



HIRSCHL & ADLER MODERN

For Immediate Release

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A Likeness

Angela Fraleigh, Chie Fueki, Eric Helvie, Colin Hunt, Andy Mister,
Clio Newton, James Everett Stanley

February 16 – April 1, 2022

Hirschl & Adler Modern is proud to present *A Likeness*, a group exhibition featuring seven contemporary artists who push the boundaries of portrait painting. Often dismissed as anachronistic, portraiture plays a vital and dynamic role in each of these artists' practice. For them, it is a strategy rather than a genre and one which elevates their work beyond a simple likeness of the sitter. While each work in the show can be solidly defined as a portrait, these paintings are also deep meditations on more abstract concepts such as labor, commodification, marginalization, grief, and displacement. These artists understand that a portrait captures the life and time of the subject, but it also encapsulates those of the artist. Understood as such, what is at once a depiction of an individual is also a broader picture of a culture and of a society. The artists find themselves echoed in the likeness of their subject and the viewer will do so, as well.

James Everett Stanley relies on the people and the landscapes of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, for his richly allegorical paintings. His honest and tender depictions, in places that are uniquely local and yet somehow outside of time, mythologize his community. Often selecting members of the Caribbean migrant population in the area, Stanley places an emphasis on painting people who are overlooked, either by accident or by choice. As year-round locals, they are more the community than anyone else and Stanley's paintings honor them for it.

In her over-sized, photorealistic drawings, **Clio Newton** celebrates the women within her community, either friends or strangers, with an unnerving straightforwardness. Dwarfing the viewer, her subjects demonstrate power, sincerity, and confidence – attributes not traditionally bestowed on women. Her choice of scale overwhelms the viewer, which Newton plays up to great effect. There is no hiding from how society marginalizes women.

Angela Fraleigh's paintings operate similarly, however Fraleigh has spent her career examining this marginalization through an art-historical lens. In these new works, Fraleigh paints Claribel and Etta Cone, important and influential American collectors whose taste for early European Modernism helped shape the course of art in this country. Fraleigh has embedded their likenesses

within a striking tableau of color and patterning taken from two of the artists they championed: Matisse and Picasso. While the artists' names are likely familiar to all, the names of the Cone sisters are likely not. Fraleigh makes sure to correct that.

For four of the artists in this exhibition the portrait serves as a formal device, rather than a conceptual concern. **Eric Helvie** begins each painting as a photorealistic portrait of his wife in a traditional manner and executed with a loving and deft hand. Helvie then dismantles and obscures the portrait through intuitive driven abstraction. For him, the portrait is simply one step in a process based on action and reaction. This denial of the subjective in the name of the objective, from representation to abstraction, is the true intent of Helvie's paintings. But Helvie, like all great romantics, cannot let the portrait go, not entirely. His wife's fixed gaze, or the curve of her ear, the curl of her lip always slips through the artist's expressive strokes, calling him back to the beginning.

Colin Hunt removes his sitter, usually himself or family member, entirely from his egg tempera paintings and watercolors. Hunt photographs his subject in the round and in a landscape of their choosing. He then collages an image of the landscape from which he has physically cut the figure out, allowing the landscape to bend and refract in the human-shaped void. Hunt meticulously renders the collage in watercolor or egg tempera at a much larger scale. For the artist, these human shaped portals operate between here and the hereafter, providing sublime solace in the shared human experience of grief.

Andy Mister's fastidious translation of the Xerox aesthetic is politically subversive when applied to portraiture. The entire tone of the portrait is in question due to Mister's handling. Is the artist being ironic? Anarchist? Is this a portrait or a cheap print advertisement? The artist is quite happy to raise more questions about what constitutes a portrait than he is to answer them.

Chie Fueki also questions what constitutes a portrait and she does so very tongue-in-cheek. Known for her heavily collaged portraits of artists and friends, the sitter in her pieces is usually situated amidst swirls of color, dense patterns and hidden imagery. Her piece here, titled *Mirror*, places the subject within a rhythmic field of diamond and checkered patterns with overlaid, floating red, yellow and blue flowers. What is not discovered until directly in front of the work is that the piece is almost entirely made with mirrored paint. The sitter of this portrait is not the woman delicately delineated in red found hiding throughout the background. Simultaneously, willingly, and unknowingly, the subject of this portrait is you.

A Likeness opens at Hirschl & Adler Modern on Wednesday, February 16 and runs through Friday, April 1, 2022. Located on the 9th floor of the Fuller Building, at the corner of 57th Street and Madison Avenue, Hirschl & Adler Modern is open Monday through Friday, from 9:30 am to 5:15 pm.

For additional information or images, contact Shelley Farmer, Director, or Ted Holland, Exhibition Coordinator, at 212-535-8810 (phone) / 212-772-7237 (fax), or by email at shelleyf@HirschlAndAdler.com or tedh@HirschlAndAdler.com. Please visit our website at www.HirschlAndAdler.com for an online preview of the exhibition.