

## Fou Gallery presents "Interest in Humanity: Portraits of Yesterday and Today" in New York

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Andy Warhol, Portrait of a Man (George), circa 1950s. Black ballpoint pen on manila paper, 16.25 x13.75 inches ©The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.

Fou Gallery announces the upcoming group exhibition ***Interest in Humanity: Portraits of Yesterday and Today*** from August 5th to October 22nd, 2023. Centered around the theme of portraiture, this exhibition selects works from both mid-20th-century masters and contemporary emerging artists, offering a transcendent journey through time within the gallery's apartment-like space. The exhibition captures the myriad expressions of artists' affinity for humanity and their imaginative approaches to portraiture. The participating artists include: **Andy Warhol** (b. 1928), **Chen Dongfan** (b. 1982), **Dawei Wang** (b. 1984), **Furen Dai** (b. 1988), **Greg Burak** (b. 1986), **Helia Chitsazan** (b. 1995), **Joan Miró** (b. 1893), **Lorena Torres** (b. 1991), **Los Bravú** (b. 1988/1989), **Marsha Pels** (b. 1950), **Suyi Xu** (b. 1996).

Since the inception of "art," depictions of oneself and others have been an enduring pursuit. Portraits and sculptures have taken on various forms, ranging from lifelike representations to symbolic interpretations. As the 20th century dawned, photography emerged as the most accessible and beloved medium for portraying individuals, prompting artists to explore novel methods of depicting characters, liberating themselves from the constraints of realism. This exploration has since evolved into a ceaseless quest to unravel the significance and representation of portraiture, reflecting an unwavering commitment to human empathy and artistic innovation.



Joan Miro, Colpir Sense Nafrar III, 1981, Lithograph on Guarro wove paper, 37.5 x 28.5 inches (work). Edition of 50

Numerous artists have forsaken representational imagery, instead endeavoring to convey characters' personalities and psyches through vibrant colors or innovative compositions. For self-portraits, capturing the essence of one's innermost self has become paramount. When familiar with their subjects, artists may seek to express the profound relationships that exist between themselves and those they portray. Fuelled by a fascination with subjectivity and emotion and a desire to challenge tradition, artists have fundamentally transformed the genre of portraiture, pushing its boundaries and redefining its forms. Must a portrait necessarily resemble its subject? Furthermore, is the physical presence of a person a prerequisite for a portrait to convey its essence? This exhibition raises these compelling questions, inviting contemplation through a remarkable array of works spanning almost 80 years.



Helia Chitsazan, Insomnia, 2022. Oil on canvas, 44 x 68 inches ©Helia Chitsazan, courtesy of Fou Gallery

***Interest in Humanity: Portraits of Yesterday and Today*** features a collection of 15 works by 11 artists, encompassing diverse media such as oil painting, paper drawings, and sculpture. Among the earliest pieces are two paper ballpoint pen drawings by Andy Warhol,

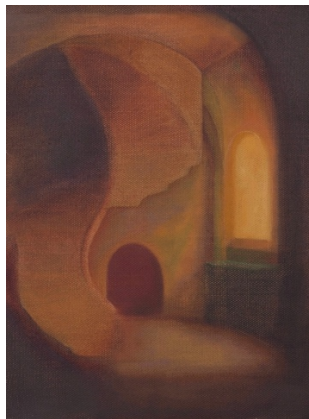
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"Portrait of a Man (George)" and "Untitled ('Male Lower Torso Partial Figure')," created in the 1950s. These works, along with others from the same series, are showcased in Taschen's Andy Warhol: Love, Sex & Design and related publications, providing a poignant portrayal of Warhol's infatuation with homosexual love and desire. Joan Miró's lithograph "Colpir Sense Nafrar III," dating back to 1981, exemplifies his distinctive style, employing a vibrant palette of yellow, red, blue, green, and black, with bold lines, triangles, and arcs meticulously woven into the composition, imbuing it with a captivating sense of magic, whimsy, and imagination.



Marsha Pels, Portrait of a Marriage, 2011. Cast bronze & aluminum on steel base,  
58 x 40 x 12 inches ©Marsha Pels, courtesy of Lubov and Fou Gallery

In a contemporary context, artist Marsha Pels' sculpture "Portrait of a Marriage," cast in bronze and aluminum on steel base in 2011, conveys profound emotions and memories tied to her partner. After the end of a romantic relationship, she created this sculpture, drawing inspiration from her partner's left-behind clothing and the corset she wore after sustaining injuries. Its form conveys a hollow representation of "she" and a flat depiction of "he," complemented by an ironic title, evoking an unconventional emotional connection.



Suyi Xu, See, The Stairs (Study of Philosopher in Meditation), 2022. Oil on linen,  
16 x 12 inches ©Suyi Xu, courtesy of Fou Gallery

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Meanwhile, contemporary artist Suyi Xu's small-scale oil painting "The Stairs (Study of Philosopher in Meditation)" presents a portrait devoid of physical characters, offering a deconstructive and reimagined take on Rembrandt's "Philosopher in Meditation." Although the philosopher is absent in Suyi Xu's composition, the serene ambiance and perfectly balanced spatial arrangement allude to the presence of philosophical and mystical elements.



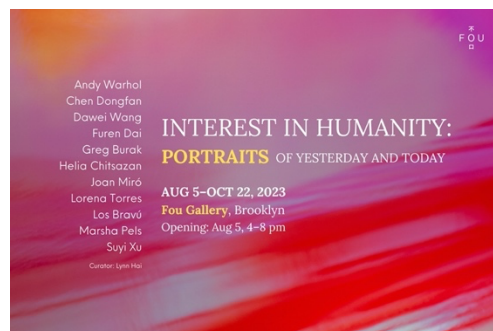
Greg Burak, Woman Smoking, 2023. Oil on linen, 19 3/4 x 18 inches

©Greg Burak, courtesy of Fortnight Institute and Fou Gallery

The exhibition is curated by Fou Gallery's Artistic Director, Lynn Hai. The showcased works epitomize diverse styles and perspectives, providing profound insights into how artists perceive and express individuality, values, and experiences. Since the 20th century, the emergence of abstract art has inspired many artists to explore non-representational techniques for portraying portraits from novel perspectives. Symbolic portraits offer subtle hints of characters' essences through depictions of personal spaces and belongings, or through representation via artistic tools alone. By eschewing surface resemblance and embracing allusions and enigmas in their creations, these artists have expanded the horizons of portraiture, boldly asserting that capturing others or oneself in art is an intricate and elusive endeavor, worthy of perpetual exploration.

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## About the exhibition





**Dates:** August 5–October 22, 2023

**Opening:** Saturday, August 5, 2023, 4–8pm

**Artists (Alphabetically sorted):** Andy Warhol, Chen Dongfan, Dawei Wang, Furen Dai, Greg Burak, Helia Chitsazan, Joan Miró, Los Bravú, Lorena Torres, Marsha Pels, Suyi Xu

**Curator:** Lynn Hai

**Co-Curator:** Echo He

**Curatorial Assistant:** Misia Yuan

**Courtesy of Fou Gallery.**

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