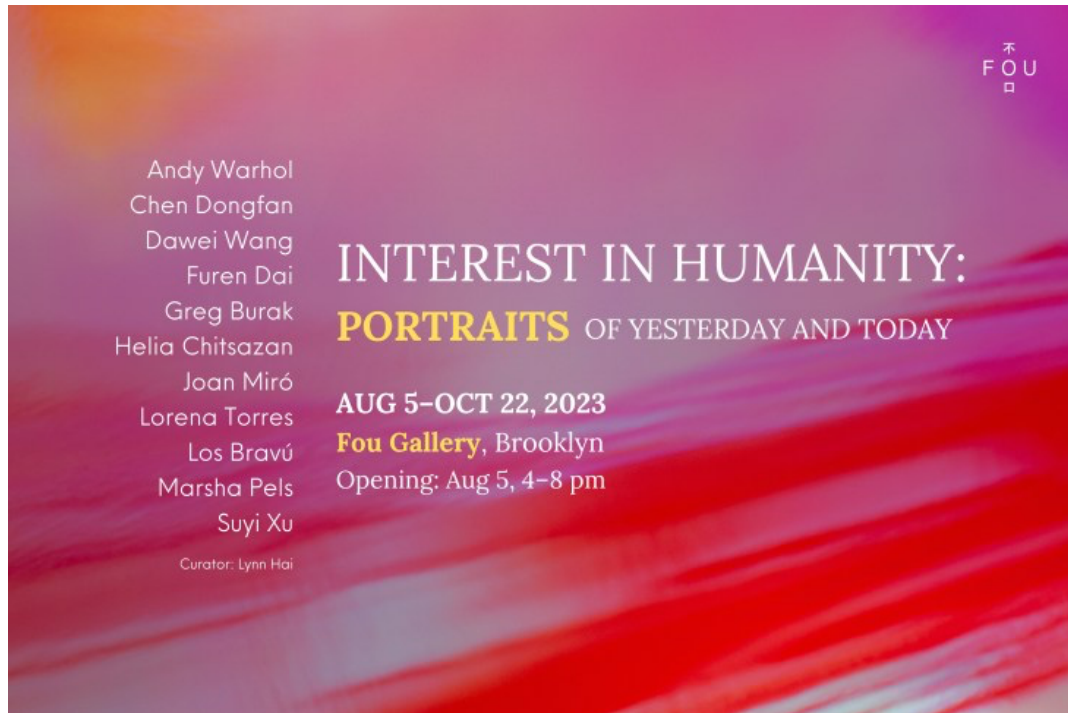


Art Show | Fou Gallery Presents Group Exhibition, Interest in Humanity: Portraits of Yesterday and Today

BY EDITORIAL TEAM | JULY 28, 2023



Design: Lynn Hai

New York – Fou Gallery is pleased to announce New York-based artist Suyi Xu’s first solo exhibition *All that is Solid Melts into Air*, from September 24th to December 18th, 2022. Xu’s first exhibition with Fou Gallery features thirteen paintings from 2020 to 2022 that depict interiors and figures with historical references and idiosyncratic symbolic elements, as a direct response to the spiritual crisis of contemporary existence.

(New York—August 5, 2023) Fou Gallery is delighted to announce 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 (listed in alphabetical order by their preferred English names) 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).



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.

Since the inception of “art,” depictions of oneself and others have been an enduring pursuit. Portraits and sculptures have been 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. 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. Fueled 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.



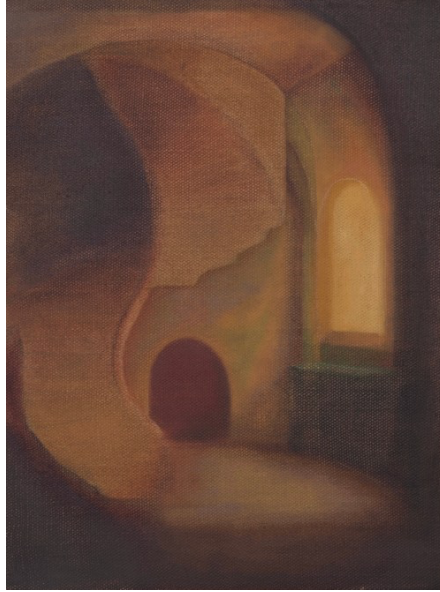
Joan Miro, *Colpir Sense Nafrrar III*, 1981, Lithograph on Guarro wove paper, 37.5 x 28.5 inches (work). Edition of 50

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, "*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. 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. 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 allow to the presence of philosophical and mystical elements.



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



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

*The press release is based on Lynn Hai's article *Constellation Narrating in Visual Art*

Exhibition Dates

August 5 – October 22, 2023

Opening Reception

Saturday, August 5, 2023, 4–8 pm

Artists (Alphabetically sorted)

Andy Warhol, Chen Dongfan, Dawei Wang, Furen Dai, Greg Burak, Helia Chitsazan, Joan Miró, Los Bravú, Lorena Torres, Marsha Pels, Suyi Xua

Curator

Lynn Hai

Co-Curator

Echo He

Curatorial Assistant

Misia Yuan

Venue

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For more information, please visit:

<https://www.fougallery.com/interest-in-humanity-portraits-of-yesterday-and-today>

About Artist (Alphabetically sorted)

Andy Warhol (b.1928, Pittsburgh, U.S.A.; d.1987, New York) is a leading figure in Pop art and among the most influential American artists of the 20th century. After graduating from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1949, he relocated to New York City, where his career as an illustrator flourished. In the early 1960s, Warhol began producing art that incorporated elements from popular culture, employing techniques like repetition and screen printing on canvas to emulate mass production. Warhol's studio, which was known as the Factory, became a center for the counterculture in New York as well as a site for his art and film production. A media-savvy, Warhol himself became a celebrity and an icon of American culture.

Chen Dongfan (b.1982, Shandong, China) obtained his B.F.A. from China Academy of Art (Hangzhou). In 2018, Chen created a large-scale public art project "The Song of Dragon and Flowers" in Chinatown supported by the New York Transportation Department, Chinatown Partnership and Fou Gallery. His work was covered by media outlets including The New York Times, NBC, CBS, Artnet, and has received a special certificate of Congressional Recognition. Recently he had solo exhibitions at AIKE (Shanghai, 2023), OōEli Pop-Up Gallery (Hangzhou, 2023) and Fou Gallery (New York, 2020).

Dawei Wang (b.1984, Shanghai, China) obtained M.F.A. at the Fine Art College of Shanghai Normal University in 2015. Wang has presented his works widely in the U.S.A. and in China, including Keyi Gallery (Hefei, China), Touchstone Gallery (Washington, D. C., 2020), Upstream Gallery, New York (2020), FQ Projects (Shanghai, 2021). Wang's art captures the solitude of urban life, influenced by his observations in Shanghai and his experiences as a new immigrant in the U.S.A. His paintings depict dream-like scenes that balance reality and imagination.

Furen Dai (b.1988, Hunan, China) received her B.A. in Russian language and literature from Beijing Foreign Studies University, and her M.F.A. from Tufts University (Boston). Dai has presented her works worldwide, including: New England Triennial (Harvard, U.S.A., 2022); The Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation (New York, 2021), National Art Center (Tokyo, 2018) and amongst others. She has participated in residencies, including International Studio and Curatorial Programs (ISCP), Art OMI, and MacDowell. Dai's recent projects explore the origins of languages, categories and systems that speak to larger socio-political structures. Her work manifests these concepts physically through the exploration of material, display, lighting, architecture, and text.

Greg Burak (b. 1986, Haverstraw, New York, U.S.A.) received his Associates Degree from the Delaware College of Art and Design, B.F.A. from the Maryland Institute College of Art, and an M.F.A. in Painting from Indiana University. Burak's solo show at Fortnight Institute (New York, 2018) marks the debut of his artistic career. Burak has presented his works widely in the U.S.A., including Venus Over Manhattan (New York, 2022), 303 Gallery (New York, 2021), Thierry Goldberg Gallery (New York, 2019). Greg Burak's artwork delves into the eerie by juxtaposing time and mystery through representational and figurative painting. He captures the elusive moment between the ordinary and supernatural, shedding light on the enigmatic.

Helia Chitsazan (b.1995, Tehran, Iran) Having earned her B.F.A. in Painting from the Art University of Tehran in 2018, Helia Chitsazan relocated to New York City and obtained an MFA in Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts in 2023. She received an award from Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation (Montreal, Canada). Chitsazan's solo show at Fou Gallery (2023) signifies the debut of her artistic career. Chitsazan's artwork captures the intricate themes of memories, identity and ephemerality, offering a nostalgic sense of home and revealing the secret double lives of Iranians, presenting an authentic expression of her personal memory while representing the deeply ingrained values of her community.

Joan Miró (b.1893, Barcelona, Spain; d. 1983, Palma, Spain) A master sculptor, painter, printmaker and ceramicist, Miró made significant contributions to Surrealism. Miró's work is instantly recognizable for its cosmic lines, bold colors, and abstract shapes. Initially studying Cubism, Fauvism, and Expressionism in Barcelona, Miró's early practice diverged from Surrealism. In 1920, he met Picasso, whose influence led Miró to join the Parisian Surrealist group, alongside Dalí and Magritte. Miró's diverse oeuvre includes papiers collés, collage, lithography, etchings, sculptures, and found objects. His works are held in prestigious collections worldwide, including the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (New York); the

Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York); Peggy Guggenheim Collection (Venice, Italy); Tate Gallery (London); and Haifa Museum (Israel), among others.

Lorena Torres (b.1991 Barranquilla, Colombia) obtained a B.F.A. in Visual Arts from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá. Based in Bogotá, Colombia, the artist portrays Colombian rural scenes, weaving magical narratives with personal memories. Through soft brushstrokes, Torres creates imagery of flowers, fruit, lush vegetation, and dreamlike figures, evoking a southern slow-motion reverie. Torres has participated in exhibitions in commercial galleries and non-profit organizations in Latin America, the U.S. and Europe, including SGR Galería (Bogotá), *Atendido por sus Propietarios* (Bogotá), *The Room* (London, 2022), and *Thierry Goldberg* (New York, 2022).

Los Bravú Dea Gómez (b.1989, Salamanca, Spain) and Diego Omil (b. 1988, Pontevedra, Spain) met when they were studying Fine Arts at the University of Salamanca and began working together in 2012 under the name “Los Bravú” – a Galician word used to refer to the smell of animals. They pursue a multidisciplinary career, blending painting, performing arts, sculpture, and comics. Their exploration of contemporary topics like touristification, rural youth life, and digital media challenges the distinction between “high” and “low” culture. Incorporating classical art influences and contemporary aesthetics, they have exhibited in Madrid, Rome, London, New York, Santo Domingo, and Dakar.

Marsha Pels (b.1950, New York) earned her B.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design (1972) and M.F.A. from Syracuse University (1974). Pels has been recognized with notable awards including the Public Art Fund Grant (1981), the Prix de Rome (1984), and a Pollock-Krasner Foundation grant (2004). Her artworks are included in public collections such as The Olbricht Collection (Essen, Germany) and the National Museum of Gaborone (Gaborone, Botswana). Pels’ exhibition at Lubov received critical acclaim in *Artforum*, *The New York Times*, *Hyperallergic* and *Garage Magazine*. Pels’ sculptural practice draws from her autobiography and historical research, exploring themes such as gender identity, war and contemporary politics.

Suyi Xu (b.1996, Shanghai, China) earned her B.F.A. in Art History from Barnard College (New York) and her M.F.A. from School of Visual Arts (New York) in 2022. Xu’s paintings are meditations on space, interiors, and architecture that morphs into color fields. Xu’s work has been shown in the U.S. and Europe, including Gallery Func (Shanghai, 2023), Fortnight Institute (New York, 2023), Galerie Hussenot (Paris, 2022), Boomer Gallery (London, 2021) and A.I.R. Gallery (New York, 2021). Her solo show at Fou Gallery (2022) signifies the debut of her artistic career. Xu’s works are included in public collections of Powerlong Museum (Shanghai), Long Museum (Shanghai) and Xiao Museum of Contemporary Art (Rizhao, China).

About Curator

Lynn Hai graduated from Architectural Association (London) in 2014 and gained her Master’s in Design Studies at Harvard University (Boston) in 2017. She is a partner and the Art Director of Fou Gallery, also a staff writer at Harvard CAMLab (Chinese Art Media Lab). She initiates and

curates art exhibitions for Fou Gallery Artists and refines the artists' creations in academic form. Her selected curatorial and design experiences includes: November online group highlights on PLATFORM by David Zwirner Gallery with Cathleen Clarke and Shuling Guo (New York, 2022); *Wei Jia: Good Times* (Fou Gallery and Chambers Fine Arts, 2021); Together in Distance benefit art auction for the relief of COVID-19 (New York, 2020); Dwelling At the Present Interior Design Exhibition and Forum (Harvard Club, New York, 2019); *Flow Fields – Confluence in Urban Picnic* (Matedero, Madrid, 2013); *Flow Fields – Dilution* in 2013 Lisbon Triennale (Sinel de Cordes Palace, Lisbon, 2013) et al. Her writings are published on art periodicals including *ArtChina*, *CAFA Artinfo*, *Tussle Magazine* and *ArtPulse* et al.

About Gallery

FOU GALLERY is an apartment gallery and creative lab based in New York. Fou is dedicated to promoting creative talents and projects of our time. As suggested by its name, Fou is both a denial of the mainstream commercial gallery model and an active contributor to a new, organic art community. With the belief that the enjoyment of art is an essential part of everyday life, Fou offers a vibrant, inspirational selection of original works in art and design, and hosts various events to create a diverse and accessible art space.

(text & photo courtesy of FOU GALLERY)

<https://litang.zone/2023/07/28/art-show-fou-gallery-presents-group-exhibition-interest-in-humanity-portraits-of-yesterday-and-today/>