



H i g h l y

THE EMOTIONAL AND
LUSH FIGURATIVE
PAINTINGS OF
MALCOLM T. LIEPKE
WILL BE ON VIEW
THIS NOVEMBER
AT ARCADIA
CONTEMPORARY.

BY ROCHELLE BELSITO

10/10/14

1 *Peek-a-Boo*, oil, 10 x 10"

2 *The Green Dress*, oil, 15 x 16"



C h a r g e d

Look at one of Malcolm T. Liepke's figurative paintings and immediately you are transported into the scene by locking eyes with a single figure or quietly observing a crowded room. His pieces are lushly painted, which adds dimension to the flat canvas and invites people into other worlds. These worlds, as Liepke explains, are not just his creation but they belong to the viewers who add their own interpretations.

Often Liepke is asked what he thinks about his paintings, but he believes his

opinion or inspiration is no longer as important because the work has been released into the universe. "If they respond to it, they see their own story told," he says, adding, "If you see something else that's great and I like that. I kind of want to encourage that. I'm always interested to hear a totally different take than what I see. That's what art does—it lets people interpret it, and it lives through the ages in a way."

In that sense, the Minneapolis-based artist's paintings are timeless in the same



3 *Head in Blue*, oil, 8 x 10"

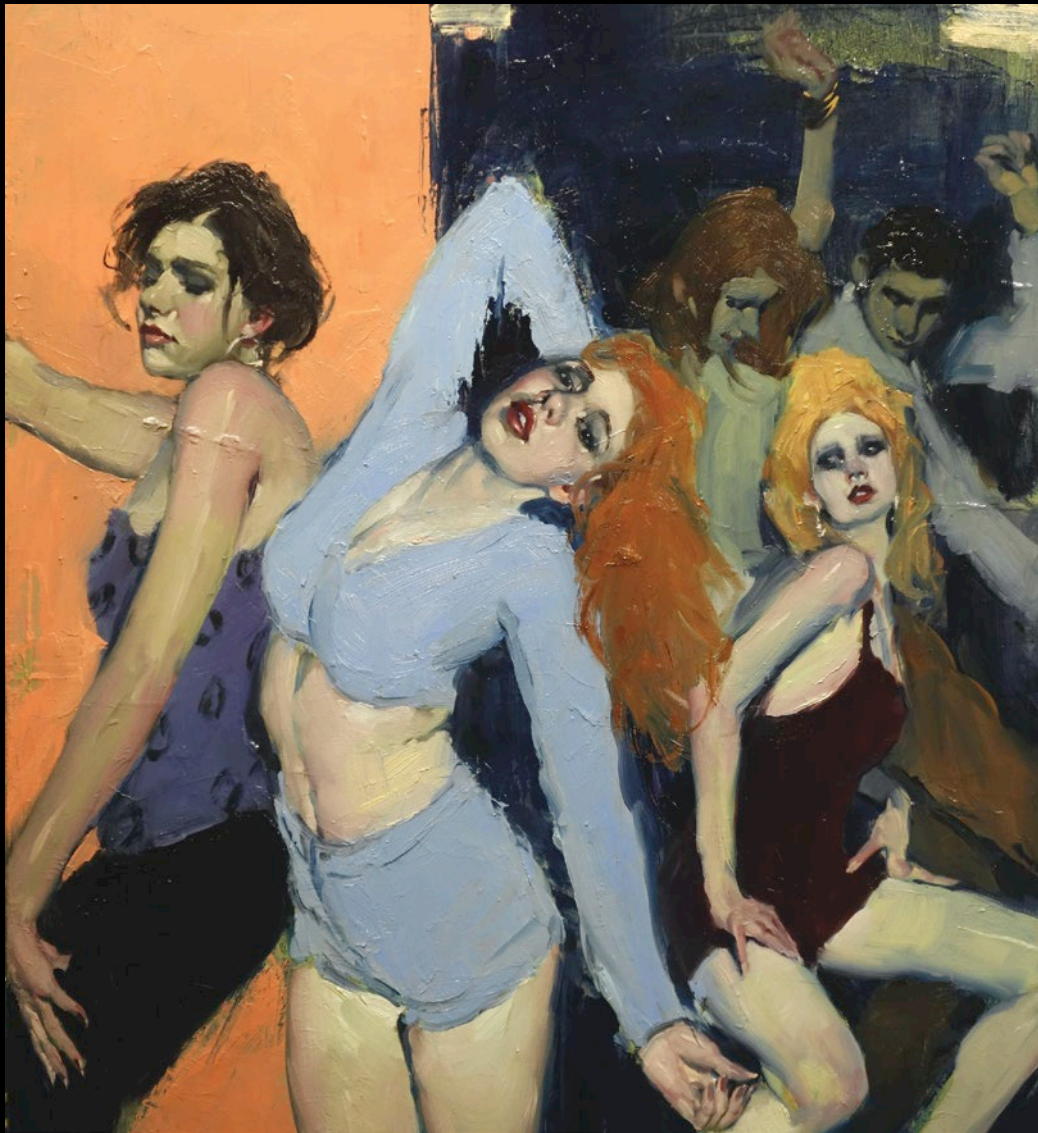
way as the works of past masters. They connect with people on multiple levels through recognizable and relatable forms or an expression or moment that recalls memories. Liepeke's works are also imbued with intense emotions. "I'm drawn and attracted to people. My paintings are really highly charged and there's a heightened sense of emotion [from the figure] that I don't get from painting landscapes or a cat," Liepeke explains. He continues,

"To me there's that timeless emotional quality that I can't get out of anything else. I don't get that connection that I see when I get a person looking back at me."

Paintings such as *Peek-a-Boo* and *Head in Blue* depict a female staring down the viewer and drawing them to that moment. The former work has a more sensual quality as the woman sits with her knees drawn close to her chest, her eyes just peering above them. *Head in Blue* can

elicit a softer emotion.

Other pieces feature multiple figures in a bar, at a party or out on the dance floor. *Dance Club* is an amalgamation of bodies moving to the beat—each person pictured lost in time and the viewer playing out every narrative in their head. "I love people in crowds because you get all those stories," Liepeke says. "The couple together, apart, someone is by themselves, someone is looking around—there are all



4 *Dance Club*, oil, 30 x 22"

those stories of people in a group."

A consummate technician, Liepke's artwork is also about how the paint is applied to the canvas. The artist is pushing to new color palettes and trying different ways of handling the backgrounds in his most recent explorations. "A lot of artists [I like] really have had that ability to show that flair [in brushwork] and use it in an emotional way and paint with juicy, loaded brushes," he says. "I've always like that.

I like the process of painting, and I like the way that a loaded brush hits the canvas. It has a tactile, juicy quality to it."

November 23 through December 12, Arcadia Contemporary will present Liepke's newest paintings in a solo exhibition at its Pasadena, California, showroom. Liepke, who briefly studied at the Art Center College of Design in the city, is excited to visit the gallery and see old friends and collectors. ●

MALCOLM T. LIEPKE

When: November 23–December 12, 2019

Where: Arcadia Contemporary, 39 E. Colorado Boulevard, Pasadena, CA 91105

Information: (626) 486-2018,
www.arcadiacontemporary.com