

# GO FIGURE: THE FEMALE GAZE

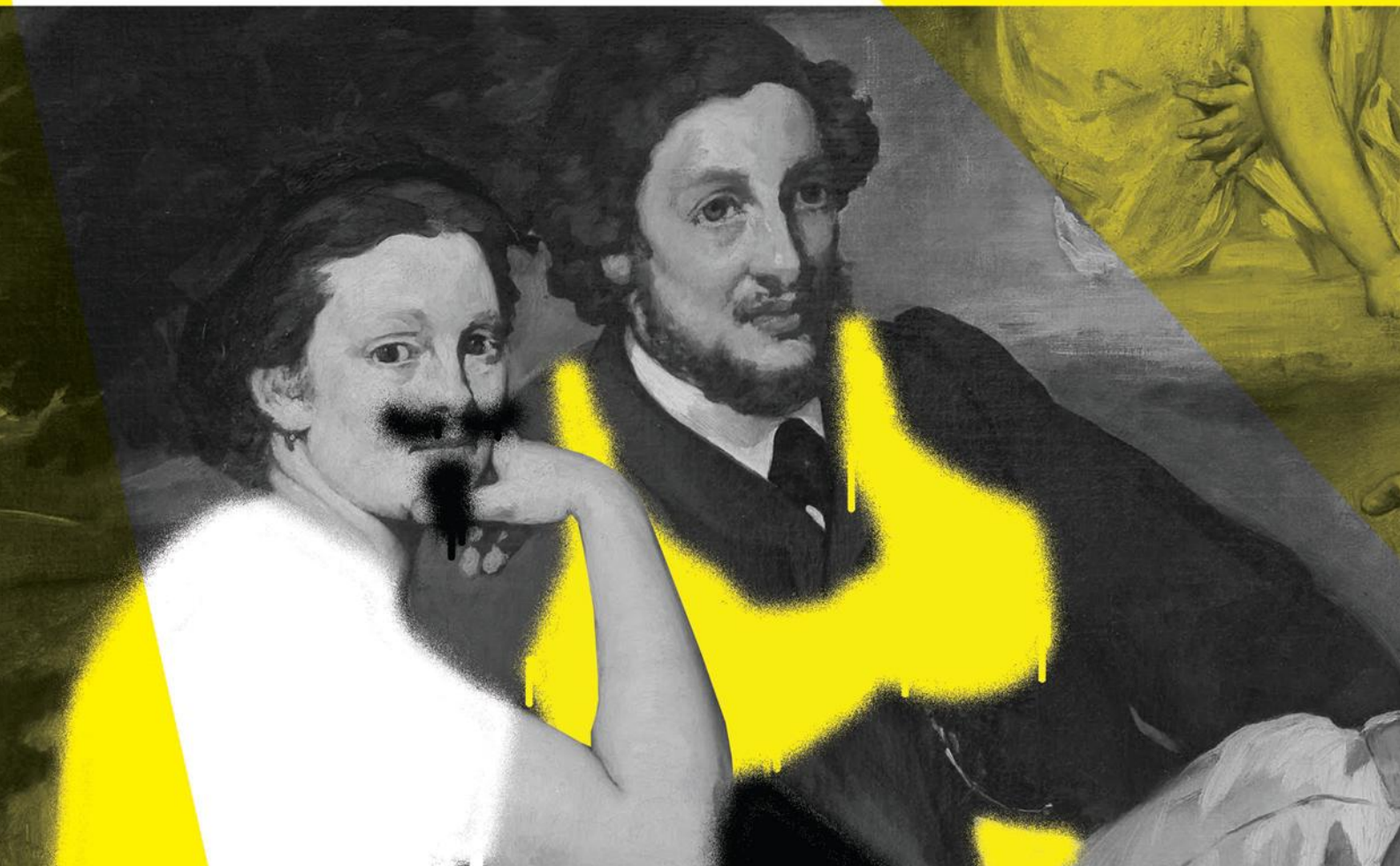


November 4–December 4, 2019

# GO FIGURE: THE FEMALE GAZE

Paola Citterio • Katie Commodore • Sophia Dawson • Rose Deler  
Maggie Ellis • Grace Graupe-Pillard • Phyllis Herfield • E. Jane  
Mary Mattingly • Alexandra Rubinstein • Robin Tewes

*Curated by Hallie Cohen*



*“Less than 5% of the artists in the Modern Art Sections [of the Metropolitan Museum of Art] are women, but 85% of the nudes are female.”* This is a famous quote from the Guerrilla Girls, a group formed in New York City in 1985 to countermand sexism and racial inequality in the art world.

*Go Figure: The Female Gaze* presents the work of eleven women artists who are embracing feminism and ecofeminism in order to challenge the traditions of male hegemony in art.

How is a distinctly female point of view manifest in terms of both content and form, particularly as it relates to figuration, sexualization, and power? What are the characteristics of a feminine gaze? Does it provide an alternative to existing stereotypes?

The artists in this exhibition employ strategies of representation in a variety of materials and methods from painting, sculpture and photography to print-making and video.

*Go Figure: The Female Gaze* offers a contemporary perspective on how female artists of varying ages and ethnicities grapple with their place in the world.

- Hallie Cohen



# PAOLA CITTERIO @PCITTERIO



PAOLA CITTERIO was born in 1964 in a small village close to Milan, Italy. She received her Master of Fine Art in Scenography from Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti, NABA, in Milan 1986. For the next fifteen years she built her career as a Production Designer, working for theater, movies and commercial productions. In 2001, Paola moved to New York City and found artistic inspiration in her family life, creating sculptures that blend the traditional craftwork she learned from the women in her childhood home, with found metal objects from the city. There is always an element of surprise in Paola's work, as she likes her audience to engage with her pieces and discover them inside and out.

“There are times when I have to push, prod and pummel my way through life. Then, there are others when I let life lead me. My work develops in much the same way. I often have no idea where it's going when I begin. The joy, for me, lies in the uncertainty; in embracing that void. The raw materials are all here: my yarns and the lost objects found by family and friends in this city I love. So, too, are the tools: the rigorously hand-made male tools, also kindly provided by the city. It is the process that is the true revelation. I use a needle felt technique. Which translates into hours of constant jabbing, pushing, probing, puncturing. This repetition, the relentless rhythm of it, creates a momentum. A momentum that not only gives birth to the piece itself but that also transports me. I am Italian. I grew up in a home and a country with clearly defined, traditional male/female roles. My father supported us as a metal worker. My mother ‘kept house.’ She cooked. She cleaned. She knit. My mother was an obsessive knitter. The metal tools, the soft, warm wool fibers and of course, the process... They are all about a ‘new world.’ A world in which as a woman and an artist, I believe we must push past those traditional assumptions, penetrate myths and provoke questions. Yes, this creates uncertainty and doubt. But doubt keeps the door open. Not just in life but in art.”

Photographs: Jorg Badura



*Tool #18*  
Metal, wool fiber • 14" x 11" x 8" • 2018

*Tool #19*  
Metal, wool fiber • 14" x 9" • 2014

*Tool #20*  
Metal, wool fiber • 13" x 8" • 2014



*Do not disturb*

Knob, wooden hanger, wool • 14" x 16" • 2014

*Pink Collar Worker*

Metal, wool blanket • 16" x 68" • 2014

KATIE COMMODORE @KATIECOMMODORE





Over the past few years, my artwork has concentrated on creating intimate portraits of my friends, often focusing on how they express their sexuality. Not whether they prefer men or women, but sexuality in the broader sense- what is it that makes them feel sexy, how do they express that physically, and how has it changed over the years? Our sexuality, and how we feel about it, is in constant flux; the same way that we redecorate our homes, change the wallpaper and curtains, change the sheets.

I try to liken this subtle change in how my friends express themselves to the way society also expresses its collective self through decorative patterns. In a round about way, it can be looked at as a meter of a population's "sexuality"- the public expression of the private. Bright colors, vibrant patterns, clean lines, and minimal decoration all provide a window into the personalities that chose or created them. Historians and anthropologists often use the decorative remnants (pots, jewelry, frescos, etc.) of past cultures to gain valuable insight into the lives of the people that created them, the same sort of cultural portrait can be drawn from our design choices today.

It is very important to me that I not come across as judgmental about my subject matter or imagery, but that they stand on their own as portraits of real people, expressing themselves how they choose.

Photo: Adrian Buckmaster



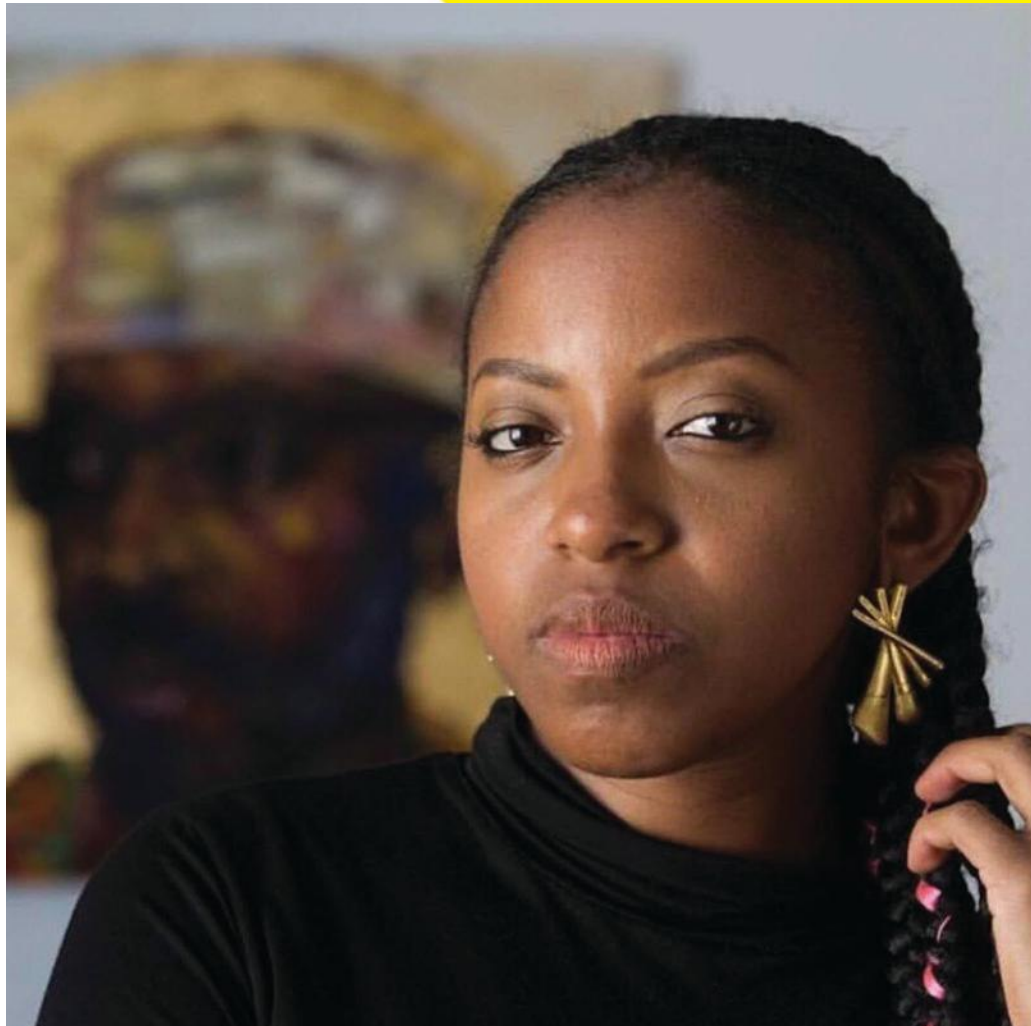
*Greg in a Catsuit*

Digitally woven cotton thread with appliqué, plastic beads, and embroidery • 48 x 58" • 2018



Detail

SOPHIA DAWSON @IAMWETPAINT



Sophia Dawson is a Brooklyn-based visual artist who has dedicated her life's work to exposing the stories and experiences of individuals who are striving to overcome the injustices they face. Sophia discovered her gift after painting a portrait of her father while studying at Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School for Music, Art and Performing Arts. At that very young age of sixteen, she witnessed that her work moved and touched people from all walks of life.

Sophia continues to develop her craft as a visual artist and muralist for justice work. In the series and mural titled, *Every Mother's Son* (2014), she highlights mothers from the past and present who have lost their children to police brutality and racism in the United States. In another series on the Central Park 5, her objective was to raise awareness of and gain support for their suit against New York City. In 2015 and 2016 she worked with Amnesty International to develop a mural that focused on individuals who are politically incarcerated on an international scale. The mural was a part of the organization's annual *Write for Rights* event which encourages tens of thousands of members to write letters in support of these individuals throughout a day of advocacy.

Recently Dawson has been a resident in the Whitney Independent Studio program.



*Young Meek*

Acrylic, gold leaf, asphalt, diamond dust, and coogi fabric on canvas • 36" x 48" • 2019

On loan from Andrea Weinzimer and Gabriel Hernandez.



Details

ROSE DELER @ROSEDELER



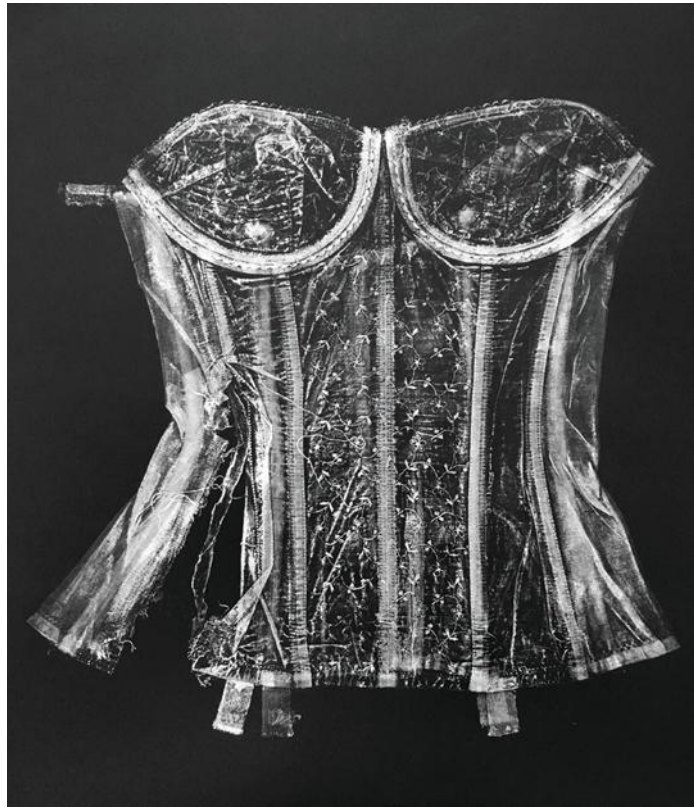


I am a maker who draws on the skills handed down to me by my ancestors. They were boat builders, carpenters, seamstresses, farmers, and homemakers. As an artist who takes pride in the artisanal quality of my work, I am interested in the labor of art making and craft. My work must bare the mark of my hand as well as my mind.

Born of feminist empowerment, my work is craft based employing textiles and sewing, clay and pottery, printing and photography. It is about memory, true, painful or happy or idealized in an attempt at self-preservation. It is about the things that have shaped us. They speak to the past but they also speak to the passing of time. They are of someone who once was, and is no more, but is still telling their story.

Pressure is a series of mono-prints on paper and fabric of vintage women's undergarments and accompaniments, exploring notions of female body image as shaped by evolving societal expectations. Throughout history, women have been judged by the shape of their figure. Consequently, a variety of contorting (and occasionally deforming) apparatuses were devised to physically mold and shape the female form to meet the ideal figure of the time. Corsets and girdles to squeeze you in, hoops and bustles to push you out. Today, some women undergo invasive surgeries, implants here, tucking there, in attempts to achieve that ideal waist-hip ratio that, according to some, represents the measure of female attractiveness. Yet despite all these interventions, time passes and all that is left behind are the remnants; discarded garments and silicone sacks that linger on once the body has turned to dust.

As I roll these garments through the press I am pleased to be subjecting them to the pressure they had once inflicted upon those who wore them.



*Domestic Violence*

White ink on black Stonehenge rag paper • 20" x 22.75" • 2017

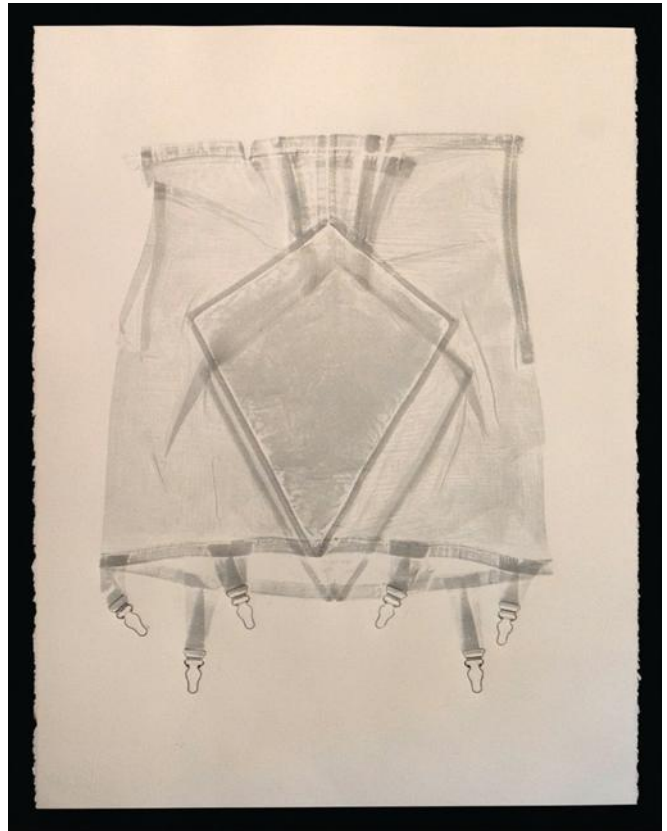
*Bra & Girdle*

White ink on paper • 25" x 36" • 2016



*Corset #7 Woman's Work*

Screen print on tissue paper, plastic and metal boning, suede lacing, metal eyelets, copper wire • 14" x 11" x 10" • 2017



*Girdle #5*

Silver ink on cream colored archival Stonehenge cotton paper • 22" x 30" • 2018

MAGGIE ELLIS @MAGGIE\_ELLIS



Locations near my childhood home in Georgia inform the images in my work. I excavate the nuances of my upbringing and southern culture by recording these observations through list making, drawing, and painting. Carrying these memories of my former life enables me to understand the world in New York City, where I currently live; driving solo between New York and Georgia seems to fill in the gaps. The point of view that informs my work can be understood through flipping back and forth between those two places, distant and up-close. The sensation that motivates me to paint these images is about viewing the south through two different lenses. One is from a familiar, non-judgmental point of view, and the other is from the perspective of living in New York City, which brings its own forms of stereotypes. Along with sadness and humor, the beautiful and the grotesque collide to create the particular patois of these images. Ultimately the painting language of my work is the clue to my position: these paintings are love letters to the places and people I left behind.



*Duane Hiding*

Acrylic on canvas • 40.5" x 55" • 2019

*Painting is courtesy Charles Moffett Gallery*



Details

GRACE GRAUPE-PILLARD @GRAUPEPILLARD



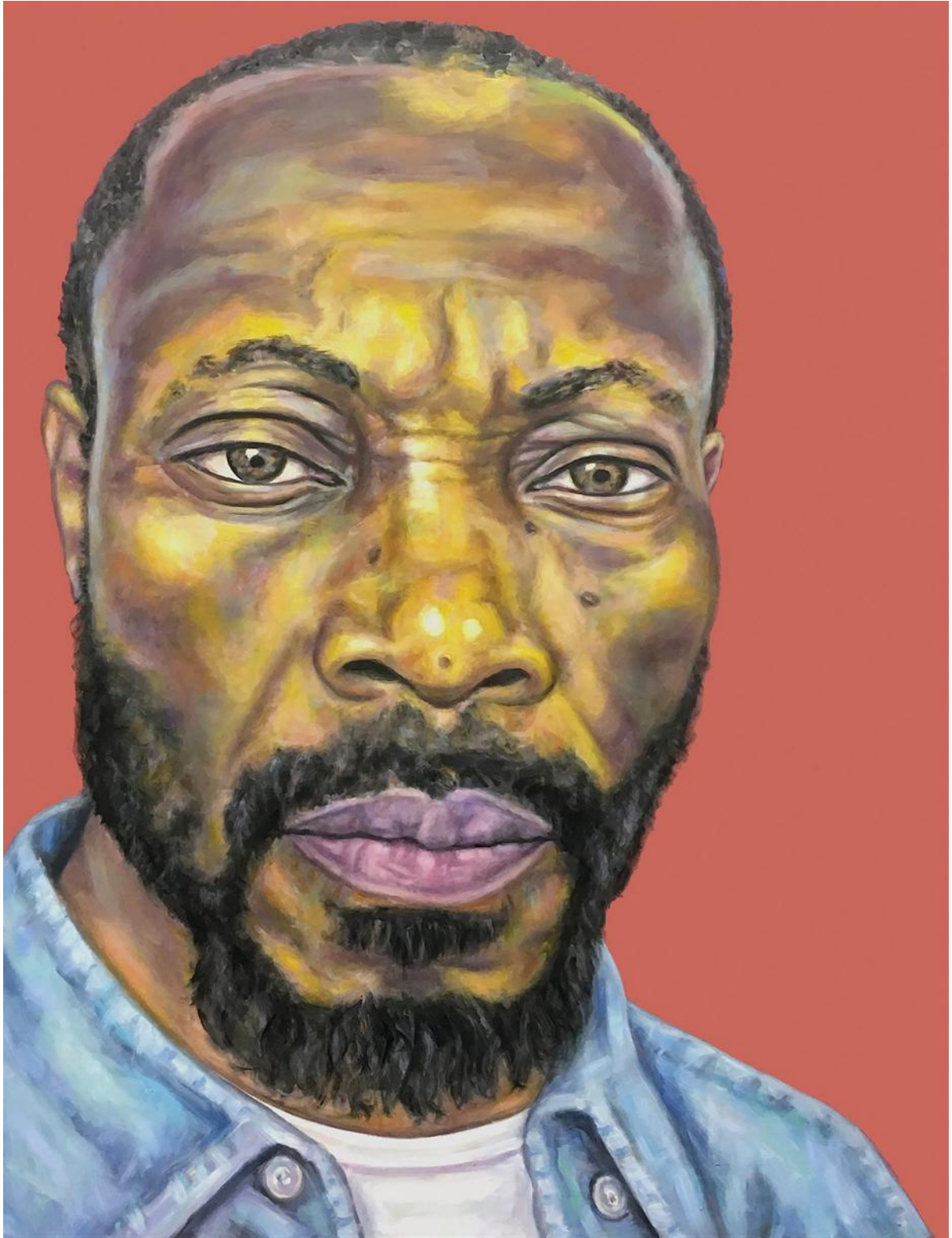


I have focused on portraiture my entire artistic life from the early *People And Hat* charcoal drawings which I exhibited at The Drawing Center, NYC in 1981, through ten years of exclusively working with the directness of pastels to create large-scale installations of people who have not been integrated into “main-stream” society. Most recently my large scale paintings attempt to convey the vitality and diversity of 21st century contemporary culture which is rampant with *selfies*, and iPhone photographs capturing ineffable moments of our lives.

The sensuality and radiant beauty of youth is depicted in my choice of subjects, as well as the ravages of time which are imprinted on our being. All stages of life are filled with humanity that both elevates and dissolves the spirit.

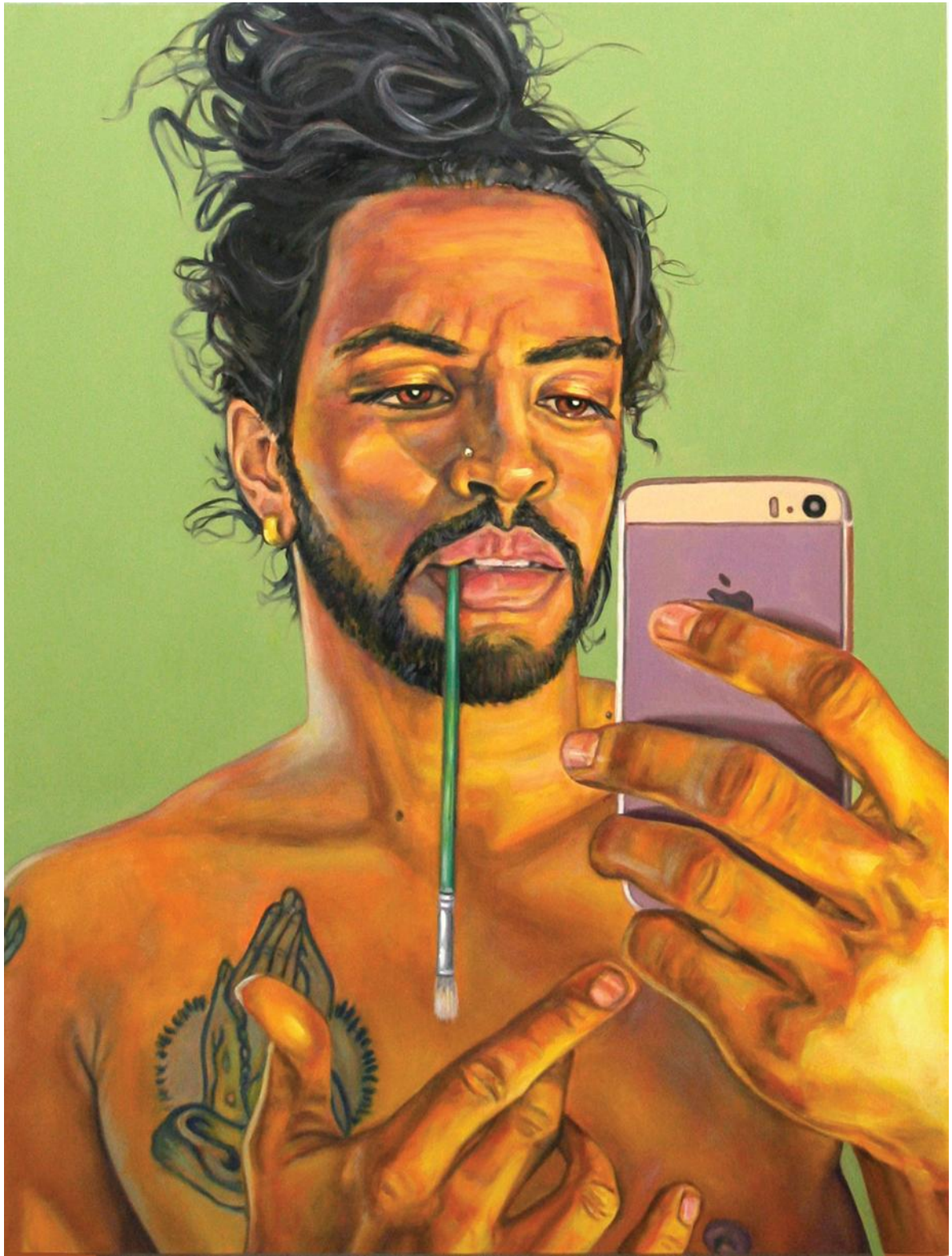
This is the intimate breath I wish to capture in my paintings.

Photo: DM Simons



*Olu*

Oil, alkyd, wood • 48" x 36" • 2018



*Dillon: Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man*  
Oil, alkyd, wood • 48" x 36" • 2016

PHYLLIS HERFIELD @PHYLLISHERFIELD

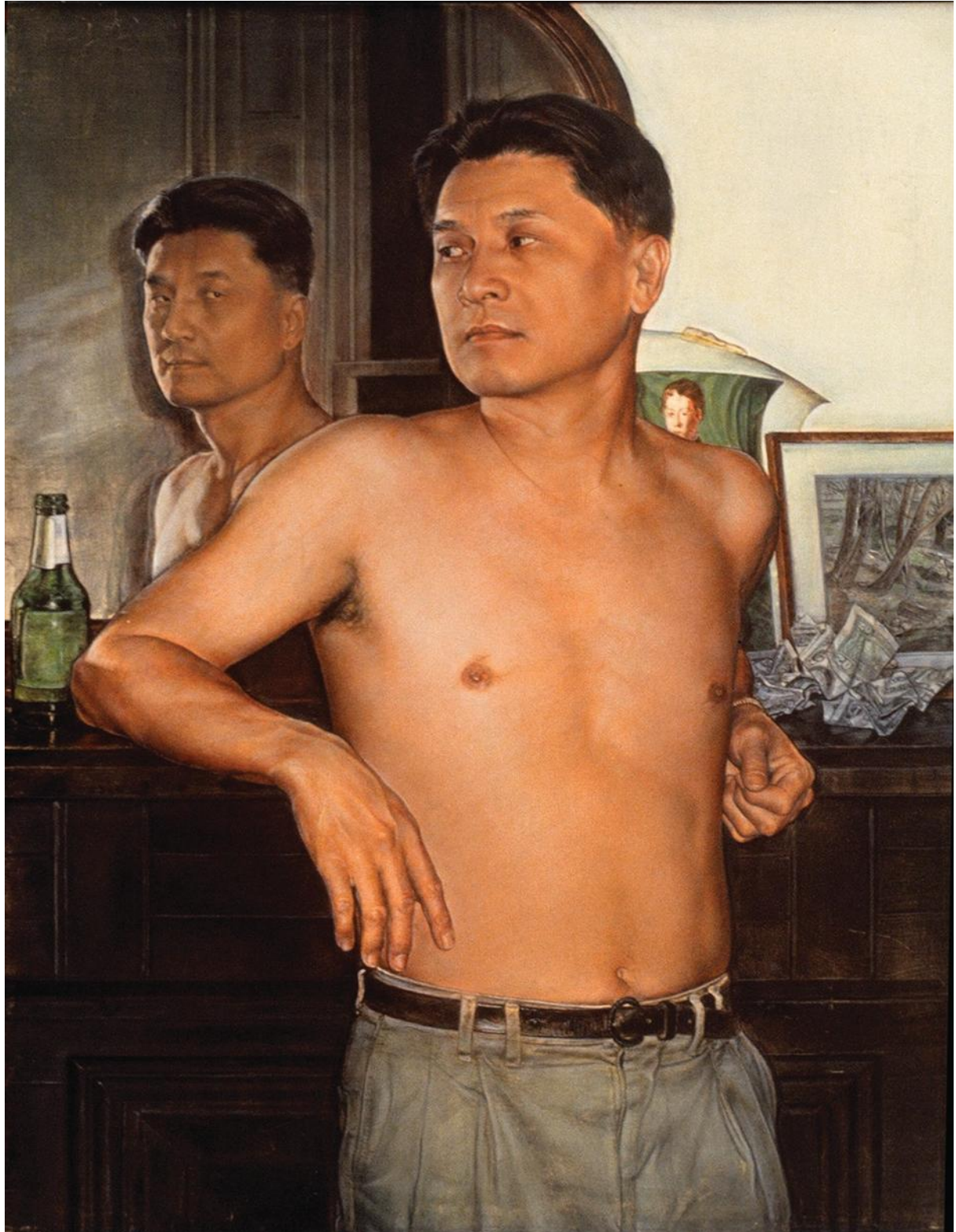


In the spirit of “So many men, so little time” —I have chosen art over lust. These two paintings are part of my series of shirtless men called *Men as Gods*.

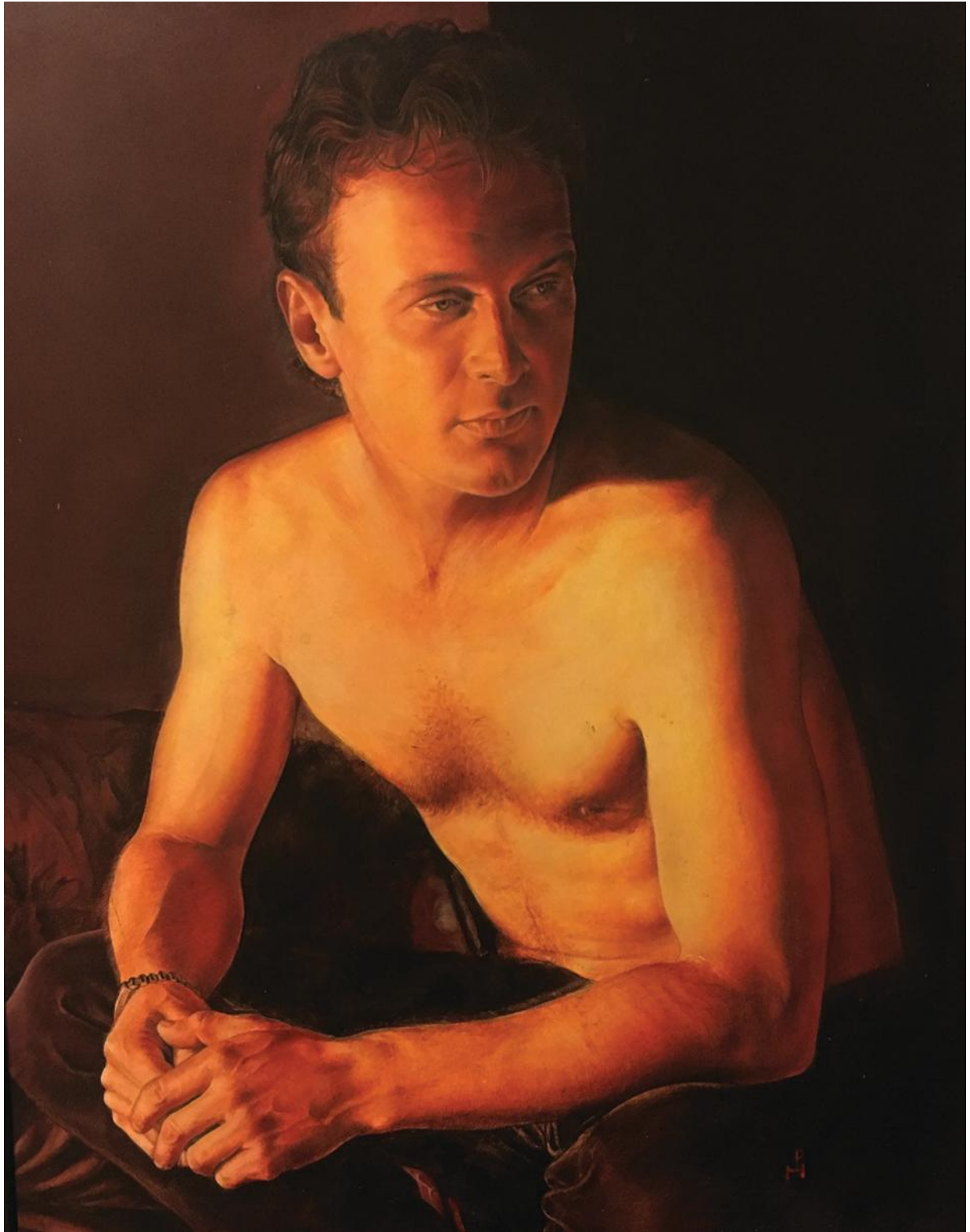
Phyllis Herfield’s portraits pay homage to the painters of the Northern Renaissance in their attention to clarity and insight. Her portraits of notable contemporaries in the arts, business and science are in public and private collections and museums across the United States, including The National Portrait Gallery, The Portland Art Museum, The Fort Lauderdale Museum, Yale University Art Gallery and The Brooklyn Academy.

Her paintings have been written about and reproduced in *Art News*, *Arts Magazine*, *The New York Observer*, *The New York Review of Art*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Diversions*, *The Wall Street Journal online*, and most recently, *Catamaran Magazine*. Ms. Herfield’s illustrations have been published in *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *Channels*, *Esquire*, *Harpers*, *Ms. Magazine*, *Politics*, *Psychology Today*, *New York Magazine*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *Time Magazine*.

Her studies include a year abroad in Rome at Tyler School of Art from which she was awarded the painting prize at graduation and two semesters at The National Academy of Design with painter Harvey Dinnerstein.



*David as Narcissus*  
Oil on wood • 18" x 14" • 1995



*Jeff Reese as Apollo (Cheesecake)*  
Oil on wood • 14" x 11" • 1993

E. JANE @MHYSA301





E. Jane is a conceptual artist and musician based in Philadelphia. Inspired by Black liberation and womanist praxis, their work incorporates digital images, video, text, performance, sculpture, installation, and sound design. E. Jane's work explores safety, futurity, and subjugated bodies in popular culture and networked media. A central facet of Jane's practice lies in their performance persona, MHYSA, an underground popstar for the cyber resistance. MHYSA operates in Jane's *Lavendra/Recovery* (2015-), an iterative multimedia installation, and out in the world. Jane considers this project a total work of art, or *Gesamtkunstwerk*. MHYSA released the Hivemind EP on NON in early 2016 and was listed in Artforum's "Best of 2016: Music." Her debut album, *fantasii*, was released on Halcyon Veil in 2017 to glowing reception, including many year-end music lists. In 2018, she followed her debut with a live audio-visual experience touring Europe and North America.

Born in Bethesda, Maryland in 1990 and based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, E. Jane received their MFA from the University of Pennsylvania in 2016 and a BA in Art History with minors in English and Philosophy from Marymount Manhattan College in New York in 2012. They have performed at The Kitchen, MoCADA and MoMA PS1 as one half of sound duo SCRAAATCH. They have shown at CP Projects Space and Studio Museum 127 in New York, Gallery 400 and Museum Of Contemporary Art (Chicago), Visual Arts Center (Austin), and many other venues. In 2015 they wrote the widely-circulated NOPE manifesto, which was published by the Brooklyn-based digital publishers, Codette. They were a 2016 recipient of the Wynn Newhouse Award and their installation, *Lavendra/Recovery*, has been shown as solo exhibitions entitled "Lavendra" both at American Medium in Brooklyn, NY in 2017 and at Glasgow International 2018 in Scotland. Jane is currently an artist-in-residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem.

Photo: Courtesy of the artist



*#Mood 14 (\$till I ri\$e)*  
mp4 • 2:47 seconds • 2016

*#Mood 2 (Instagram, Instagram is deep)*  
mp4 • 27 seconds • 2015



#Mood 16 (*Playing with fabric and Madonna*)  
mp4 • 4:52 seconds • 2017

#Mood 8 (*giving no fucks*)  
mp4 • 51 seconds • 2015

MARY MATTINGLY @MARYMATTINGLY



Artist Mary Mattingly has developed an intriguing creative methodology that integrates photography with aspects of sculpture, installation, and performance. Drawing upon the work of whimsical dreamers and recalling failed utopian projects, yet intermixing Fortune 500 corporate logos with jaw-dropping landscapes, Mattingly's work engages conflict with systems of technology and consumerism. Rigorous in their research, these multi-form projects begin with the imagination of a possible scenario and evolve as ad hoc solutions to the circumstances of living and sustaining. With *Nomadographies* Mattingly proposes a world returned to nomadic roots, following a peripatetic population constantly on the move. In as much as the protagonists in Mattingly's photographs are related to pioneers of the American frontier, they are also products of a Cold War-era bunker mentality. - *Robert Mann Gallery*

Photo: Rebekah Schott



*In the Navel of the Moon, 2008*  
Chromogenic dye coupler print

© Mary Mattingly, courtesy the artist and Robert Mann Gallery, New York

*“In the Navel of the Moon* was taken in Mexico on a long bicycle trip from Guadalajara to Mexcaltitan with artist and collaborator, Veronica Flores. A precursor to bundling all of my objects in performances like *Pull*, we took everything we needed in boxes piled high, attached to the bike and documented our journey in a series titled “Nomadographies” (the series was then shown at Robert Mann Gallery in 2008). We stopped in small towns along the way and eventually had to depend on a stranger to take us in his boat to cross from the mainland to Mexcaltitan. This photograph was taken at the mid-point in our journey, a flooded field where we stopped for the day. On our way back the field was completely dry. In nahuatl (Veronica’s heritage), the meaning of the word Mexico is “the navel of the moon”.”

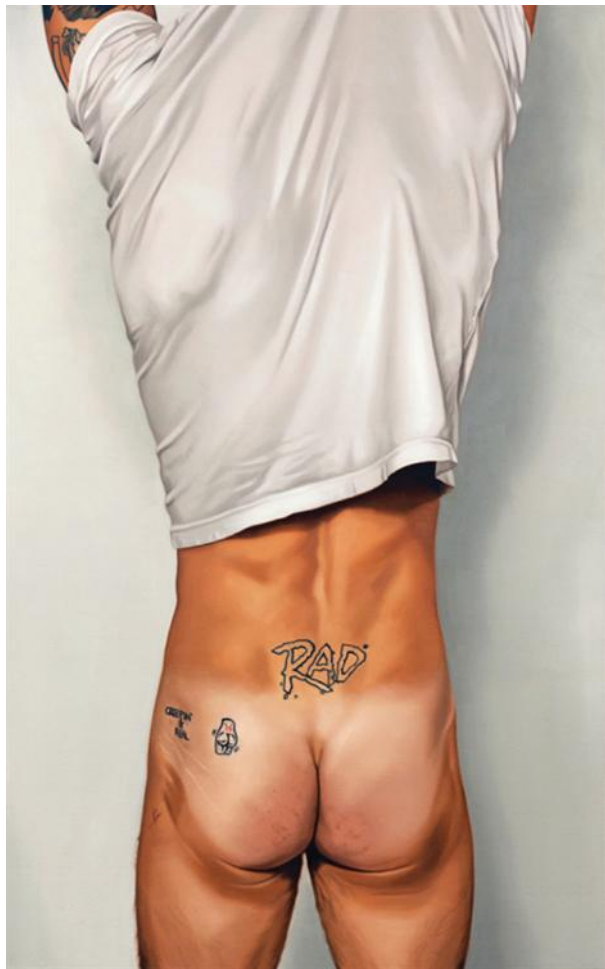
- Mary Mattingly

ALEXANDRA RUBINSTEIN @THERUBINSREIN



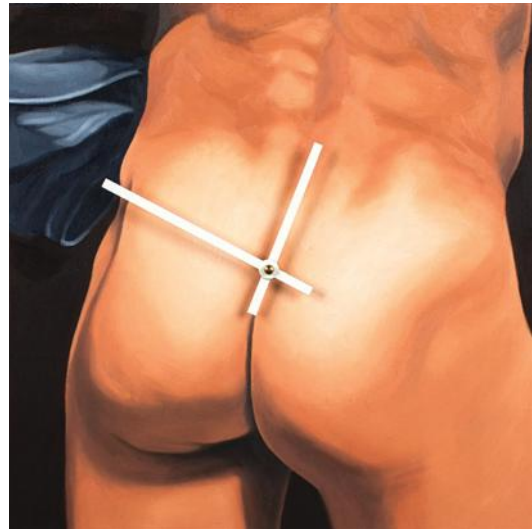


“Nothing Butt Time” is series of paintings of male butts functioning as clocks. By using men to adorn a functioning object, as is so often done with women’s bodies, the series turns women from objects to consumers. The source images are taken from vintage Playgirls, referencing the second wave of feminism which pushed for legalization of birth control, abortion and the equal rights amendment, allowing women more opportunities and the ability to delay childbearing, giving them more control over their bodies and their time. Access to family planning tools along with increased legal protection also allowed for a less passive and more open expression of the female sexuality. The clocks demonstrate this evolution of American women in society on an economic and social level and their changing relationship to time, especially in respect to men and the shifting gender dynamic.



*Rosé all Day*  
Oil on canvas • 30" x 48"

*Just Eating, Not Talking*  
Graphite and charcoal on paper • 12" x 9"



*Richard, Rafael, Graham, Conroy, Burl*  
Oil on panel, resin, clock mechanism • 12" x 12"

ROBIN TEWES @ROBINJTEWES



I'm interested in how much a narrative moment can tell us about ourselves. My work is involved with expressing paradoxical truths and the narrative has psychological theory. The *Men In Trouble* paintings are of men saving and struggling with themselves and each other, all of which happens in or near water. It is not certain if they are helping or harming each other. They are in compromising positions that reflect these challenging and changing times. Men depicted in paintings are usually viewed more as heroic and strong and not as vulnerable or fragile. This series shows men exposed, which suggests the need to be able to be honest and open with each other for survival reasons, relating to new ideas and shared power. It investigates what safety and danger means to men in comparison to what it can mean to women. This series is about the instability of the human experience and the desire to survive. The absence of gravity that occurs underwater creates a dream or subconscious state. The fragments of light piercing from above or the outside world displaces the recognizable moment, which is parallel to the uncertainty and unexpected course of events that can define and change our lives forever.

Photo: Monica Jane Frisell



*Men in Trouble 3*  
Oil on canvas • 58" x 36" • 2018



*Men in Trouble 4*  
Oil on canvas • 58" x 36" • 2015





## ABOUT THE HEWITT GALLERY OF ART

The Hewitt Gallery of Art, located in the main esplanade and adjacent Black and White galleries, is a laboratory for and an extension of the pedagogy of the Art and Art History Department. In addition, it is an alternative exhibition space for contemporary art of emerging, mid-career, and established artists displaying a wide variety of media and styles. The Gallery provides opportunities for art majors and minors to gain first-hand experience in exhibiting their capstone and junior work, for students to curate and organize shows in conjunction with the Gallery Director and for faculty and alumni to present current work to the community.

**Hallie Cohen** | *Director of the Hewitt Gallery of Art*



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Marymount  
Manhattan  
College

The Hewitt Gallery of Art • 221 E. 71<sup>st</sup> Street • New York, NY 10021  
The Hewitt Gallery is open 7 days a week from 9 am–10 pm