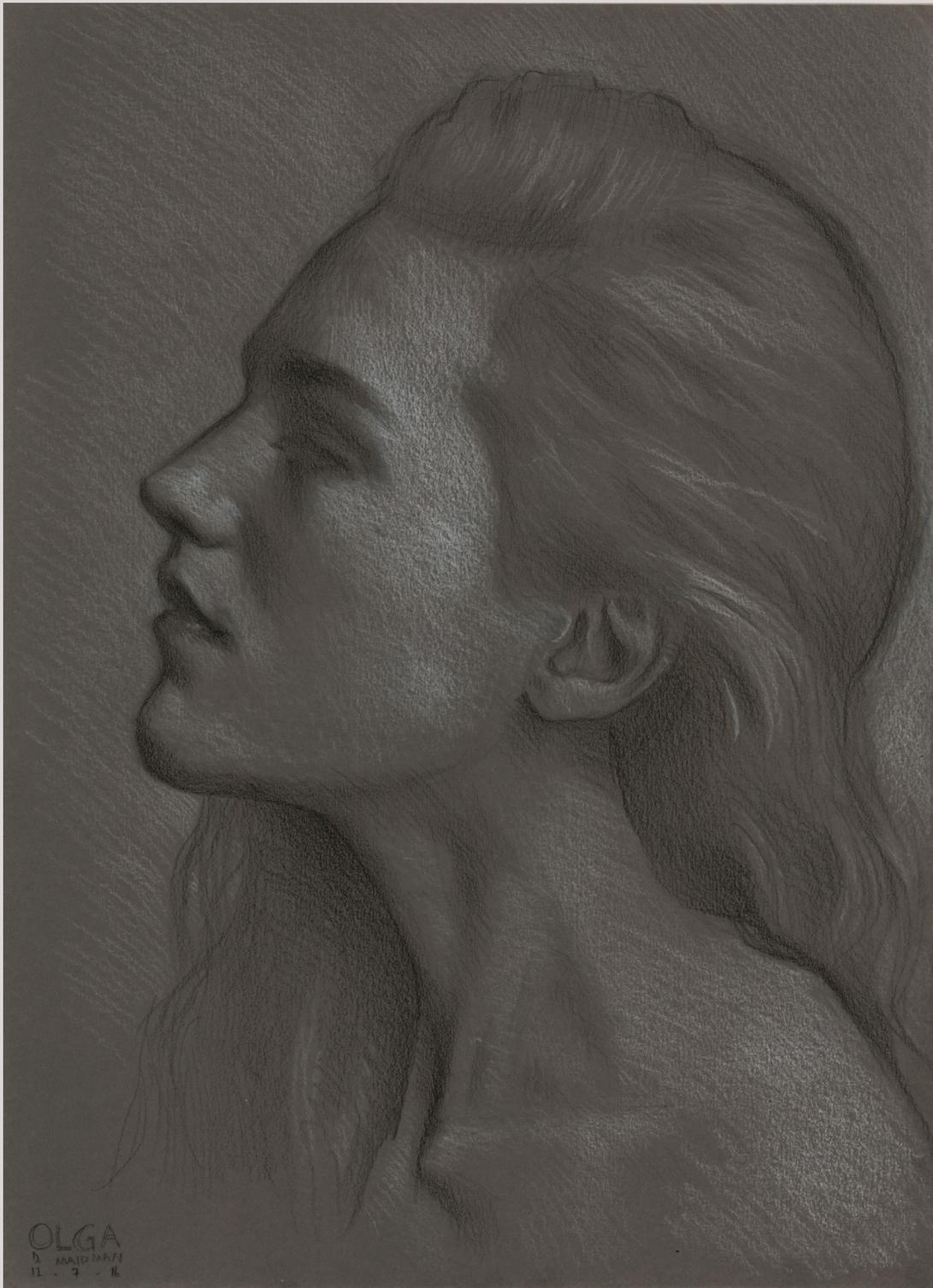




DANIEL MAIDMAN

Manou Stretching

11" x 15" pencil on paper



DANIEL MAIDMAN

Olga in Profile

11" x 15" pencil on paper

Can We Get Extra Hot Sauce Packets?

There's a special sadness
when a significant liberation occurs
in a drive thru—how
trivially rebellious to tear
up your expired draft
card and hand it through
the driver's side window
of a rusted out Honda—
shredded garbage into the palm
of a politely oblivious attendant
who hands you in return
a bag of tacos.

My art was unflattering self-recognition.

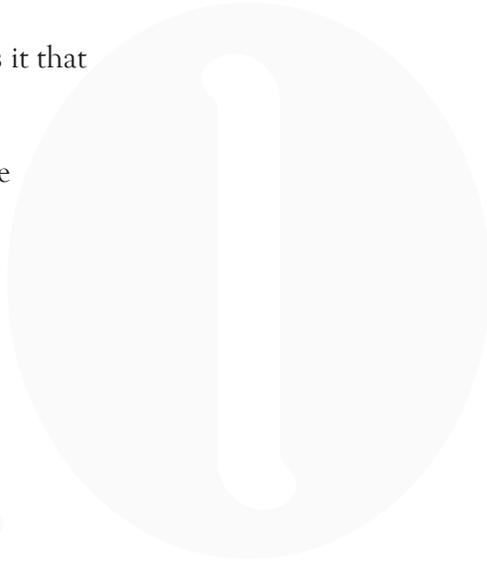
It wasn't nearly enough.

The friend I was with
has since died.

The United States government
doesn't even issue draft cards anymore
though we fight that same war
all these years later.

In the intervening time
it's not so much
depression

though the doctor calls it that
as an immense
neutrality a neutrality
the exact shape and size
of human history
that unfurls inside
each of my many cells.



Dead and Alive

I'd been peeing off that side deck forever
 –peering moon obscured by overgrown flora
 so it felt like a private experience
 though the splashing might've been
 recognizable to a neighbor or passerby—
 until one night a bright beam of light
 descended from the sky.

I was on the phone providing basic information
 to a salesperson reluctantly agreeing
 to replace my warrantied stereo speakers.
 I'd just unzipped and released
 when the stream suddenly glistened
 and the ivy exploded in pitchy white
 and to my horror I saw
 a spider the size of my face
 rising on luminous filaments
 from the festering underworld
 where my landlord Nona Marigold
 planted roses with no sense of irony
 before moving to Hawaii
 to harvest coffee beans as therapy
 for neck and soul as the world began
 to close up shop at the end of that era.

I for one had been wondering
 if I might already be dead for the most part
 when that unreal light invaded the moment.
 Instinctively whimpering at cilia
 gleaming on the spider's rosy thighs
 I recalled a Raid can under the sink.
 With surprising acuity I pinched my flow
 nimbly zipped, scampered, snatched and
 blasted that arachnid with aerosol poison
 never compromising the new speaker conversation.
 I understood that such an adept killer
 could only qualify as *alive*.
 Phone pinned to shoulder I stood
 holding the cylinder in light originating
 at a police helicopter that eventually
 moved along, scanning the neighborhood's
 shadowy entryways, startling cats
 from low-lying shrubbery.

The next morning I learned a security officer
 had been murdered with a hatchet
 just a few blocks away
 so while that thick spider
 floated in a poison cloud
 a man bled out and a suspect fled
 under a blanket in the back of a Saturn.

Earthquakes began in the foothills
 opening shafts into the mantle.
 A sinkhole swallowed a duplex.
 The whole world seemed to quiver.
 On its way to the football stadium
 the officer's substantial funeral procession
 funneled past my side deck where I
 no longer expose my tender parts to air.
 Speakers arrived and a singer sang
 everything makes sense in ten
 thousand year increments. Captured
 at a Utah Denny's, the suspect admitted
 he'd always feared his nature.
 Found guilty, his sentence was life.

A Memory of Authentic Speaking

after *Stations*, by Jay Meek

For our morning conversations
 I crossed the switchyards
 behind my apartment on foot.
 I dodged the yard man while cars thundered
 joining for the run called the Empire Builder.
 Tagged out hoppers piled high
 with frac sand bound for the badlands
 reflected in the glass of corporate
 centers where techies tested unmanned aircraft
 deployed in wars called Freedom.
 Those trains shook the shelved bottles
 at West Side Liquors. Dogs
 in the trailer park chased cars
 to the edge of beet fields
 that supplied the sugar plant north of Fargo.
 When those freighters finally rose
 from the valley, beyond the shores
 of an ancient lake they say
 will fill again this century
 they churned through distances I'd only imagined
 toward a mountain crossing
 I hoped to see for myself.

In his own travels, my teacher arrived
 at many stations: a lighted platform
 where he glimpsed human tenderness,
 an auction of religious artifacts
 lit for display like supermarket filets,
 a municipal storage room where a file revealed
 the fate of ancestors lost at sea.

Once, at dusk, distant antelope
 far off on a snow-covered plain
 watching a train enter a tunnel, where a traveler
 struggling to maintain faith, purpose, love
 for his own body as a vessel
 began to sing and continued singing
 through that dark interval to emerge
 in a world transformed
 by light arriving from another time.

Mornings I arrived at his small office
 in that old building, I sat in a hard chair
 with the year 1934 etched on a brass plate
 screwed into the wooden arm rest—
 the year my mother was born.
 Light softened through the old pine tree
 outside the dusty window. Stacks of actual
 paper and a page curled out of a typewriter
 roller on the side table by the desk.
 It felt like a privilege then: speaking
 the day's first words in shared wonder
 at the journeys they carry beyond our lives.
 But how obscure it seems now—
 to meet and haltingly describe, uncertainly
 hope, value a kind but discerning appraisal.
 I wish I could hold more firmly
 to a belief in the value of those moments
 but with the economies and conflicts
 elections and extinctions, even
 a memory of authentic speaking
 produces a kind of shame.

Jesus It's Fucking Hot Says Dave

it's true it's un
seasonable but imagine death
valley fuck
imagine the actual sun
the un
relenting hate being
the engine
of your own ex
tinction

WILLIAM STOBB

WHY POETRY?

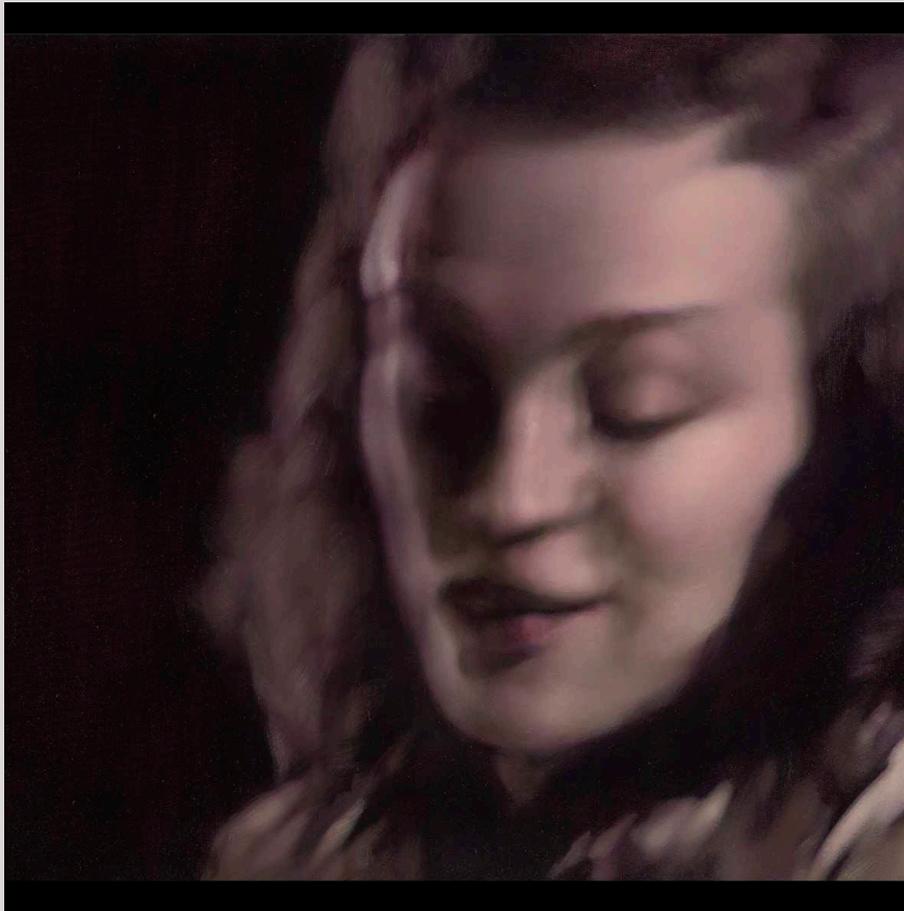
I'm conflicted about writing. When I was young and encountered contemporary poetry, my automatic response was to want to write my own poems like those of Dean Young, Jay Meek, Mary Ruefle, and many other poets whose work excited me. Since then, if I go very long without writing something that I halfway like, I feel shitty. When I read Wallace Stevens' "The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words," I recognized something he said: that poetry helped people maintain an inner integrity against the "pressure of reality." Without creating some space for reflection, consciousness, & reverie, life was like "watching the movements of people in the intervals of a storm," and that's sort of how it feels to me. Still, I fight with myself about it—I feel kind of stupid sometimes about continuing to write creatively, when there are many other things that could be done. This shame is the thing I'm trying to describe at the end of "A Memory of Authentic Speaking."

WILLIAM STOBB is the author of the forthcoming *You Are Still Alive* (42 Miles Press, 2019), as well as the National Poetry Series selection *Nervous Systems* and *Absentia*, both from Penguin Books. Stobb works on the editorial staff of the groundbreaking zine *Conduit* and its book division, Conduit Books & Ephemera. He teaches on the Creative Writing faculty at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.





detail



GEOFFREY LAURENCE

Nightingale

86" x 26" oil on canvas

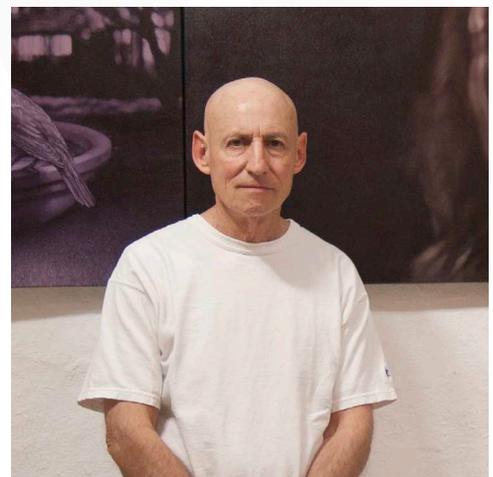
I believe when an artist puts a person in a painting, it immediately becomes a statement about humanity and all people. The history of art has always been mostly figures in landscapes, whether they be kings, queens, saints or goddesses. After Hiroshima in 1945 and the birth of the nuclear age, the figure disappeared almost completely in art until the 1990s, signifying in my opinion the enormous and incomprehensible reality of mankind's new ability to cease life altogether. I was a young teenager during the Cuban missile crisis, and I believe it had a significant effect on me. From 1965 onwards, against the demands of the contemporary artworld at that time that was more taken up with graphic images of soup cans, I felt compelled to make a statement against this reality and driven towards using the figure in my work as much as possible, as the old masters had done. Now things have reversed completely, and the art world seems finally to be embracing the figure once again.

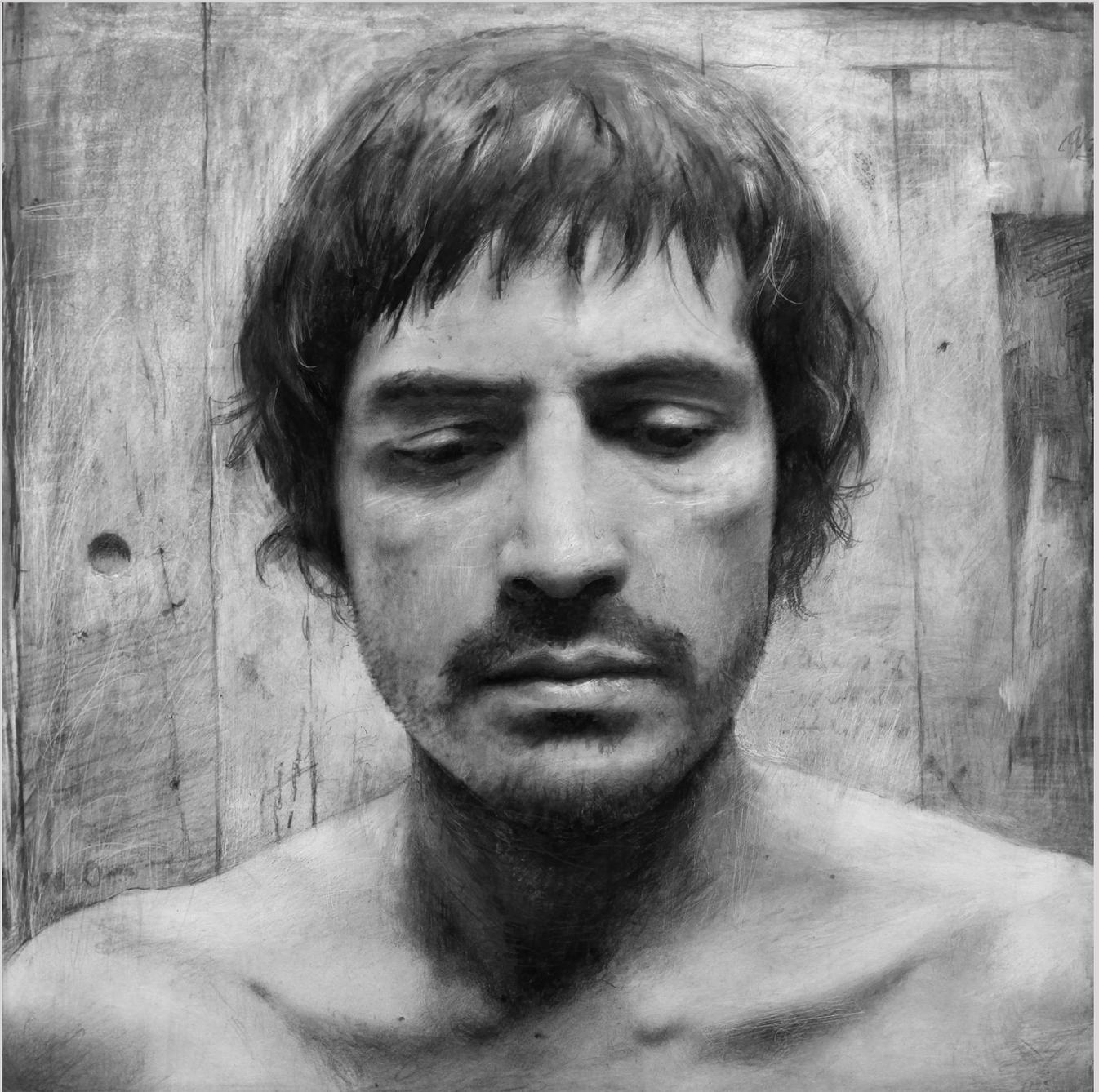
GEOFFREY LAURENCE has been drawing and painting the figure since 1965. He works in pastel, charcoal and oil paint.

He trained in painting, graphic design, photography, and printmaking in London from 1965 to 1972 at the Byam Shaw School of Art, London College of Printing and St. Martins School of Art and received his LCAD and BA in painting there. He spent the next 20 years concentrating on drawing and painting, working exclusively from life and specifically with the figure while also working freelance in the allied arts fields of illustration, photography, fashion, and interior design.

He attended the New York Academy in 1993, receiving his MFA *cum laude* and relocated to Santa Fe in 1996. Since then, he has continued to work with the figure in drawings and paintings and his ongoing *Holocaust Series* and has taught painting, drawing and anatomy in New York, New Mexico, Florida, and Washington State.

His work is in museums and public collections in both the USA and UK.





RYAN SHULTZ

Self Portrait (Pensive)

8" x 8" graphite & ink on panel



DIRK DZIMIRSKY

Nothing Stays the Same

47.2" x 63" charcoal & acrylic on canvas



MICHELE MURTAUGH

Infinite Possibilities

72" x 72" oil on canvas

The human form is a full recording of its history. The features tell of her family, her marks tell of her experiences, the gesture expresses a feeling, and her eyes, well if you can capture them, will tell you of her dreams. In painting the figure, I am trying to discover much of my forgotten history.



MICHELE ANN MURTAUGH, originally from Glendale, AZ and currently residing in Sacramento, CA, is an award-winning emerging contemporary artist. She recently completed a sixty-foot by forty-foot mural as a gift to the City of Sacramento. Her works have been featured at Marin Museum of Contemporary Art and several juried shows in the US and Europe. The minimalist art of Ellsworth Kelly and Carmen Herrera inspires her. The play of negative space is a specific shape, which promotes the feeling of uncluttered atmosphere and is just as integral as the detailed figure. The energized gestures indicate a moment in time and the figures themselves as strong, agile, and vulnerable.





STEPHANIE DESHPANDE

Infestation

30" x 30" oil on linen

The Traveler

40" x 30" oil on linen

Although I enjoy capturing the beauty of a floral arrangement or a still life, my favorite subject to paint is the human form. Not only is there beauty in the exterior but also beauty in the mysteries of the human mind. Whether depicting a solitary figure or several figures, the psychological component is the most fascinating to me. We innately empathize with the individual, allowing us to relate to the situation. A painting of the figure is compelling because it reveals shared experiences that are less about an individual and more about the human condition.

STEPHANIE DESHPANDE is a representational painter living in northern New Jersey. She is best known for her psychological portraits and narrative paintings. Her work combines her love of realism with personal allegories. She creates paintings that unearth hidden emotions and capture the quiet drama of the world around her.





RILEY DOYLE

Reconnect

72" x 48" oil on panel

I think I was initially attracted to figurative work because the figure seemed like a subject that was impossible to master. I may be at the beginning of my career, but I think this pursuit of mastery will last a lifetime, and to me that is very exciting. Lately I have been painting figurative landscape compositions and it has been so interesting to see how the figures affect the context of the environment and how the environment affects the context of the figures. Their relationship to each other is very intriguing and something I am only beginning to really explore.

RILEY DOYLE (b. 1990) was born and raised in Colorado. He was exposed to art very early on by his mother, an artist and high school art teacher. He has been drawing and image making from the age of 10. He spent most of his high school days in either the photography dark room or the computer lab working with Photoshop and Illustrator. Both played an important role in developing his interest in composition. He attended Metropolitan State University of Denver for printmaking from 2011 to 2014, where he was able to reach further back into traditional printmaking techniques. In 2013, Riley attended a two-week workshop at Anthony Ryder's Santa Fe studio, which became a catalyst for his technical training in observation and traditional drawing and painting media. In 2014, he moved to Seattle to attend Georgetown Atelier. He finished the classical three-year program in two years. In Summer 2016, Riley attended the Hudson River Fellowship. In 2017, he was awarded the Stobart Foundation Grant, which helped him to produce his first group of large-scale, multifigural landscape compositions. His current work draws from both his figurative training as well as his plein air practice. Riley is based in Seattle.





GUSTAVO RAMOS

Winter Window

18" x 24" oil on panel

I am fascinated by the idea of turning a flat surface and a handful of pigments into what seems to be a living, breathing thing. Almost as if an attempt of alchemy, I think this visual transformation of matter demonstrates the intellect of a human being. I want to add my unique contribution to the figurative tradition and continue this ever-present narrative of the human condition.

GUSTAVO RAMOS (b. 1993 Paraná, Brazil) is a realist painter whose work shows deep interest in modernist design. Though academically trained, the manner in which the artist creates space is much more akin to the visual concepts that modernists like Hopper, de Chirico, and Morandi were addressing. But in contrast, Ramos's focus lies on the figure. His interest in figurative work arises from his experiences as a Brazilian immigrant moving to the United States with no English fluency. This non-verbal period refined Ramos's sensitivity to the subtleties of facial and other physical expressions, which now play a major role in his paintings.

Gustavo Ramos is a three-time recipient of the Western Heritage Museum's Stacey Scholarship. His work has been featured in several publications, including *The Artist's Magazine*, *Southwest Art*, and *International Drawing Annual*. Ramos currently resides and maintains a studio in Salt Lake City.



The orgasm grows sad

so very sad. How can she survive if everyone is staring at their computer screens instead of her? She thinks and thinks. Maybe she can become a poet or an artist. Maybe she can join an artist community or take classes and give color and meaning to her life. She stares out the window at a yellow finch swooping across the meadow. She opens her windows, her doors, her mind. She steps outside and flaps her arms slowly, watching as the earth disappears beneath her feet.

Once upon a time an orgasm fell in love with her writing professor

Yes, *I fell in love with him*, the orgasm confessed. *Every student did*. But she thought she was special. She thought he liked her best. After all, he told her that she was unique. That she was the most talented of all. But then he sliced her open, his words like fire ants traveling deep inside her, making tunnels and nests. When there was nothing left to sting or bite, when there was no warmth left inside her, and she had become but a filmy bride, a cloud, a fragment of moonlight, a single line, they left her. So did he. That, she learned later, is how poets are made.

The orgasm reads a book of recipes

on self-healing, written by a priest. The first ingredient is silence. She tries her best to hush. The second is black cape. She covers herself from head to toe in shame. The third, a magnifying glass, that she may see herself and despair. She closes her eyes and falls asleep, a wet rag over her forehead. Outside the window of her dream, a woman is painting a flowering pear tree. With each brush stroke, the tree fills with song and leaves, and the orgasm climbs it limb by limb as the wind fools with her flame red hair.

The Orgasm Writes a Short Biography of Nin

after Frank O'Hara

As a child, Nin played
alone. She hated birthdays,
Barbie and the freckles on
her nose. Animals
were her best friends.
At night she stayed awake
and spoke with ghosts.

When I first visited her,
she hid beneath the sheets,
ashamed.
She told friends
she'd never heard of me.
Even then, she lied.

Now here I am,
the author of her life.

The Banned Orgasm

In the town where I grew up, orgasms were against the law. The women dressed in heavy black cloaks. On windy days they looked like dark sails on the streets. If they exposed a wisp of hair, an ankle, a sliver of wrist, they were sent away. Locked up. Sometimes their clitori were cut off. (Yes, clitori, the plural of clitoris. Every woman had more than one back then. If she was smart, she kept the extras for rainy days.) How can I explain?

By the time I was twelve, I wanted an orgasm. *Just one*, I said. I knew it was a bad idea. The men tried to convince me to behave. They explained the risks. Who knows what could happen to a girl such as me? A girl whose hair floated free like a cloud? A girl who let the birds nest inside her blouse? Besides, they said, God never had an orgasm. Why should I? Did I dare to make him jealous? they asked.

Yes! I whispered softly. Yes! Yes! Yes!

The Suicide Artist

When I was a girl, my mother taught me that virginity is sacred. Virginity is a present a girl must keep for her future spouse, a present only he should unwrap. *You must be careful*, she explained. *You don't want a man to discover you've already taken off all the bows, the ribbons, and tape. You don't want to give him something used or second-hand.*

That was the first time I realized how tightly wrapped I was. How taped and bound with string. How I was already owned by a man I didn't know. At night, when Mother was asleep, I peeled back my layers, little by little. Who is in there? I wondered. And what? I was careful, so careful, I reasoned that I could always rewrap myself. Or feign innocence. Pretend I'd never seen the stars, never climbed up and up to the rooftops just to fling myself into the darkness. *This time*, I thought night after night, *yes, this time I will die!*

NIN ANDREWS

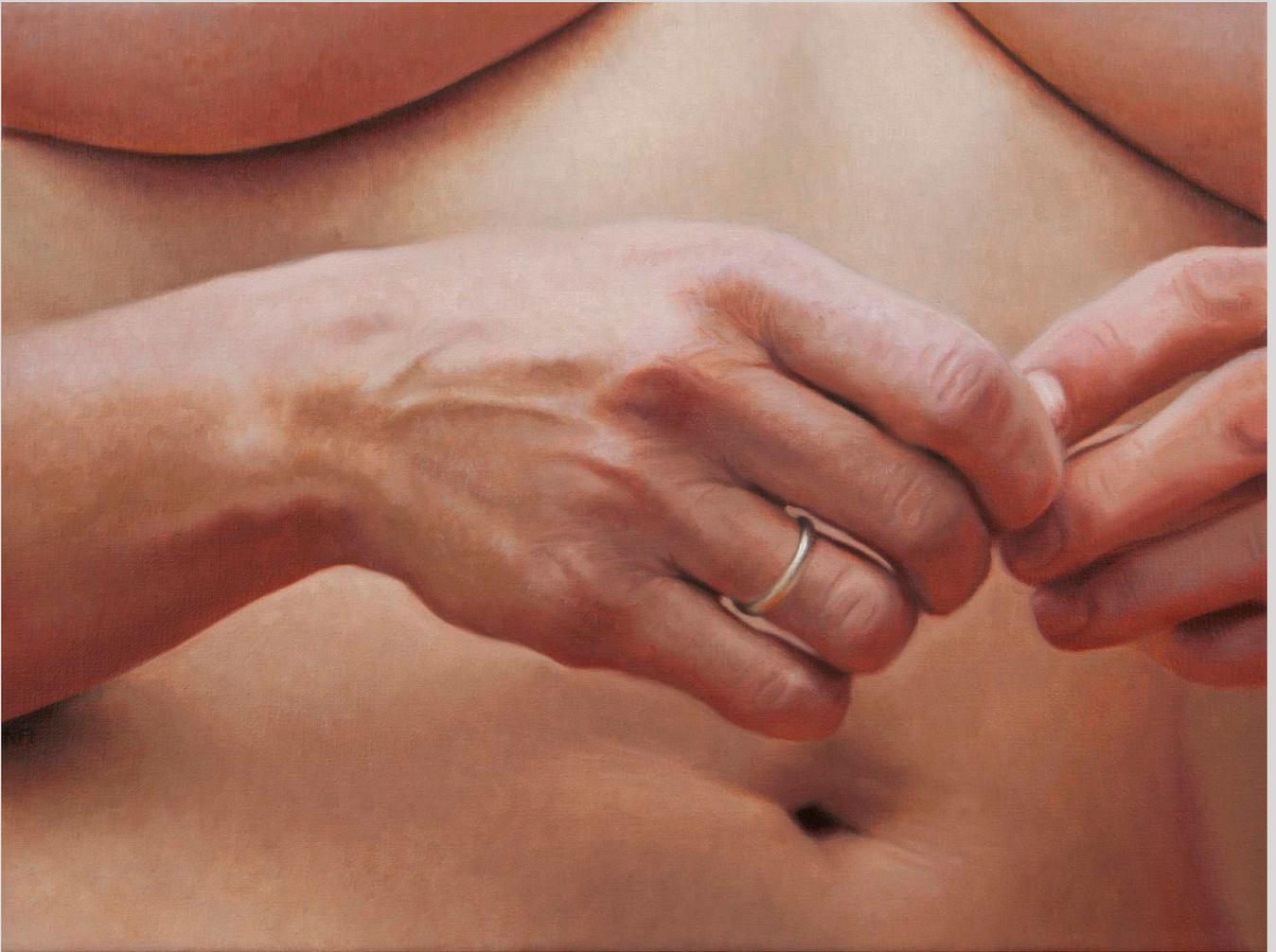
WHY POETRY?

I like to imagine that someone else is writing my poems. I can see her in my mind—upstairs typing away at odd hours of the day and night, saying whatever she pleases. Unlike me she doesn't suffer from cultural limitations and personal inhibitions. She is not easily depressed, and she doesn't worry about what others will say or think or do. She enjoys being the opposite of socially acceptable. Normal. Decent. If she can offend you, she probably will. I love this other because she's completely free. But only when she writes poetry.

For some reason, I don't know why—if I am writing fiction or nonfiction, I can't break away from personal reality and silly concerns. Poetry is the one genre where I can step out of my clothes, my skin, my identity, my mind. I can examine things for what they are, and if it suits me, let them go.

NIN ANDREWS' poems have appeared in many literary journals and anthologies including *Ploughshares*, *Agni*, *The Paris Review*, and four editions of *Best American Poetry*. She is the author of seven chapbooks and seven full-length poetry collections. Her most recent book, *Miss August*, was published by CavanKerry Press in 2017.





NADINE ROBBINS

Me Too

12" x 9" oil on linen



DANIELA KOVAČIĆ

Christina

48" x 60" oil on linen



DANIELA KOVAČIĆ

Sojourner I

48" x 60" oil on linen



ISABELLE BALLARD

Austin in the Woods in November

14" x 24" pastel

I came to paint the figure as part of a natural progression in my artistic education. I am only two years out of college where the painting curriculum centered on life drawing sessions. While I was in school, I fell in love with the feeling of connection to another person while I drew them and redrew them. Because I live in a remote area, far away from any kind of art “scene,” finding models is extremely difficult. This means that everyone I draw now is someone who trusts me very much. I have a stronger sense of obligation to my model and to the work I create. I want my drawings and paintings to turn out well, not just because I like nice drawings and paintings, but because I want the model to be proud of the work they helped make.

ISABELLE BALLARD is a realist painter living and working in Kentucky. Born in 1994 in Louisville, she was the first child of an unlikely pair. Her mother is an American professor from Kentucky. Her father is a Nicaraguan truck driver, who moved to Costa Rica during at the outset of the Sandinista Revolution. Their union was brief but produced two children, who grew up with strong connections to both sides of their family. Isabelle attended seven different elementary schools in Kentucky, Costa Rica, and Mexico. She was a perpetual outsider in communities that relied on insulation and tradition. Her paintings draw on the isolation she experienced in childhood and the influence of her family's Catholic faith over her perception of the world. In 2018, she received a grant from the Kentucky Foundation for Women to paint a series of self-portraits exploring Latinx identity in the rural United States. Her current work depicts figures in and around the forested landscapes of Kentucky.





SILVIO PORZIONATO

Ultimo Atto #Blackseries 24

47.4" x 70.9" oil on canvas

Ultimo Atto #Blackseries 25

47.4" x 70.9" oil on canvas

I paint the picture for many reasons... for example, I love painting the skin, the flesh... much more than painting *things!*

I like to recollect the human soul with the sole force of the gaze.

It is as if I wanted to tell the story of each individual in a single painted image. Or the story that "we" want to see inside.

The painted figures close-up have a dreamlike and mystical sense. They are portraits of figures that do not exist in reality, even if I use images produced by photographic shots of real people.

They are images of souls in the world.

SILVIO PORZIONATO (b. 1971) was born in Moncalieri, Italy. He is a figurative painter who prefers oil paint on large canvases.

Silvio graduated from art school, then served for a decade as head designer for an important Italian company. Eventually, he decided to start a new life in the silence of the countryside, close with nature and art. Within a year he had received the Mondadori Art Prize, won the critics' prize in Saluzzo Art, and had a work acquired for permanent placement in the Museum of Urban Art in Turin. In 2011, Silvio was selected for the 54th Venice Arts. In 2013, for MACS (Museum of Contemporary Art in Sicily), he realized three installations named "Temporal Code," which was comprised of 112 paintings that reflected the different ages of man from childhood to old age.

His most recent solo and group exhibitions have been held in Hong Kong, Miami, Chicago, London, Paris, Bogotá, New York, Seoul, and Istanbul. In Italy, Silvio is represented by Liquid Art System of Franco Senesi based in Capri, Anacapri, Positano, London, and Istanbul.





KIMBERLY DOW

Beguiled

30" x 27" oil

I paint the figure because I can not imagine anything else being able to say or tell as many different stories as humans can. Body language, hand position, facial expressions—they all allow for a subtle or blatant weaving of emotions. I am a voyeur at heart. My obsession with people and their stories seems never-ending. Whether it is acting out a narrative or just expressing how someone sees themselves, people are just plain fascinating.

Knowing she would make her living as an artist since she was a child, KIMBERLY DOW has been gallery-represented and selling her work since she was 19. With some college studies, self-study, and workshops with artists she admires, she has crafted her figurative paintings to express narratives in a modern realism style. Her voyeuristic obsession with people and their stories continues. The narrative figures, nudes, and portrait commissions she paints from her mountaintop studio in North Carolina hang in collections around the world.





JUNE STRATTON

Harper – Camouflage

36" x 36" oil on linen



JUNE STRATTON

Maggie – Watcher

20" x 20" oil on linen

Engagement Zone

Wounds appear—
stinging garnet petals,
their thorns bedding in and down

beneath my notice,
thieves having stolen comfort

who remain 'til ache lifts
and browns to flake away

reminding me of extremity's
exposure to edges and impact,

keeping the closer, the meatier
safe behind barricades of frontier bone

and the necessity of skin, though thin.

Show Link

Eyes to genitals must be
the appropriate correspondence

for these appreciators
of the performers on the low stage

the common level must communicate
creative force emanating from ovary

or testicle, which the watchers,
a foot or so below crave

particularly when the notes struck,
plucked, or sung begin to ensnare

that privileged front, that early row,
the union consummating, the standers

in satisfaction, the new life rings
for ninety-minutes in decibel birth.

Need of Direction

Teen males must have sprayed
these spurting phalluses

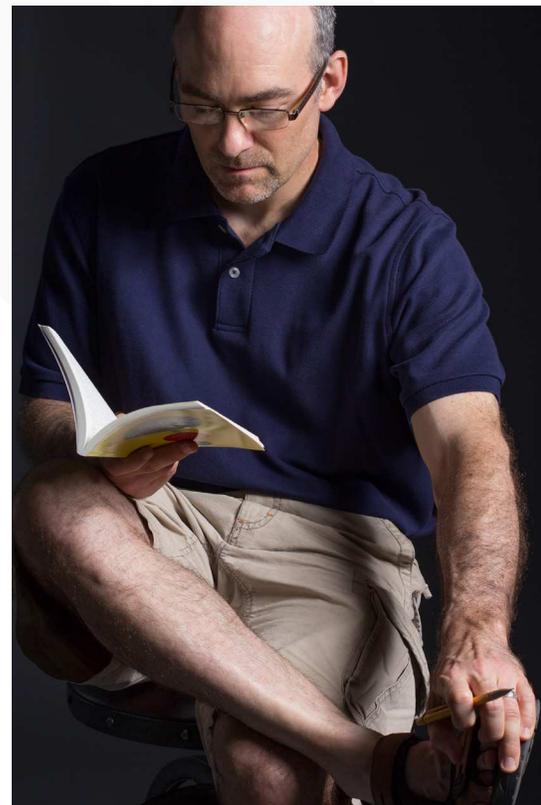
pointing to power, progeny,
and progress toward the goal,

so thoughtful were they
in their lined creations,

youthful guides on the bicycle trail,
whose asphalt would not yield

a hint, silent in its flat face
that only led by lying open,

too sparse for those without a clue.



Hanging Tough

Inverted though I may be,
strung up, the day's nooses
on each ankle

and yielding blood through
fingertip incisions, it only drops
a globe at a time,

the interval too large to drain
me if I can limit the cuts
and contain them

to capillary depth. Though the pressure
in skull will bulge my forehead's
branching veins,

I'll consider it just gymnastics,
convince myself I'm world-class
and leading the field in the event.

Preferably Impervious

Art should be hard, watertight,
repelling the leak of the lugubrious,
dollops to melt the fine, tempered frame,

shell, and core of steel skill
worked and quenched to withstand
those gnawing drops of over-sentiment

ever skulking, teary-eyed
for immediate ingress,

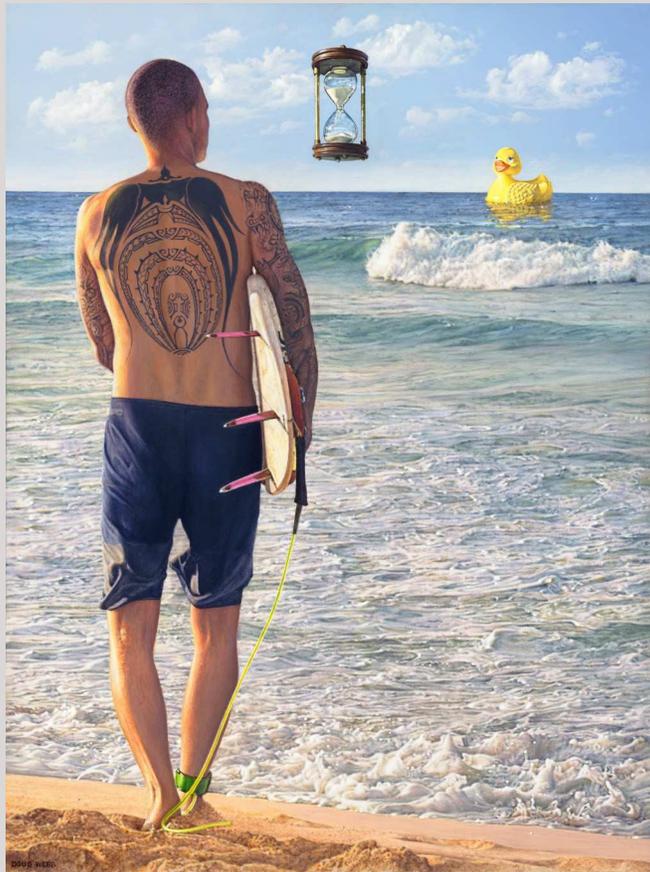
warping the righted form to putty
so forcing the once-tight
to falling down.

JOHN ZEDOLIK

WHY POETRY?

~because writing feels as if I'm catching hold of the currents that run through our life, a live wire that the right words in the right combination can catch like nothing else—I suppose poetry makes me feel electrified and as if I'm also completing some of the circuits. I'm a receiver and a transmitter. There's nothing like the pins and needles that run through my brain when I receive the inspiration/shock: from cosmos to me and back out, transformed, shaped, back out into the cosmos. I've been changed by the world and the words, and I hope to change the world a bit as well.

JOHN ZEDOLIK: For 13 years, I taught English and Latin in a private school. Eventually, I wrote a dissertation that focused on the pragmatic comedy of the *Canterbury Tales*, thereby completing my Ph.D. in English. Currently, I am an adjunct instructor at a number of universities in Pittsburgh. However, I have had many jobs in my life, including archaeological field assistant, obituary writer, and television-screen-factory worker, which—I hope—have contributed in positive ways to my writing. I have published poems in such journals as *The Alembic*, *Ascent Aspirations* (CAN), *The Bangalore Review* (IND), *Common Ground Review*, *Orbis* (UK), *Pulsar Poetry Webzine* (UK), *Transom*, and in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. I have a full-length collection forthcoming in July 2019. My iPhone is my primary poetry notebook, and I hope my use of technology in regard to this ancient art form continues to be fruitful.



DOUG WEBB

Mid Life

12" x 16" acrylic on linen

Break Every Chain

16" x 20" acrylic on linen

The figure, with a surreal influence, dominated my work when I first started on my journey as a full-time artist 40 years ago. Eventually I focused more on objects to convey surreal social commentary. Since my association with *PoetsArtists*, I've gone back to my roots. Although I haven't fully abandoned my use of objects, I've broadened my perspective and rediscovered the joy of painting the human figure.

Born in Istanbul, Turkey in 1946, DOUG WEBB is an American self-taught painter known for creating a hybrid of surrealism by juxtaposing Magritte-like oversized objects within scenes and shifts of scale to create meaningful metaphor in a hyperrealistic style.

He currently works and resides in Calabasas, CA.





MARY CHIARAMONTE

Remember Me

24" x 18" oil on linen

Because of my upbringing in a very isolated area of West Virginia, I have always found myself drawn to others' personal story. We only had one another: my older brother, my twin sister, my mother, father and me. We relied on our self-sufficiency; everything we ate was raised by our hand. I helped work the farm as a child to produce vegetable gardens, fruit trees, honeybees for our sugar, goats for our dairy and rabbits for our meat. We rarely saw others and I began to become fascinated by their lives. In due time, I was writing stories about the people we met, which were of course, accompanied by illustrations. This creative foundation has since progressed into the narrative and figurative intent in my paintings today.

Born in 1979 West Virginia, MARY CHIARAMONTE was raised helping her family live from and farm their land in an isolated area. She had no TV or other distractions and was encouraged to entertain herself with objects in nature. Left with the workings of her imagination and observations of the world around her, she translated her understanding into paintings. She continues this practice today, taking much of her momentum from the people that surround and affect her. Hanging between darkness and light, Chiaramonte's figurative realism offers a narrative that echoes a provocative daydream, communicating both the human disposition and the mysteries therein.

Chiaramonte is currently represented by Abend Gallery in Denver, CO. A 2010 Master of Fine Arts graduate, Chiaramonte received the Best Graduate Thesis award from Radford University. Her work has been in numerous group exhibitions and collections throughout the U.S. and Europe. Her paintings have been published in *American Art Collector*, *Fine Art Connoisseur*, *American Artist*, and *The New York Times*. She has also been the recipient of awards from the Portrait Society of America (2016) and the International ARC Salon competition (2018). Chiaramonte lives and works in Richmond, Virginia.





MEGAN READ

Furling

36" x 48" oil on panel



MISTY HAWKINS

Center of Eruption

42" x 42" oil on linen



ROBIN COLE

Desire Guides Imagination

30" x 24" oil on mounted linen

In My Lady's House

24" x 30" oil on mounted linen

The figure is a recent addition to my work; I drew and painted elements of landscape and the natural world almost exclusively for most of my artistic life. Oddly, I never felt deeply connected to the figure, at least not in the same way I feel connected to the natural world. I think this was in part a struggle with the specific nature of identity and a feeling (however ill-founded) that I needed to be absolutely true to every aspect of my model. This interplay between visual acuity and artistic license did not become truly engaging until I started painting portraits of those close to me—people whose interior selves are almost as familiar to me as their physical appearance. Since that time, I've found great joy in working to hone my technical skill through the challenge of painting a beloved face, and beyond that, attempting to touch on something universal through the conduit of the familiar.

I now find painting the figure to be an infinitely challenging but deeply rewarding experience. Of particular interest to me is the interplay between the figure and the many elements of my past work, notably, details of the landscape and its inhabitants, atmospheric variety, and the ever enchanting play of light across form and texture. I enjoy the demands on my technique as well as the search for that unknowable something that alchemically transforms an academic portrait into something touching and deeply familiar, whether it is your first encounter with the subject or your thousandth.

ROBIN COLE (b. 1985 in Denver, CO) is a painter, draftswoman, and encaustic artist working in the tradition of realism.

Cole received her BA in English at Colorado College as a Boettcher Foundation scholar before making a shift in her studies and career to pursue fine art. She later completed the post-baccalaureate program in Studio Art at the Burren College of Art in County Clare, Ireland, and went on to earn a Master's of Fine Art in Drawing from the Laguna College of Art and Design (LCAD) in 2013. Following graduation, Cole stayed on for five years as faculty at LCAD, where she was able to utilize both her literary and artistic backgrounds to teach a variety of undergraduate drawing and graduate writing courses. After leaving her teaching positions to pursue painting full time, Cole received a second artist grant from the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation in support of her new work, as a follow-up to her initial grant in 2012 for her unique encaustic drawings. In spring of 2018, Cole returned to Colorado Springs, where she now lives and works.





FRANCIEN KRIEG

Crawling in My Skin

23.6" x 15.7" oil on linen

Personal Identities

39.4" x 31.5" oil on linen

The truth is that I paint myself ... and therefore the battle of my own body with age, my own fears, and my fascination with death.

That fascination began at an early age because my father was preoccupied with death. His mother passed away at a young age and the subject was taboo, nothing could be said about her death. This had such an impact on his thoughts that as an adult he conducted a thorough investigation on whether there is life after death. Listening to voices of deceased people and the radio program *The black hole* with psychic André Groote filled our living room on Sunday afternoon.

His fascination also became mine, but this only became apparent years later when I was in art school. I made installations made of skins, meat heads, empty cocoons and baby skins. What appealed to me in this was the contrast between the tangible and the intangible of the body, the familiar contrasts with the distance that I feel in my body.

The sudden death of a close friend during my time at the academy reinforced this feeling. The distance to my own body and my mistrust of it became even greater. Would my body also betray me in this manner? What followed was a long search that is still on-going, a search for the acceptance of transience.

In the early stages I created paintings in which human forms were visible. I painted these in a detached manner: I removed heads, the bodies were decorative, eye contact was almost non-existent, there was no contact with the viewer. As my work developed I became closer to the skin, from strange perspectives I showed the alienation to my own body. My fascination with the body deepened, I began to paint other people, especially those who deviate from the ideal of beauty. But even more, I really wanted to paint people like you and me, a universal image of the aging person.

Staying true to myself, I have confined myself to the female body.

Dutch artist FRANCIEN KRIEG (b. 1973) lives in the countryside of The Netherlands with her two children and husband and works full-time in her studio. She graduated from the Royal Art Academy in The Hague in 1998 with a degree in Monumental Art and has studied at The Free Academy of The Hague. Some of the important Dutch art collections that have acquired her work include the ING Collection and the former Scheringa Collection. Krieg has exhibited at Scope Basel and Realisme Amsterdam in Europe, Beinart Gallery in Australia, throughout the US at Zhou B Art Center (Chicago), Townsend Atelier (Chattanooga), and [r]evolution (Tennessee). In 2017, she was nominated for the Dutch Portrait Award and shortlisted for the Figurativas 2017 at MEAM in Barcelona, and her work was featured in a three-page article in the Austrian art magazine *Milionart Kaleidoscope*. Krieg has been represented by Gallery Mokum in Amsterdam.

Negotiation with Clouds

Maybe it's easier to complain
about spring.

A poet shook a limb
of cherry blossoms and wrote
a poem with its petals.

It sounds easy to be that bold.
When he leaves, I kiss the scar
on my wrist, the temporariness
of seasons. I've lost touch
with the Kardashians.

Maybe we weren't penpals.

Maybe we weren't even pals.

A friend texts me because
he's tired of his wife. I respond
with a sad face emoji, draw lines
through avoidance.

He sends me a fistbump.

Before I enter into my house,
I toss my phone beneath the tulips.

I hang my mistakes on the coat rack
and pick up a cat. My turntable
makes every night a Friday.

The sky is missing again.

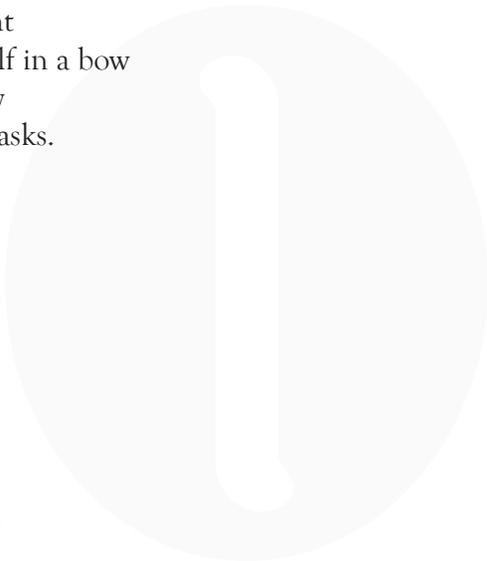
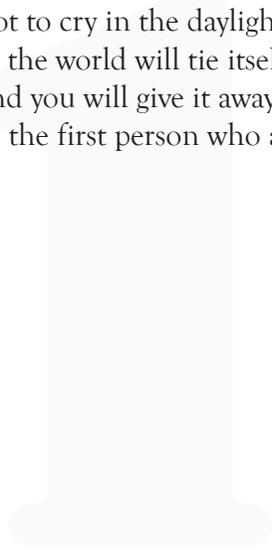
I open the clouds, there.

I compromise with the breeze.



Poem Without Breakthrough

Maybe this is temporary, crying
at 4 a.m. because you can't
determine if you've wasted your life
or watered the lilies, or watered your life
and wasted the lilies—it's almost 5 now
and the sun slips through the cheap
shades like a toddler who wakes
before she needs to, and you try to
send her back to her bed
but she's so persistent—
and across the sea there's a hillside
sliding into the ocean, homes
of burning lava, and you know how lucky
you were the year you totaled the van
reaching for cranberry melody,
*(I mean, cranberry, really?
like who eats that?)* and it's true how you
always apologized for what you didn't do,
and maybe this is temporary, or you need
to be loved or loved more, or your watered-
down life is drowning or you are, and the sun
is awake for sure now and you know
not to cry in the daylight
as the world will tie itself in a bow
and you will give it away
to the first person who asks.



I Have Lived My Whole Life in a Shadowbox Called Expectation

for diane seuss

Is dominoes. Is a phone call at 2 a.m., 3 a.m., who has died,
who is, who may be
dying. Dominoes in a blue cup, set atop
that plate which doesn't break. Who is breaking, who broke
the blue cup, the pick-up truck veering off the edge
of a calendar
year. Is pill bottles. Is orchids. Empty
beer cans tossed behind a wooden fence. A rifle. Is possible
death. An oven fire, grease fire, but the turkey survives,
meaning—good enough
for us. Meaning the feathers were. Plucked.
The pumpkin pie never bought. When the dead call.
Laughter is the new sorrow. Is heart
attack, is hard
-boiled eggs. No. Only a shell. Broken, but
from a distance, a cherub. A globe. Who
glued us together? A single marble, a crystal ball
contains both—
case and nourishment. Two women
holding hands as they walk to a funeral. Are bottle heavy.
One leans like a domino caught. Don't let her. Fall.
In a blue cup
of shadow. Leaves beneath them. Hold each other
up. Cat's eye. Continue on. A photograph
of daylight in her pocket.



After Watching Titanic on Netflix

Outside the window a plastic device detects
wind speed—see how easy it is to confuse
deities with technology, to see your reflection
in a puddle and not know if you're drowning
or adrift. We all know Rose had enough room
for Jack on her raft, but we cried for his sacrifice,
the idea we can love someone enough
to stay cold, to be the iceberg
and just keep floating. In the middle
of the night, the moon illuminates the dead
wood floating, illuminates the backs of whitecaps,
and how do we allow each other to rise?

Some days we're all jumping in without life
vests and some days, we're asleep onshore.
How many lives does the hammock hold?
When I lick my fingers, I taste the salt
from last night's swim, I taste a moon-pulled life.
The hummingbird sits near the barn swallow
sits near the seagull and the crow. Exist
with different types of feathers and share
the sky. Begin with your wings just touching
the wind. Begin with knowing you're not
king of the world and there's always room
for another on your raft.

KELLI RUSSELL AGODON

WHY POETRY?

Why love, why sex, why desire, why nature, why curiosity, why find art when the world is falling apart?

Our reality is where we look, so why not look to words, why not create? No one apologizes for watching sitcoms or organizing the shed, we shouldn't even have to question poetry. Why poetry? Why not.

KELLI RUSSELL AGODON'S most recent book, *Hourglass Museum*, was a Finalist for the Washington State Book Awards and shortlisted for the Julie Suk Poetry Prize. Her second book, *Letters from the Emily Dickinson Room*, was the winner of the Foreword Book of the Year Prize for poetry and was also a finalist for the Washington State Book Awards. She is also the coauthor of *The Daily Poet: Day-By-Day Prompts for Your Writing Practice*, which she coauthored with Martha Silano. She is the cofounder of Two Sylvias Press where she works as an editor and book cover designer. She is an avid paddleboarder who lives in a sleepy seaside town in the Pacific Northwest. She is currently working on her fourth manuscript of poems.



ARINA GORDIENKO

I Can See What You See

16" x 12" oil on linen

There is a magic in the very process of painting a figure. You start with just staring at the blank canvas and then, in a while, something begins to appear in your mind and your hand takes a pencil and makes a first line on the blank surface... The magic begins. After that first line all the images from your imagination live their own life and demand you, as an artist, just transfer them to the canvas as if they appear there themselves and you simply conduct them to this world within your brushes and paints. I love to be this conductor, I love to materialize the images from imagination to the figures on the canvas. Within depicting a figure the most inspiring for me is to capture and express on canvas the pure essence of a human's soul, deep emotions and feelings. The fragile magic of life mesmerizes me. I see humans' souls as fragile lights of fireflies in the dark—it is so easy to break this light... I am trying to transfer this light onto my paintings; and by this maybe my works keep saving and increasing this light in the world? I so much hope they do.

ARINA GORDIENKO was born in a small gold-mining settlement in Chukotka, the most north-easterly region of Russia, part of the polar Arctic desert "tundra." Now she is internationally acclaimed artist and lives in the UK.

She was awarded Associate Living Master status by Art Renewal Center and has been recognized with numerous international prizes and awards. Her paintings have been featured by Saatchi Gallery and Mall Galleries in London, Museum of Fantastic Art in Vienna and venues throughout Italy including Museum of Modern Art Vittoria Colonna in Pescara, Museum Complex of Dioscuri and Museum Sant'Oreste in Rome and Venice Arsenal. Publications worldwide have showcased Arina's work, including Reinhard Fuchs' book *Masterpieces of Visual Arts: The Great Female Artists from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era, Masters of Contemporary Fine Art* and *Masters of Painting* in the UK and *Strokes of Genius* (Editions 4 & 6) in the US. She studied at Central Saint Martins College of Art, having graduated with Masters Degree in Fine Arts from Chelsea College of Arts (University of the Arts London).

Arina widely proclaims revival of beauty in art and, passionately dedicated to renaissance of the realistic traditions in painting, developed her own significant and highly recognizable style, combining traditional classical techniques with surreal imaginative compositions and contemporary palette.





ARINA GORDIENKO

Reflection on Light 1

16" x 22" oil on linen

Reflection on Light 2

16" x 22" oil on linen



DIRK DZIMIRSKY (b. 1969) is a German artist who is known for his hyper-realistic drawings and paintings of people. His carefully elaborated stagings of light and shadow reveal the sensitivity and vulnerability of the models. An extreme level of detail in combination with calculated set of light create an enigmatic mood of melancholic beauty in his images.

Dzimirsky's work has been exhibited in the US, Europe and Tokyo and as part of numerous international collections.

In 2014 he was commissioned by Waterman – Paris to draw a large-scale portrait with ball pen to introduce their new line of luxury pens. The artwork was shown at exhibitions in Paris and Tokyo as well as on billboards and screens throughout the cities.

In 2014 and 2017, Dzimirsky was hired by A&E Network for designing and creating drawings of characters for their TV shows, which were then used for advertising in print and on billboards.

Dzimirsky lives and works in a former schoolhouse in Warmseen, Germany.

Australian artist DIANNE GALL is known for her meticulous and detailed large scale, noir-colored saturated oil paintings of women. She has been painting for more than 30 years since graduating from the South Australian School of Art and has been focusing on her current femme noir paintings since 2012.

The work is painted from images that she painstakingly creates from photo shoots that she stages with carefully sourced models and locations ranging from art deco cinemas and private homes to seedy night clubs. The models are dressed in hand-sourced vintage clothing and objects, while lighting and furniture is mainly from the 1940s to 1960s and tailored to suit the scenes. It will take up to six months to finish painting a work. Dianne works by the motto that "Less is more and quality is all."



TERESA ELLIOTT is a contemporary realist who has shown in many galleries and museums nationally and internationally. The MEAM Museum in Barcelona, The Salmagundi Club, The World Art Museum in Beijing and The Butler Institute Of Art are among the institutions that have exhibited her oil paintings.

Currently, she is working and living in the badlands of West Texas with a continuing fascination with agrarian, rural life in the Texas countryside. Her studio in the hills sits on a bed of ancient lava rock looking over a vast old ranch.



MISTY HAWKINS grew up in San Diego, CA. Her work explores personal identity in intimate portraits and nudes. Her models are often friends, if not herself. At an early age she started drawing, with an interest in faces, using magazines and books. Later this grew into an interest in cultural ideas about the body informed by personal research and classes. In college she focused on life drawing, painting, and literature courses and received a BA in Painting from San Diego State University.

Misty had a desire to continue her formal study in art and experience living on the East Coast. She moved Philadelphia to complete a Master's degree in Drawing and Painting from Tyler School of Art at Temple University in 2003. Next she lived and worked in Brooklyn and New York, mainly inspired to visit the museums and

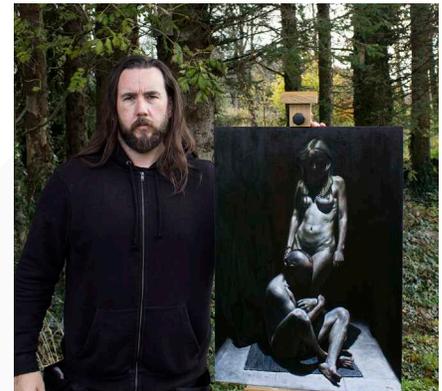
galleries. Misty returned to San Diego in 2005 to teach drawing courses for the San Diego Community College District and live close to family.

She continues to paint in a private studio and exhibit her work.

Born and raised in the Chilean Patagonia, DANIELA KOVAČIĆ has dedicated her career to oil painting. Her work explores different topics around self-identity, largely through the depiction of women and children.

She has a master's degree from the New York Academy of Art and a bachelor's degree from Universidad Finis Terrae, Santiago, Chile.

Daniela has received prestigious awards and scholarships such as Fulbright, Becas Chile, Robert Gamblin Painting Award, NYAA scholarships and residency from the Terra Foundation for American Art. Her work has been exhibited and published internationally since 2005.



DÁIRE LYNCH is a Dublin-born artist who currently resides in County Mayo in the west of Ireland. His primary subject matter is the human, both in form and the intricate nature of their emotions and interactions with the world around them. With a boundless reverence for life and the human form, he has birthed a world where the nuances of humanity are brought to the forefront and propose an emotive journey to the viewer.

Dáire is a self-taught painter, though he studied drawing in BCFE, Dublin. He also is a qualified sound engineer and multi-instrumentalist.

When not painting or creating, Dáire can be found in the wilds of Connemara, be it woods, lakes, or the powerful

Atlantic Ocean. He recently became an alpha in a pack of wolves by showing fearlessness, tenacity, and a willingness to fight for meat.

DANIEL MAIDMAN is best known for his vivid depiction of the figure. Maidman's drawings and paintings are included in the permanent collections of the Library of Congress, New Britain Museum of American Art, and Long Beach Museum of Art. His art and writing on art have been featured in *The Huffington Post*, *PoetsArtists*, *ARTnews*, *Beautiful Bizarre*, *Forbes*, *W*, *Juxtapoz*, *Hyperallergic*, *International Artist*, *American Art Collector*, *D/Railed*, *Whitehot*, and *Manifest*. He is a repeat guest critic at the New York Academy of Art. His books, *Daniel Maidman: Nudes* and *Theseus: Vincent Desiderio on Art*, are available from Griffith Moon Publishing. He lives and paints in Brooklyn, NY.



SUSANNAH MARTIN (b. 1964) was born in New York City. She studied at New York University and received a SEHNAP scholarship for painting. Among her most notable teachers there were: John Kacere, Louise Lawler, Sherrie Levine, and Peter Campus. Following her studies, she was self-employed as a muralist and painter of sets for film and photography in New York, Berlin, and Frankfurt am Main, where she currently lives and works. In 2004, she returned to fine art.

Over the last years, Susannah's work has focused exclusively on contemporizing the classical subject of the nude in landscape. Avoiding a falsely idyllic scenario, her work focuses on man's estrangement from nature. The figures may appear absurd stripped of all social indicators and possessions or ecstatic in unexpected reunification with their natural selves. Martin's work creates a stage in which man's struggle between the two poles of his identity, the natural and the synthetic, may be contemplated.

Her work is exhibited internationally throughout Europe and the US.



MEGAN ELIZABETH READ is a realist oil painter and charcoal artist whose work tends to reflect the tension between light and shadow in both a literal and figurative sense.

Her paintings and drawings are often self portraits, sometimes adorned with traditional draperies or modern brands, or at times simply nude, with other work focussing on unassuming objects that are personally symbolic. Despite the different content, almost all of her pieces involve soft or intimate forms or objects in cold, dark, spaces and revolve around vulnerability and finding a sense of place.

Mae currently lives and works in Charlottesville, VA.



As well as a solo exhibition at Brill Gallery (MA) in 2009, NADINE ROBBINS has shown widely in group shows such as *Perspectives of the American Experience: American Women Artists* at the Rockwell Museum (NY) 2018, *Figurative Masters* at Arcadia Contemporary (CA), *Women Painting Women* at RJD Gallery (NY), International Guild of Realism's 12th Annual Group Show at Winfield Gallery (CA), and as part of shows from The Wausau Museum of Contemporary Art (WI), Robert Lange Studios (SC) and Bernarducci Gallery (NY).

Robbins is the recipient of a grant from the Puffin Foundation and was listed as one of top figurative painters working now by BuzzFeed in 2017. The artist's

work may be found in several important private collections, most notably the Howard A. & Judith Tullman Collection and The Count-Ibex Collection.



As a painting restorer and art school teacher, ANNE-CHRISTINE RODA was forced to stop working as a restorer during her pregnancy because of the dangerousness of the products. She took advantage of this forced leave to resume her brushes and has not stopped since. Since 2013, she has been exhibiting in contemporary art fairs and galleries, including in Geneva, Paris, Monaco, London and Edinburgh. In 2015, Anne-Christine participated in the prestigious BP Portrait Award and exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery in London, Edinburgh and Belfast.

Her paintings, in terms of the choice of pose for her models and the neutral treatment of their backgrounds, are as rooted in tradition, as her subjects are sourced unequivocally from our contemporary era. Her choice of subject speaks directly to our everyday lives.



VIKTORIA SAVENKOVA (1979) began to draw in childhood in an art studio and continued at art school including college and the Academy of Art (Minsk, Belarus). In 2014, she went back to painting working primarily in large formats. Her work centers on psychological portraits, sensuous landscapes, and figure studies in a realistic style.

She has participated in local and international exhibitions and competitions (Italy, Spain, US) and been published in various catalogs.



SHANE SCRIBNER was born in Tulsa in 1980. He excelled in art as a child and began his career in the arts immediately after graduating high school.

He attended the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, graduating in 2004.

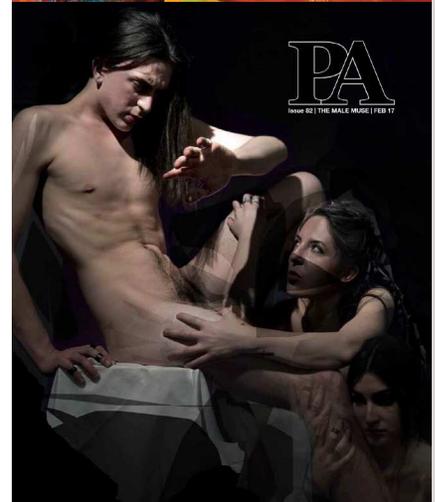
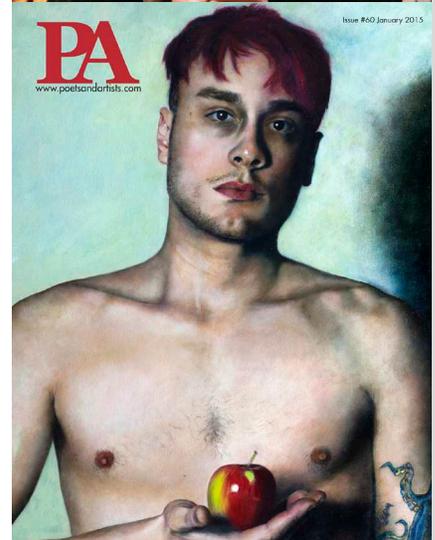
Shane and his wife Sara met while studying at the Academy of Art University. Together they have exhibited widely across their home state and in galleries and juried competitions nationwide.



RYAN SHULTZ is a figurative realist painter and art teacher from Chicago. In Ryan's paintings, he attempts to create a marriage of the present and the past, utilizing the techniques of the Old Masters, gleaning ideas and imagery from cultures past, to make artwork about the contemporary world.

Over the years, Ryan has exhibited at FM Gallery, the Zhou B. Art Center, Benrimon Contemporary, and Like the Spice Gallery, to name few. He has been featured in publications like Artworks Magazine in the US, Intro Mag in Germany, and Samuel Magazine, Brazil. In addition to this, Ryan was also seen worldwide on the first season of Bravo TV's *Work of Art*.

JUNE STRATTON was born in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1959 and is most known for her contemporary figurative realism. She studied at the California College of Fine Arts and Crafts but is primarily self-taught. June is represented by Robert Lange Studios (Charleston, SC) and Distinction Gallery (Escondido, CA).







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Curated by Dirk Dzimirsky

Kelli Russell Agodon	Daniel Maidman
Nicole Alger	Susannah Martin
Nin Andrews	Michele Murtaugh
Isabelle Ballard	Aixa Oliveras
Grace Cavalieri	Silvio Porzionato
Mary Chiaramonte	Matthew Quick
Robin Cole	Christina Ramos
Stephanie Deshpande	Gustavo Ramos
Kimberly Dow	Megan Read
Denise Duhamel	Nadine Robbins
Riley Doyle	Anne-Christine Roda
Dirk Dzimirsky	Connie Karleta Sales
Teresa Elliott	Buket Savci
Miriam Escofet	Viktoria Savenkova
Barbara Fox	Shane Scribner
Dianne Gall	Victoria Selbach
Arina Gordienko	Ryan Shultz
Misty Hawkins	Suzy Smith
Simon Hennessey	Sharon Sprung
F. Scott Hess	William Stobb
Claudia Kaak	June Stratton
Daniela Kovacic	Vicki Sullivan
Francien Krieg	Anna Toberman
Geoffrey Laurence	Doug Webb
Brianna Lee	Thomas Wharton
David Lehman	Veronica Winters
Dáire Lynch	John Zedolik