

Distinctive Portraits



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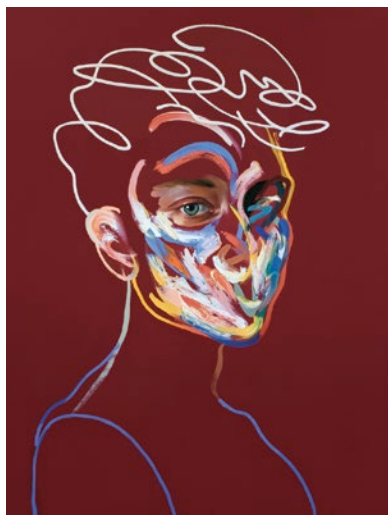
The new exhibition *Portraiture 2020* at Arcadia Contemporary in Pasadena, California, explores what a portrait is considered to be. The artwork in the show, by five artists from around the world, highlights diverse styles that push the boundaries of the classic genre. Works will hang from January 11 through 30.

"From the elegant and timeless works by the U.S.'s **Will St. John** to the mysterious and haunting works by **Lo Chan Peng** from Taiwan, the 'rules are being re-written' as to what artists and collectors should consider as a portrait," says gallery president Steven Diamant. "The other artists in the exhibition include the Wales-based **Mary Jane Ansell** whose hyper-romantic and flawlessly executed works are a radical contrast to the paintings created by Australia's **Loribelle Spirovski**, whose frantic and hyperactive works are

indicative of our contemporary, fast-shifting multimedia culture. Rounding out the group is London's **Ben Ashton** whose works might be mistaken for British portraiture of the 18th and early 19th century...but with a surreal and, perhaps, drug-induced twist."

Among the paintings in the show is Chan Peng's *The Fog*. The artist explains, "My works reflect different circumstances men face in life, including history, war and cross-cultural events. *The Fog* indicates the complex feelings one feels and how they reflect on one's appearance; it can also be seen as my self-portrait."

Ashton's *The Best Intentions No. 1* is from a larger body of work. "This series of work focuses on the Regency period in British portraiture, a time when Britain was focused on relentless expansion of Empire. To this day, the walls of British museums, institutions and



3



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Lo Chan Peng, *The Fog*,
oil on canvas, 36 x 28"

2
Will St. John, *Untitled*,
oil on panel, 21 x 18"

3
Loribelle Spirovski,
Homme 164, oil, 48 x 36"

4
Mary Jane Ansell,
Lamina, oil on
aluminum, 12 x 12"

5
Ben Ashton,
The Best Intentions No. 1,
oil, 22 x 18"

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stately homes are lined with portraits from the era, which depict a very positive view of that age's aristocrats, basking in the spoils of this colonial conquest," he says. "Today as the Empire fades into the past, the British public suffer from a lofty nostalgia, obsessed with past glories that are more myth now than reality. By distorting and corrupting this imagery I hope to lend the past an unsafe and tainted air, subverting idealized memories of triumphs past."

Soribelle's *The Homme Series* includes the painting *Homme 164*. The series as a whole "began as a way for me to play with techniques and ideas that I've always been curious to experiment with over time," the artist says. "It grew into its own kind of style with a visual language that aims to capture the freshness of a sketch. *Homme 164* is part of its own sub-series within the *Homme* collection, in which a single eye is isolated for detail and refinement while a strong linear focus is emphasized by drawing onto the canvas directly with the tube of paint. For this work, as with the other *Homme* pieces, I have not used a particular model but instead drew from a conglomeration of different faces and genders, remembered and seen." ●

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5

