



FRAMING
THE FEMALE
GAZE



COMPARE

CLASSIC | CONTEMPORARY

Framing the Female Gaze brings together the work of contemporary women artists, who draw inspiration from male masters of French 19th-century art, from late Jacques-Louis David to early Pablo Picasso, but who also transform and critique these historical works from their own perspectives. Compare and evaluate the recast perspectives, where women are now the active and heroic subjects of their own artworks.

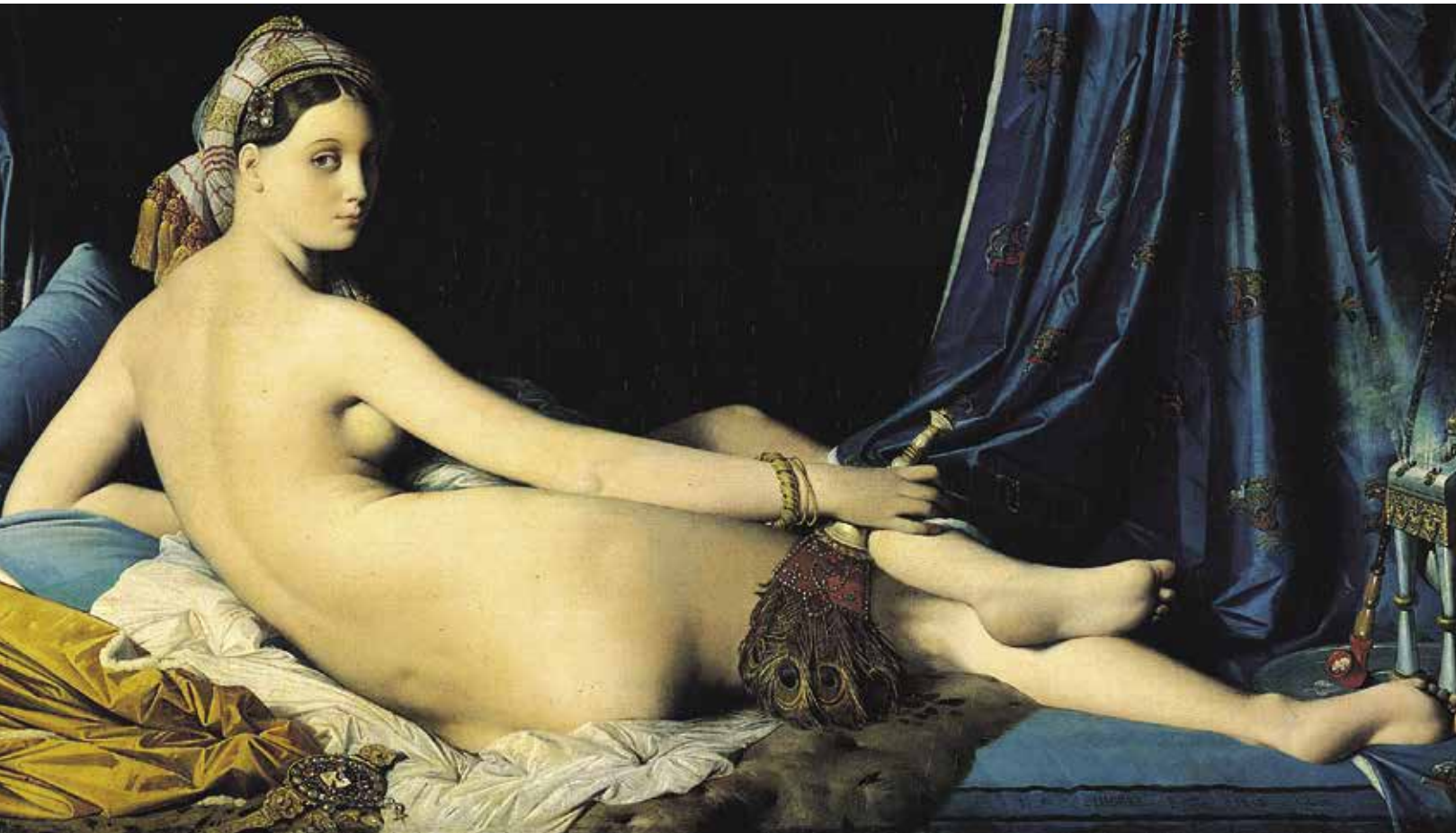
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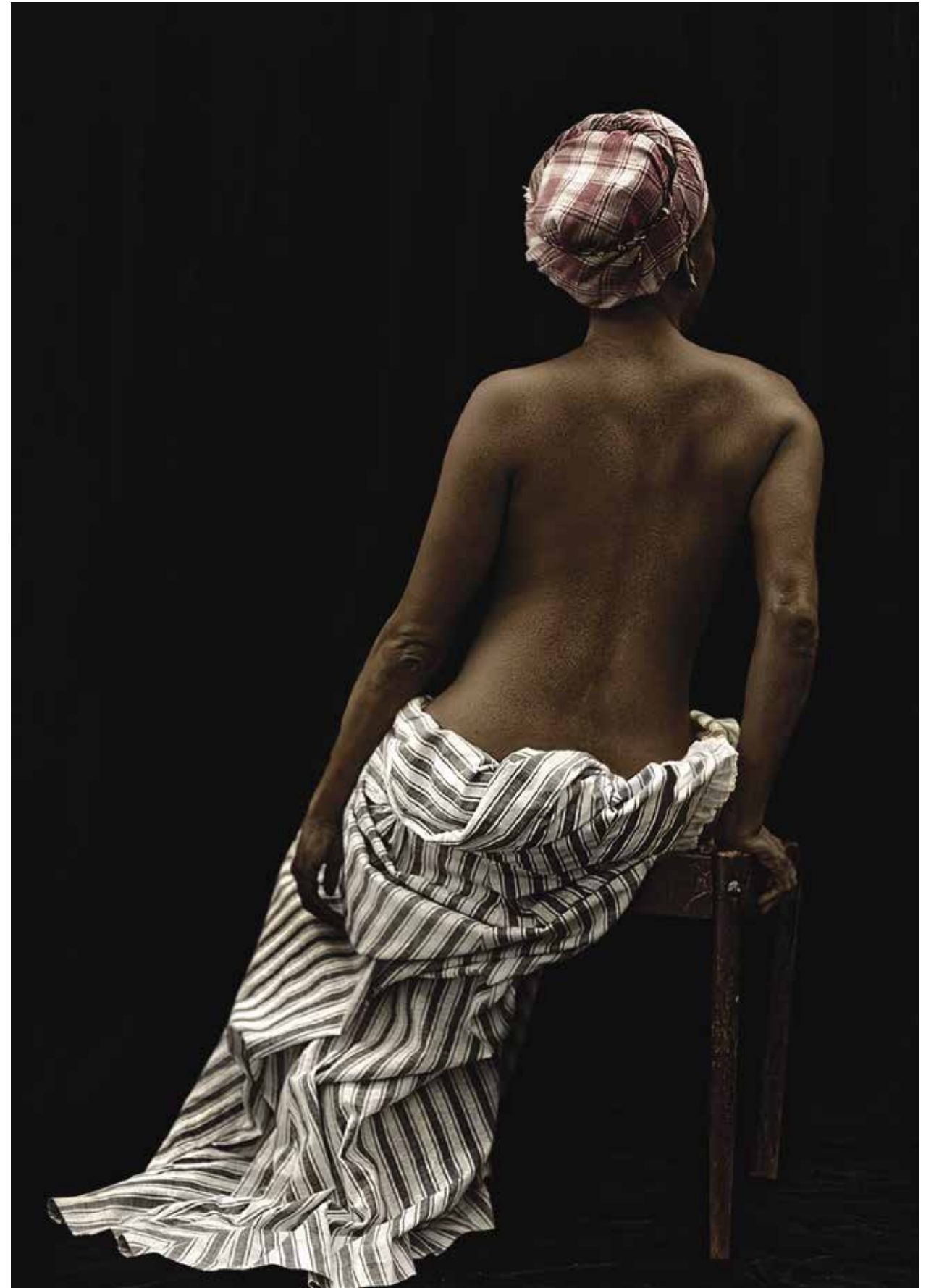




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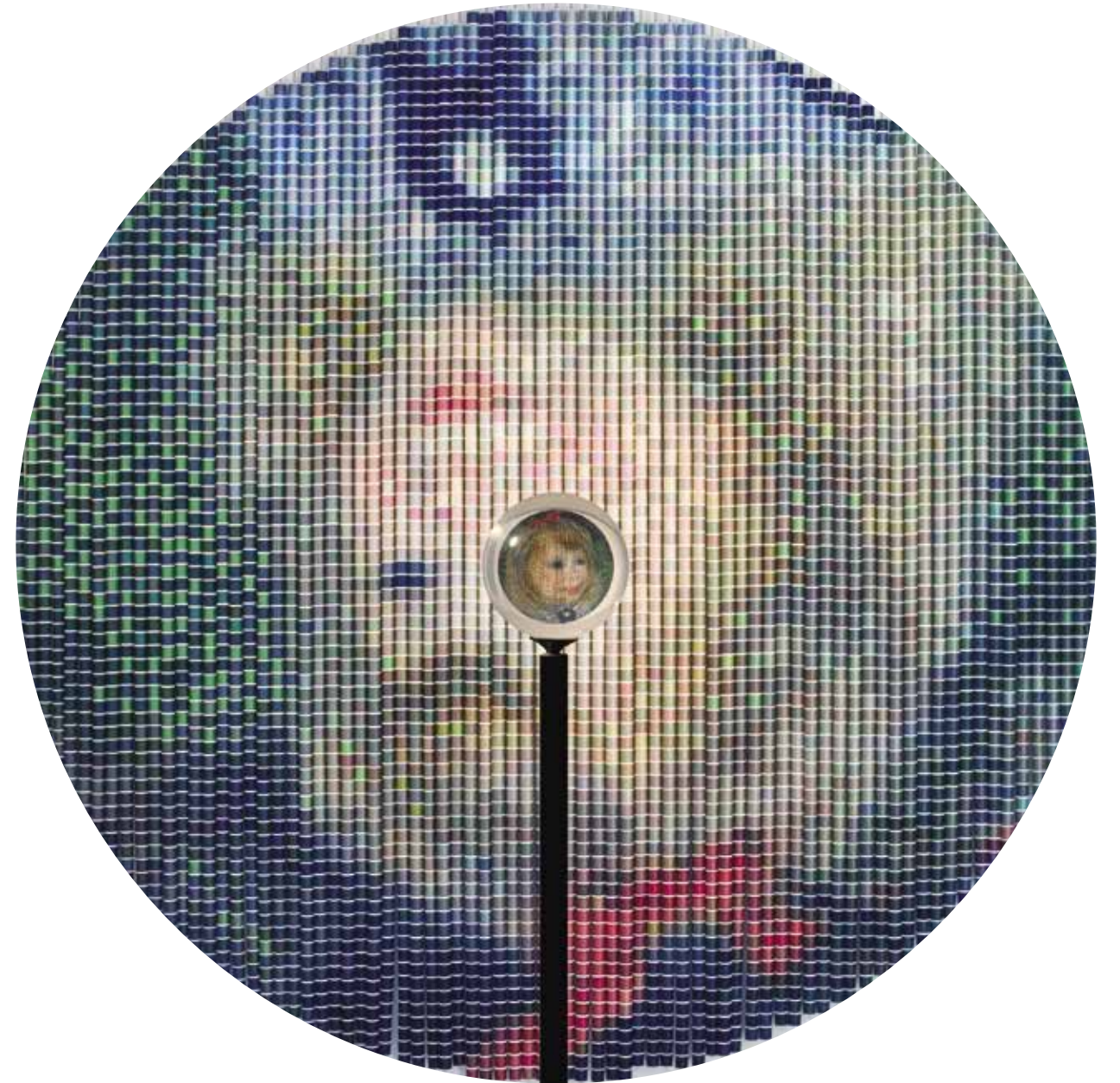
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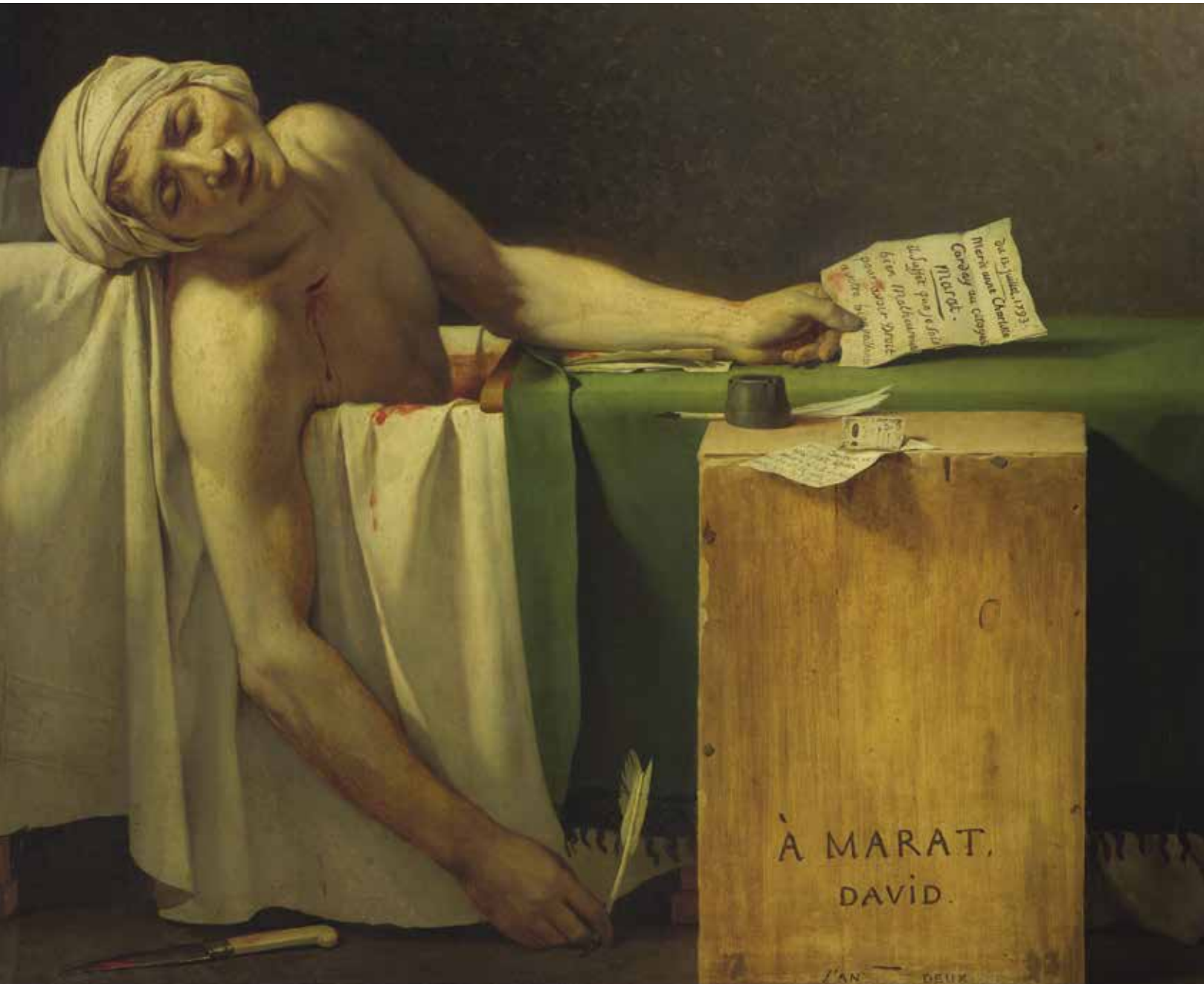


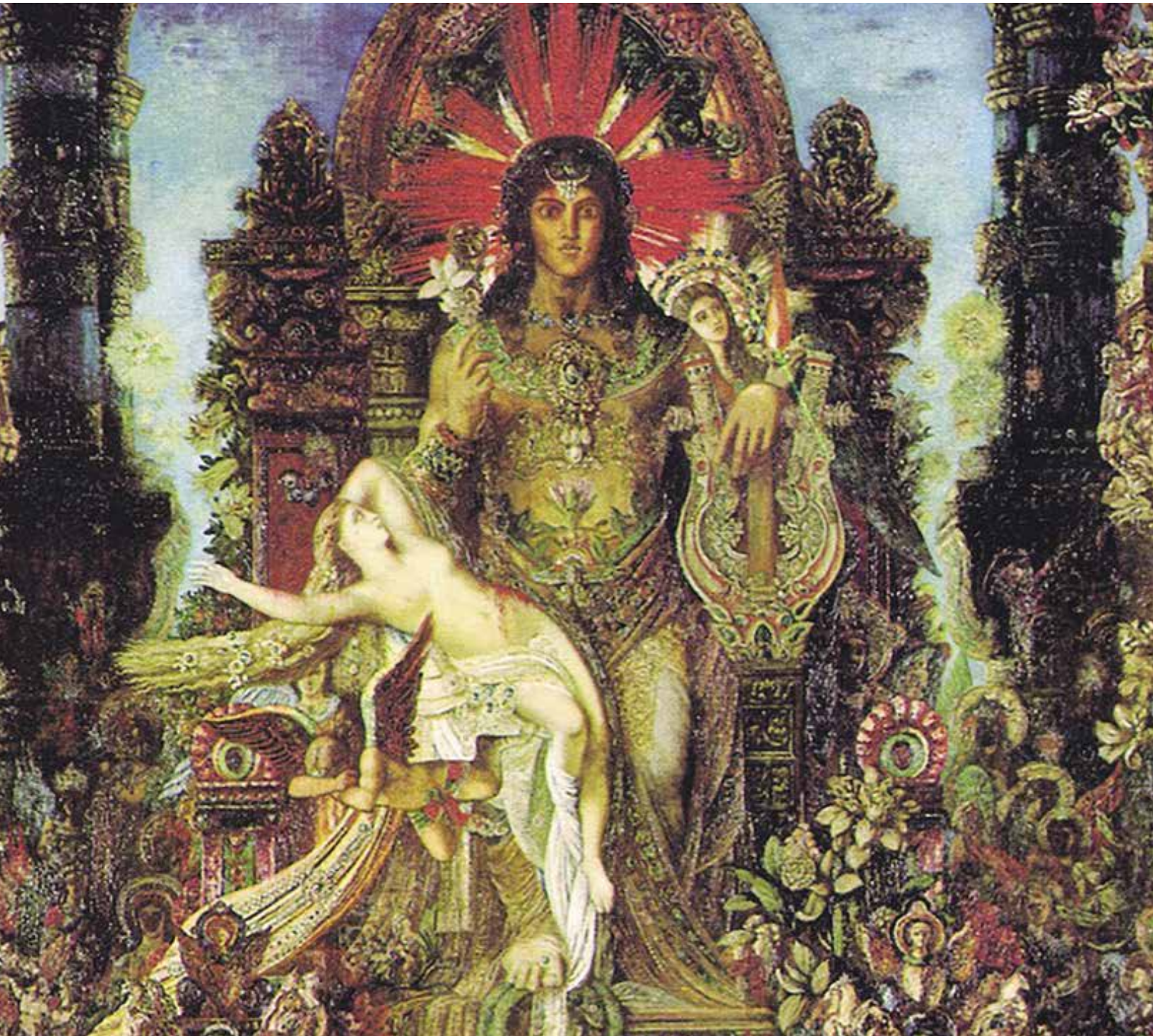
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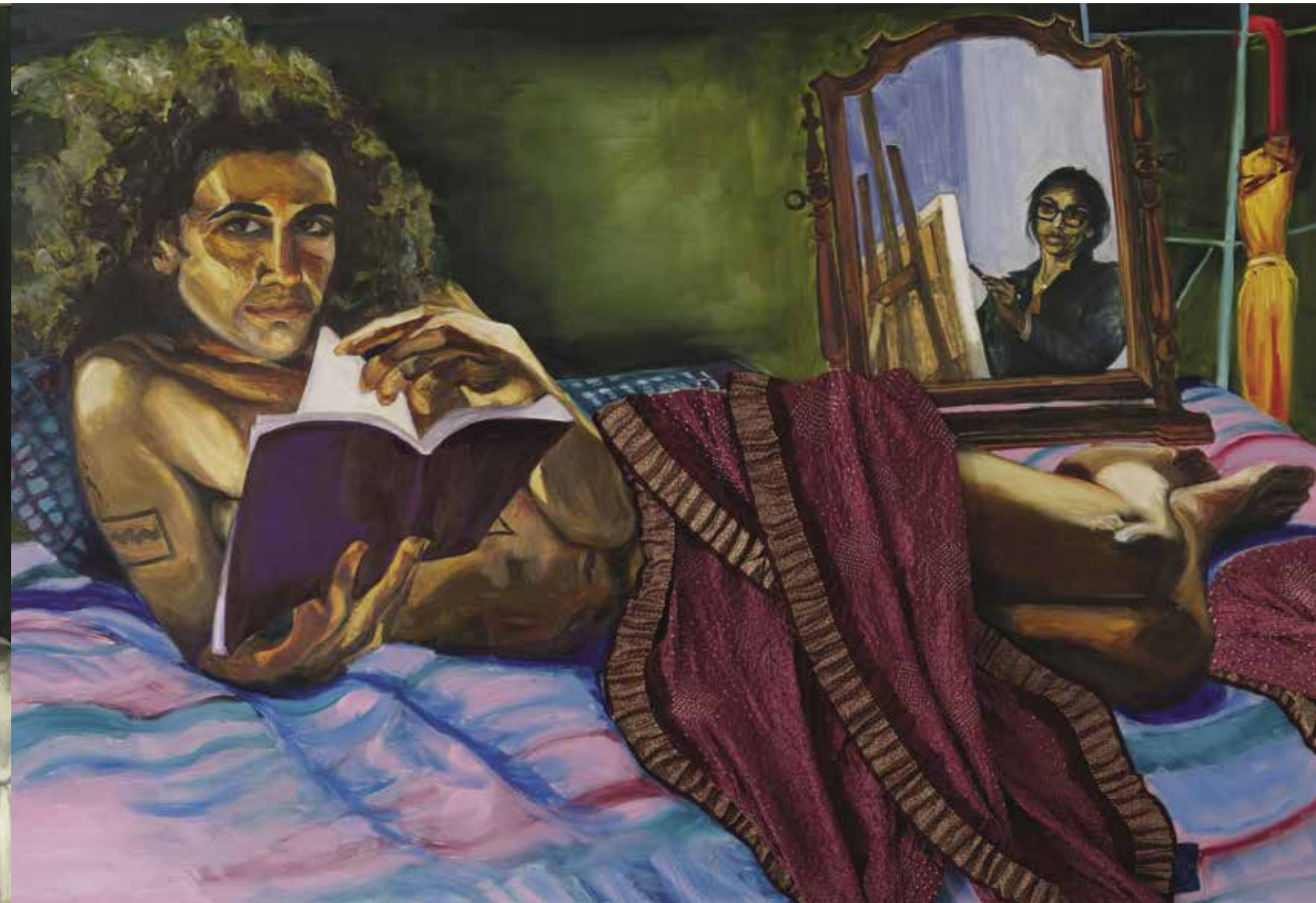




MANET



CHARABARTI



Artists and Images

Compare Classic | Contemporary

Pages 4 and 5

Edgar Degas (1834-1917). *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen*, 1879-1881

Deborah Ory and Ken Browar. *Misty Copeland after Degas, "Little Dancer,"* 2015

Pages 6 and 7

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867). *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814

Lalla Essaydi. *Les Femmes du Maroc: La Grande Odalisque*, 2008

Pages 8 and 9

Eugène Delacroix (1789-1863). *Women of Algiers in their Apartment*, 1834

Mimi Gross. *Dark Air: After Delacroix's Women of Algiers*, 1980-1981. Detail

Pages 10 and 11

John Singer Sargent (1856-1925). *Portrait of Madam X*, 1883-1884. Detail

Christie Neptune. *Guild of Light*, 2020. Detail

Pages 12 and 13

Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825). *The Coronation of Napoleon*, 1805-1807. Detail

Claudia Doring Baez. *David—Josephine's Cape During the Coronation of Napoleon*, Louvre, 2021

Pages 14 and 15

Henry Fuseli (1741-1825). *The Nightmare*, 1781

Yushi Li. *The Nightmare*, 2019

Pages 16 and 17

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867). *Odalisque or the Small Bather*, 1864

Ayana V. Jackson. *Anarcha*, 2017

Pages 18 and 19

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841-1919). *A Girl with a Watering Can*, 1876. Detail

Devorah Sperber. *After Renoir*, 2006. Detail

Pages 20 and 21

Gustave Caillebotte (1848-1894). *The Floor Scrapers*, 1875. Detail

Julia Santos Solomon. *The Floor Scrapers*, 1994-1995. Detail

Pages 22 and 23

Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825). *The Death of Marat*, 1793

Lara Alcantara Lansberg. *untamed*, 2023. Detail

Pages 24 and 25

Gustave Moreau (1826-1898). *Jupiter and Sémélé*, 1895. Detail

Fay Ku. *Throne*, 2016. Detail

Pages 26 and 27

Édouard Manet (1832-1883). *Olympia*, 1863

Basha Charabarti. *Beshouy as Olympia*, 2023. Detail

Introductory Pages

Altered details

Page 2

Onésipe Aguado de las Marismas (1830-1893). *Woman Seen from the Back*, 1862

Jessica Spence. *Fearless/Fear-Less*, 2019

Page 30

Édouard Manet (1832-1883). *Nana*, 1877

Cecily Brown. *Nana*, 2023

Page 48

Marie-Guillemine Benoist (1768-1826). *Portrait of Madeline*, 1800

Scherezade Garcia. *Aroma of Cacao*, 2022

Page 166

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867). *Portrait of Amédée-David de Pastoret, le Comte de Pastoret*, 1823-1826

Kathleen Gilje. *Robert Rosenblum on Ingres's Portrait of Marquis de Pastoret*, 2005

Front Cover

Allison Zuckerman. *Woman at her Toilette*, 2017. Detail

Back Cover (Details)

Top row:

Elinor Carucci. *And if I don't get enough attention*, 2002

Marilyn Minter. *Target*, 2017

Second row:

Scherezade Garcia. *Aroma of Cacao*, 2022

Celeste Rapone. *Muscle for Hire*, 2023

Third Row:

Fay Ku. *The Jungle Has Eyes*, 2019

Cheyenne Julien. *Can't Go out, Can't stay in*, 2019

Fourth Row:

Cecily Brown. *Nana*, 2023

Rose Freymuth-Frazier. *Love Seeker*, 2022



FRAMING THE FEMALE GAZE

Women Artists and the New Historicism

Lehman College Art Gallery

City University of New York

2023

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WOMEN AND MEN, AND WHAT THEY SEE — A HOPSCOTCH ACROSS ART HISTORY

It is amazing how powerful images haunt you.

Years ago, riding on a Manhattan bus one rainy afternoon, I was struck by an image of a naked woman wearing the head from a guerilla suit. On a grey day, the black-and-white image, derived from one of the most famous nudes in female art, Ingres's *La Grande Odalisque*, was dramatically juxtaposed against a background of raincoat yellow, alongside text boldly declaring the statistics of an inequitable art world. But it was the image that got me. The most famous image of Guerilla Girls is famous for a reason: funny and angry at the same time, the poster does what the best political images do, make the case "in the field" as a visual snapshot that encapsulates a political position and stays with you. I tucked that image into my memory, and years later, deep in conversation with writer Georgette Gouveia, it resurfaced in my mind. Georgette has long held interest in issues that surround the female gaze—how women artists view men. During our enlightening, if meandering conversations, Georgette pointed out that the death, in early 2019, of feminist art critic Linda Nochlin, often quoted for her 1971 article, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" made the presence of women artists ripe for reconsideration. I was intrigued, and with colleague Deborah Yasinsky debated topics that, linked by a cogent thread, could become an exhibition, one that embraced the ideas of women and men and what they see that hopscotch across art history.

In March 2020, Covid-19 upended Lehman Gallery's exhibition planning, but sometimes slower development yields unexpected fruit, and the Ingres-derived Guerilla Girls image returned to me, again, one afternoon when Georgette, Deborah, and I were on a Zoom call to discuss the possibility of a show built around contemporary interpretations of Renaissance portraiture. A question came up: What about the influence of 19th-century France, a time and a place where political and artistic forces vied to be accepted? The Guerrilla Girls chose Ingres, realizing the instant recognizability and power of his image, a nude concubine. The show gained focus and drive when we made the decision to focus on the relationship between contemporary female artists and their male counterparts in 19th-century France. Deborah's research into contemporary artists who drew inspiration from David to Gauguin, demonstrated that the comparison between artists of different centuries and genders was viable for Lehman, a small academic gallery. Ingres hovered around the fast-forming list of paintings like a spirit animal.

The "Female Gaze" can be a slippery subject. Who is staring at whom and why? Who has power and who doesn't? Is it a sign of agency to put oneself on display for the delectation of others? Or is it ultimately succumbing to a form of capitalist patriarchy? Is the Female Gaze ultimately any less exploitive than the Male version, and where do the two overlap? An exhibition of nearly four



1



2



3



4



5



6

MODERN DAY ENDYMIONS THE MALE ODALISQUE

- 1 Phyllis Gay Palmer. *Crouch*, 1997
- 2 Yushi Li, in collaboration with Steph Wilson. *The Feast, inside*, 2020
- 3 Jordan Casteel. *Elijah*, 2013

- 4 Basha Chakrabarti. *Beshouy as Olympia*, 2023
- 5 Katie Commodore. *Greg in His Catsuit*, 2018
- 6 Sylvia Sleigh. *Portrait of an Actor: Sean Pratt*, 1994

dozen artists engaging in a host of viewpoints and perspectives emerged, but all circled the central thesis—the long shadow of art history that for good or ill continues to engage today’s artists, inspiring them, generating debate and critique, and spawning new art. The curatorial team expanded with Patricia Cazorla, Director of The Hall of Fame Art Gallery at Bronx Community College (BCC), who secured several important loans for the show, and the timely decision of BCC to reopen its Gallery gave us the opportunity to create a related focus exhibition to enhance the main offering at Lehman, another campus link across CUNY’s network of art galleries.

I am surprised by the range of artists who have been inspired by *La Grande Odalisque*; naming just two, the cheeky insouciance of Arlene Rush’s gender-bending diptych to Layla Essaydi’s odalisque she clothes in messages in her solemn reconsideration of cultural appropriation. If Ingres became the guiding force when considering the historical influence of a slew of French 19th-century artists, Sylvia Sleigh, famous for her 1970s male odalisques she infused with beauty, longing, and humanity, became the guide for our contemporary list of works in the show. I was lucky enough to have known Sylvia late in her life, and I am sure she would be pleased by the work of her spiritual daughters and granddaughters. Sleigh became famous for her depictions of the male nude, (which actually make up a comparatively small portion of her oeuvre) but, as can be seen in the selection of male odalisques here, the female eye’s appreciation of male beauty continues unabated. There is a thematic line running from Sleigh through to the male nudes of Jordan Casteel. Each of the artists suggests an earnest appreciation of the male form combined with a distinct emphasis on the model’s individuality. Here, the Female Gaze might be better termed the Empathetic Gaze. Although these women artists have absorbed the sensuality of Ingres, they do not resort to his generalized stereotypes of eroticism. Rather than fierce and brooding male sexuality in heroic mode, the artists present a humanist, perhaps more feminized, vision of manhood.

Framing the Female Gaze has been a work of love for the many people who have helped bring the show to fruition. I am grateful to our artists whose compositions on view have made one of our most beautiful installations. At Lehman College, I am grateful to our President, Dr. Fernando Delgado for his support of the Gallery. Rene Rotolo, Vice President for Administration and Finance, has been a dedicated supporter of the arts at Lehman College, overseeing the Art Gallery, Lehman Stages, and the Performing Arts Center, and providing enthusiasm, resources, and thoughtful advice as we continue developing Lehman’s artistic mission. Our devoted board members, co-chaired by Marina Garde and Dolly Bross Geary, have worked energetically to further the mission of the Gallery and to support our ambitious programming. I am lucky to have a

wonderful staff: Deborah Yasinsky, Assistant Director, did a fine job developing early iterations of the exhibition checklist, organizing the accompanying education programs for the exhibition, and acting as my artistic partner during the final months of exhibition preparation. Sarah Alvira, Gallery Assistant, worked diligently as our project registrar in the final months of execution, handling myriad details relating to loans and shipping, image collection, and installation issues. Mary Ann Siano, Grants Associate, acquired the vital funding that allowed us to undertake ambitious programming. Juan Cano oversaw our handsome installation with talent and efficiency. Linda Locke, the Gallery’s longstanding publications editor, outdid even her meticulous standards for our largest catalog to date, exhibiting great patience with our many changes. As always, her creativity and dedication serve as a reminder to me what it is to be dedicated to one’s work. Michelle Frank created the elegant design that beautifully showcases the works on these pages. Christina Zuccari skillfully provided expert installation assistance on a tight deadline. I owe a special debt of thanks to Salvatore Schiciano and Anne Swartz, both of whom proved an invaluable font of ideas, making suggestions of artists to include in the exhibition. I am also grateful to Paula Ewin and Andrew Hottle for their assistance in helping us secure a fine example of Sylvia Sleigh’s work for the show.

Discussing this exhibition with students in the gallery where we are surrounded by the art, I am reminded of the relevance of this subject matter. Many of our visitors are entering an art gallery for the first time. They may not be familiar with the names in the French art historical canon but they recognize that the images and the discussions surrounding beauty, sex, desire, power, and societal approval and opprobrium, are as meaningful today as when Gustave Courbet created *The Origin of the World* to scandal in 1866. All of our gallery discussions eventually return to the power of social media and the crushing obligation many young people feel to put themselves on display for society’s approval. Artist Yushi Li may have the greatest insight for this exhibition: that the Male and Female Gazes are collapsing into one vast Technological Gaze, in which individuals eschew privacy to present themselves to the all-seeing eye of the digital age. Strong stuff for the rising generation. As our students engage this swirling cornucopia of societal issues, I have no doubt that they will transform the art being made, using the power of the historical antecedent, which continues to exert the gravitational pull of the past.

Bartholomew F. Bland
Executive Director, Lehman College Art Gallery

FOCUS EXHIBITION, *FRAMING THE FEMALE GAZE*
THE HALL OF FAME ART GALLERY, BRONX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Hall of Fame Art Gallery Bronx Community College is honored to present the Focus Exhibition for *Framing the Female Gaze: Women Artists and the New Historicism*, showing the work of two contemporary Latin-American artists—Cecilia Paredes and Lara Alcántara Lansberg—who found inspiration in the art historical works of 19th-century France.

It is a pleasure to oversee the Hall of Fame Art Gallery at its debut collaboration with Lehman College Art Gallery. Our exhibition coincides with the re-opening of the Hall of Fame, following its temporary closing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Founded over 40 years ago, and back in its original location in Bliss Hall, the Hall of Fame Art Gallery is administered by the Department of Art & Music at Bronx Community College (BCC). Highlighting friendship in times of uncertainty, global anxiety, and hostility worldwide is essential. The topic, the “female gaze,” is appropriate for joining these two galleries because CUNY art galleries provide a contemplative arena where dialog about women’s issues, such as sexuality, femininity, identity, voyeurism, and eroticism are explored without the shadow of misogynistic criticism.

It is not a coincidence that two immigrant women artists from Latin America were chosen to exhibit their work for *Framing the Female Gaze* at the Hall of Fame Art Gallery. The Gallery derives its name from one of the most prominent features of the Bronx Community College campus—The Hall of Fame for Great Americans. Situated on the western edge of the campus within sight of the panoramic view of the Palisades along the New Jersey shoreline, this 560-foot-long, open-air colonnade is the first Hall of Fame in the United States. Originally commissioned by New York University, the campus’s former owner, it was designed by Beaux Arts architect Stanford White. The Hall of Fame honors scientists, educators, humanitarians, and artists. Its architecture focuses on the “great men of history,” and its collection includes 96 bronze busts, but only 10 of them are of women.

Framing the Female Gaze follows the goal of The Hall of Fame Art Gallery to highlight extraordinary works by underrepresented artists with unique viewpoints. This exhibition is also a testament to the transformative influence of social movements such as MeToo and Black Lives Matter, which continue to shape the educational landscape, bringing new sociopolitical dynamics and fostering a more inclusive environment within academic institutions. The works of Paredes and Alcántara Lansberg include six large-scale photographs, captivating reflections by the two artists, whose resolutely contemporary work draws inspiration from the roots of the art historical canon. Born in Peru, Paredes has been a nomad for most of her adult life, calling many places home. It was Costa Rica’s



natural beauty which inspired her performances that she documented in photography. She seamlessly integrates her physical form into vibrant textiles, effectively blurring the boundaries between the self and the surrounding environment. This distinct method of camouflage serves as a visual metaphor, symbolizing her ceaseless endeavor to comprehend and assimilate into various cultural landscapes. In contrast, Alcántara Lansberg, a fellow Spanish-speaking Venezuelan artist, employs a divergent approach, intertwining contemporary issues with personal narratives to explore the complexities of femininity and the female gaze. While her thematic exploration aligns with Paredes’s focus on the female experience, Alcántara Lansberg’s work often delves into the emotional and psychological intricacies of womanhood. She uses muted tones and subtle, nuanced compositions to create an intimate and introspective atmosphere within her photographs, inviting viewers to contemplate the multifaceted nature of female identity in a rapidly changing world.

Paredes and Alcántara Lansberg share the intricate layers of their views of the female gaze, each unveiling a personal narrative that strikes a chord with the ever-evolving experiences of women today. Their art represents the vibrant tapestry of the Latin-American artistic realm, melded to historical French influence, and displays a blend of contrasts and harmony that captivates the eye and also examines the essence of our collective identities. As I immersed myself in their creations, it became clear that their contributions extend far beyond the walls of this gallery, igniting vital conversations about what it means to belong, adapt, and thrive in the ever-changing global fabric of society.

Patricia Cazorla
Director, The Hall of Fame Art Gallery

A GAZE OF THEIR OWN: WOMEN RECLAIMING ART HISTORY

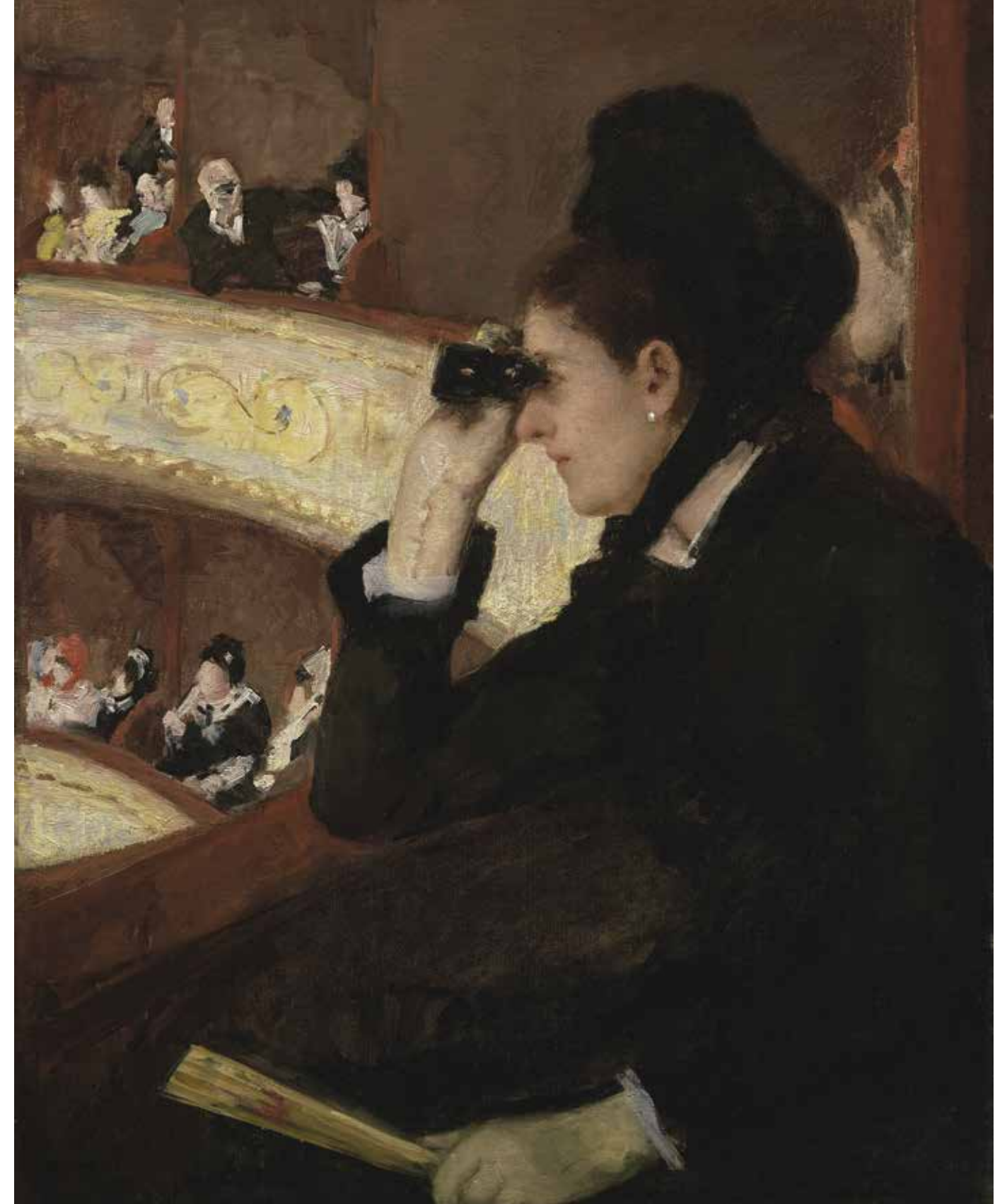
GEORGETTE GOUVEIA

In Judith Wyer's *A Muse*, 2020, a female exhibition-goer gazes at a work or something else unseen, as a male patron sits in a corner watching her. This canvas—along with two of her other museum-themed paintings, *Glance* and *Barely There*, 2020 oils on linen—is as solitary, theatrical, and airless as anything by Edward Hopper. But the spirit of the works is less Hopper than Mary Cassatt, evoking her painting *In the Loge*, 1878, by the only American to exhibit with the French Impressionists. As Cassatt



understood, the 19th century marked the beginning of Modernism, of seeing and being seen as conscious subject matter. In her painting a female theatergoer looks through her opera glasses, presumably at the unseen stage. A male patron at a distance is looking through opera glasses, too—apparently at her, and in a sense us, as we watch him watching her watch something we can only guess at. It's a metaphor for all the far-seeing women who have too often been seen—and perhaps have even seen themselves—through the voyeuristic lens of the male eye.

What, then, is the female gaze? As Cassatt's work demonstrates there is one to be sure, but it was mostly unsung, until feminist art historian Linda Nochlin, in her 1971 essay, posed the question, "Why have there been no great women artists?" (the essay reproduced as a 2020 Thames & Hudson book)—and her question answered in a landmark 1977 show at the Brooklyn Museum, *Women Artists: 1550-1950*.



Mary Cassatt, *In the Loge*, 1878. Oil on canvas, 32 x 26 inches. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

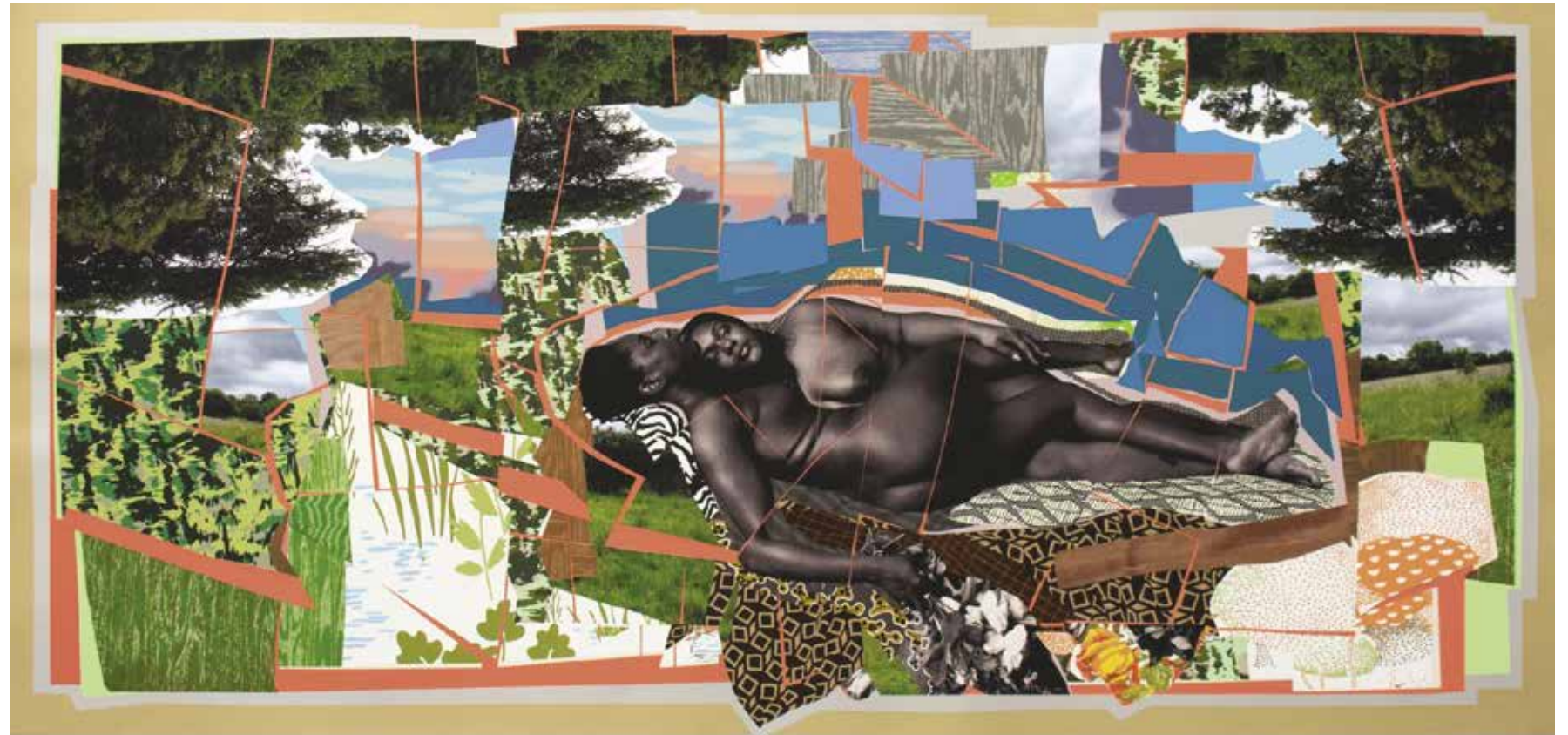
Opposite

Judith Wyer. *A Muse*, 2021. Oil on canvas, 19 x 22 inches. Courtesy of Carrie Haddad Gallery, Hudson, New York



Gustave Courbet. *The Sleepers* [Le Sommeil], 1866. Oil on canvas, 53 x 79 inches, Petit Palais, Paris

Four years after Nochlin asked her question, British film theorist Laura Mulvey coined the term “the male gaze” to describe the way in which women have been presented in the visual arts from men’s perspective to such an extent that women have adopted the same viewpoint, often acquiescing to the objectification that defines it. The male gaze became the default position; the female gaze, by contrast, the wayward one, an exception that proved the rule. In the late-20th and early-21st centuries, an age of cultural appropriation that has seen minorities adapt and reinvent the masterpieces of Western civilization, women artists have reasserted the female gaze not only by creating wholly original works but by reclaiming the art historical canon, either interpolating themselves and women arts leaders into iterations of great paintings—the works of Kathleen Gilje, who began her career as an art conservator, or imagining men from a woman’s perspective (Gilje’s 2005 oil on linen of art historian Robert Rosenblum as the Marquis de Pastoret, after a painting by Jean-Antoine-Dominique Ingres; the male nudes of Sylvia Sleigh; or Rose Freymuth-Frazier’s portraits of men, set against a contrapuntal floral background). Nor have these artists confined themselves to appropriating the fine arts. After all what is *Vertigo*, Lynn Hershman Leeson’s 2017 installation and video but her response to *Vertigo*, Alfred Hitchcock’s 1958 film paean to the male gaze.



Mickalene Thomas. *Sleep: Deux Femmes Noires*, 2013. Woodblock and silkscreen on paper, and photographic elements 32 1/8 x 74 7/8 inches. Courtesy of Mickalene Thomas Studios, New York

Framing the Female Gaze: Women Artists and the New Historicism explores contemporary women artists refracting the prism of 19th-century French “isms,” from the Neoclassicism of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and Jacques-Louis David to the Post-Impressionism of Paul Gauguin and the Symbolism of Gustave Moreau. This prism has proved serendipitous for 19th-century French art that would begin with a kind of fluid male gaze very different from that of the male patron with opera glasses focused on the woman of *In the Loge*, one that resulted from the sociopolitical tumult of the French Revolution, the brief restoration of the monarchy, and its eclipse by a Napoleonic empire echoed in the sumptuous sweep of Claudia Doring Baez’s *David – Josephine’s Cape During The Coronation of Napoleon, Louvre*, a 2021 oil painting inspired by a detail of David’s *The Coronation of Napoleon*, 1805.

In her provocative book *Male Trouble* (Thames & Hudson, 1997), Abigail Solomon-Godeau argues that the tumult in late-18th and early-19th century France created a homosocial—we might say, homoerotic—“crisis in representation,” in which the ever-present male nude was portrayed by male artists like David, Ingres, and Anne-Louis Girodet not only in its heroic, active stance but in the languorous, supine pose of the traditional female nude—sometimes within one canvas. Suddenly,



Anne-Louis Girodet, 1767-1824. *The Sleep of Endymion*, 1791. Oil on canvas, 78 x 102 ¾ inches. The Louvre, Paris

reclining Venuses who had been offered for male delectation vied with stunning, recumbent Endymions and Cephaluses, conveniently oblivious to the carnal gazes of moon goddess Selene and dawn goddess Aurora, respectively.

Ode to the Odalisque, Male and Female

In this exhibition *Framing the Female Gaze* and its catalog, we see the female artist's eye on the modern-day Endymions of their subjects in male nudes, like Sylvia Sleigh's *Portrait of an Actor*: Sean Pratt, 1994; Jordan Casteel's *Elijah*, 2013, and Phyllis Gay Palmer's *Crouch*, 1997, as well as in Katie Commodore's *Greg in His Catsuit*, 2018, a digitally woven work, which takes the tradition of the nude on an animal skin and upends it, underscoring men's animal magnetism. The men lounge for the viewers' pleasure, just as the women of the Turkish harem of the imagination did as the turbaned but otherwise nude odalisques Ingres painted from the early to the middle of the 19th century. There are crucial

differences, however. The men in the works by the contemporary women artists gaze for the most part directly at us. They take a matter-of-fact participation in being viewed. Implicit in that attitude and any sexual role reversal is the knowledge that men's physical, political, and financial powers have traditionally been greater than those held by women. Even nude or playfully reduced to the animalistic, the men are less vulnerable being seen by a female artist than women are being seen by a male one.

The female odalisques manifested in works by Ingres, Eugène Delacroix, and others inspired the 38-year-old feminist group Guerrilla Girls, which used Ingres's *The Grande Odalisque*, 1814—with her cool, erotically charged gaze over her elongated back—for a 1989 poster that asked, “Do women have to be naked to get into the Met Museum?” (the answer is a decided “no,” as Moroccan-born photographer Lalla Essaydi illustrates in her 2008 print *Les Femmes du Maroc: La Grande Odalisque*, which restores to the odalisque the dignity that 19th-century French male artists often stripped from her.

In our own time other women artists have answered that question not only by turning their gaze on the male nude but by reclaiming the female body for nude or partially clothed presentation. Ayana V. Jackson transforms the odalisque and its classic turbaned pose (seen from a nude back) into a commentary on the gynecological experiments that Dr. J. Marion Sims conducted on Anarcha and other enslaved African American women. In *Anarcha*, a 2017 print that is part of her *Intimate Justice in the Stolen Moment* series. Arlene Rush considers Ingres's *The Grande Odalisque* as a metaphor for androgyny, portraying it as equally forthright male and female figures in *Twins Cameo IV (Diptych)*, 2012, two digital prints. Cecilia Paredes captures the odalisque as a photographed performance in her 2017 work *Hermitage*.

Elsewhere artists evoke the spirit of the female odalisque—knowing or seemingly unaware—in works of women with limbs akimbo (Lara Alcantara Lansberg's 2023 photograph *untamed*); steaming up a shower or the camera lens in peek-a-boo dance with the camera (Marilyn Minter's 2017 print *Target*); and, provocatively displayed like a centerfold on a black-clad male figure (Elinor Carucci's 2002 print *And if I don't get enough attention*).

Intimate Scenes of Everyday Life

With the climax of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the bourgeoisie came a shift in France from the sweeping mythological and religious subjects of so-called “history paintings” in the Neoclassical turn-of-the-19th century where men and the male nudes often dominated to more intimate paintings of scenes in the mid-and late-19th century (portraits, interiors, backstage moments, even picnics in landscapes), in which women and the female nude took center stage. Elise Ansel puts a contemporary spin on Ingres's *Portrait of Comtesse d'Haussonville*, 1845, his famous oil painting of the essayist and

biographer Louise de Broglie. Ansel's *The Red Ribbon (after Ingres)*, 2015, captures not only Ingres's technique but de Broglie's apparent self-possession.

The subjects of portraits were not always actual aristocracy but the increasingly modern equivalent—the nouveau riche—as we see in the works of John Singer Sargent, who studied in Paris and, for a time, flirted with French Impressionism. In *A Guild of Light Shining Bright*, 2020, Christie Neptune channels Sargent's *The Wyndham Sisters*, 1899, from the white gown to the elegant pose, but puts a West Indian stamp on her photograph with two adornments—gold grape earrings that symbolize her Guyanese ancestry and the *kala tika*, a black spot on the forehead used to ward off evil.

The Realists and the Impressionists of the second half of the 19th century took women beyond portraiture in the parlor to the intimacy of backstage at the ballet as well as the bath and the bordello. For a 2016 *Harper's Bazaar* article on The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *Edgar Degas: A Strange New Beauty*, Misty Copeland—the first Black female principal in the American Ballet Theatre's history—posed in couture dresses evoking this 19th-century artist's dance paintings and sculptures but in 2015 photographs by Deborah Ory and Ken Browar. Degas was equally known for his scenes of brothels and of bathers, echoed in Jenna Gribbon's oil painting *Toe nail Trim*, 2021. It was, however, Gustave Courbet who distilled the female nude to its ultimate intimacy in *The Origin of the World*, 1866, a close-up of a woman's furry genitalia that has not lost its power to shock (in its 2008 retrospective on Courbet The Met placed this painting behind a pull-chord velvet curtain). Eunice Golden answered the museum's cautious display with her phallic mountain, the 1972 mixed media *Landscape #160*. Call her a female Courbet. Mickalene Thomas has also recreated a Courbet pose in her *Sleep: Deux Femmes Noires*, 2013, based on his scandalous ode to lesbian love, *The Sleepers*, 1866, but with Black female nudes (See page 42 and 43). In the works of both Golden and Thomas, an abstract element takes the edge off the in-your-face aspect of Courbet's paintings that begs the question: Is the female gaze subtler than its counterpart?

Yushi Li and Steph Wilson bring the picnic indoors in *The Feast, inside*, 2020. This time the women sit primly clothed, while the men lounge around in the buff. Manet and his prostitute muses were also the inspiration for *Nana*, 2023, a print by Cecily Brown, whose painterly appropriations of the Western canon are part of the retrospective *Death and the Maid*, at The Met through December 3, 2023; and Bhasha Chakrabarti's painting of oil and used linen, *Beshoy as Olympia*, 2023, which imagines a man that resembles Manet's slim, gimlet-eyed courtesan.

Fay Ku continues to interpret the canon through what she calls the East Asian and Female Gazes of her work in *The Jungle Has Eyes*, 2019, an oil painting that she layers on translucent drafting

film, and which evokes the familiarity of the women in Paul Gauguin's painting *Barbarian Tales*, 1902. But Ku's backdrop is vastly different, with eyes like so many peacock feathers that underscores the aspect of seeing and being seen that has been key not only to Modernism, the digital age, and her work, but to the way women have always had to navigate the world.

Ku's *Throne*, 2016, and Camille Eskill's digital collages from her *Queens of Babylon* series, 2022-23, recall the Symbolist Gustav Moreau's haunting canvases—teeming, dreamlike tapestries and biblical, mythological subject matter—returning us to the 19th-century's dawn. Moreover, they give us woman as apotheosis.

Whither the female gaze?

What are we to learn from these and other works in this show beyond the pleasure of looking at them? Many are by women of color, a reminder that cultural appropriation—often controversial when a member of the majority appropriates something from a minority—is considered acceptable when a minority appropriates from a majority. Women's freedom to gaze at the male canon of works is part of the price men pay for the power they've held over women for so long.

Could women, though, who now dominate colleges and professional schools, potentially create two economic classes based on the two traditional genders as Hanna Rosin predicted in her 2012 book *The End of Men and the Rise of Women*, and so fall into the same power trap that has ensnared men? It's revealing that Lara Alcantara Lansberg calls her 2021 photographic self-portrait, *prisoner of my freedom*, which pose was inspired by the French-trained 19th-century Venezuelan painter Arturo Michelena's portrait of doomed Venezuelan revolutionary Francisco de Miranda. Nothing is without its price.

That some of the artists working in this vein and represented in this show are members of the LGBTQ+ community—Mickalene Thomas's recasting of Courbet's sensual study of lesbian love—begs another question: Can we even speak of a female gaze or should we be considering an individual, genderless one? Is the female gaze—so hard fought and only recently won—already a thing of the past?

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Winner of ArtsWestchester's 2023 President's Award for her 43-year career as an arts journalist, Georgette Gouveia is cultural writer and luxury editor for Westfair Communications Inc.'s *Westfair Business Journal* and its *Wake Up With Westfair*, e-newsletter. Author of "The Games Men Play" blog and book series, Gouveia explores the power dynamic in culture. Her latest novel, the historical thriller *Riddle Me This*, was recently published by JMS Books.



CATALOG
OF
THE EXHIBITION

ARTISTS

Lara Alcantara Lansberg 52

Lizzy Alejandro 56

Elise Ansel 60

Claudia Doring Baez 62

Cecily Brown 64

Elinor Carucci 66

Jordan Casteel 68

Basha Chakrabarti 70

Katie Commodore 72

Martha Edellheit 74

Camille Eskell 76

Lalla Essaydi 80

Rose Freymuth-Frazier 82

Scherezade Garcia 86

Kathleen Gilje 90

Eunice Golden 92

Jenna Gribbon 94

Mimi Gross 96

Guerrilla Girls 98

Hilary Harkness 100

Lewinale Havette 102

Vera Iliatova 106

Ayana V. Jackson 108

Cheyenne Julien 112

Fay Ku 114

Yushi Li 118

Yushi Li,
in collaboration with
Steph Wilson 120

Shona McAndrew 122

Marilyn Minter 124

Jesse Mockrin 126

Christie Neptune 128

Deborah Ory & Ken Browar 130

Phyllis Gay Palmer 134

Cecilia Paredes 136

Celeste Rapone 140

Arlene Rush 142

Julia Santos Solomon 146

Sylvia Sleigh 148

Jessica Spence 150

Devorah Sperber 152

Mickalene Thomas 156

Sharon Wybrants 158

Judith Wyer 160

Allison Zuckerman 164

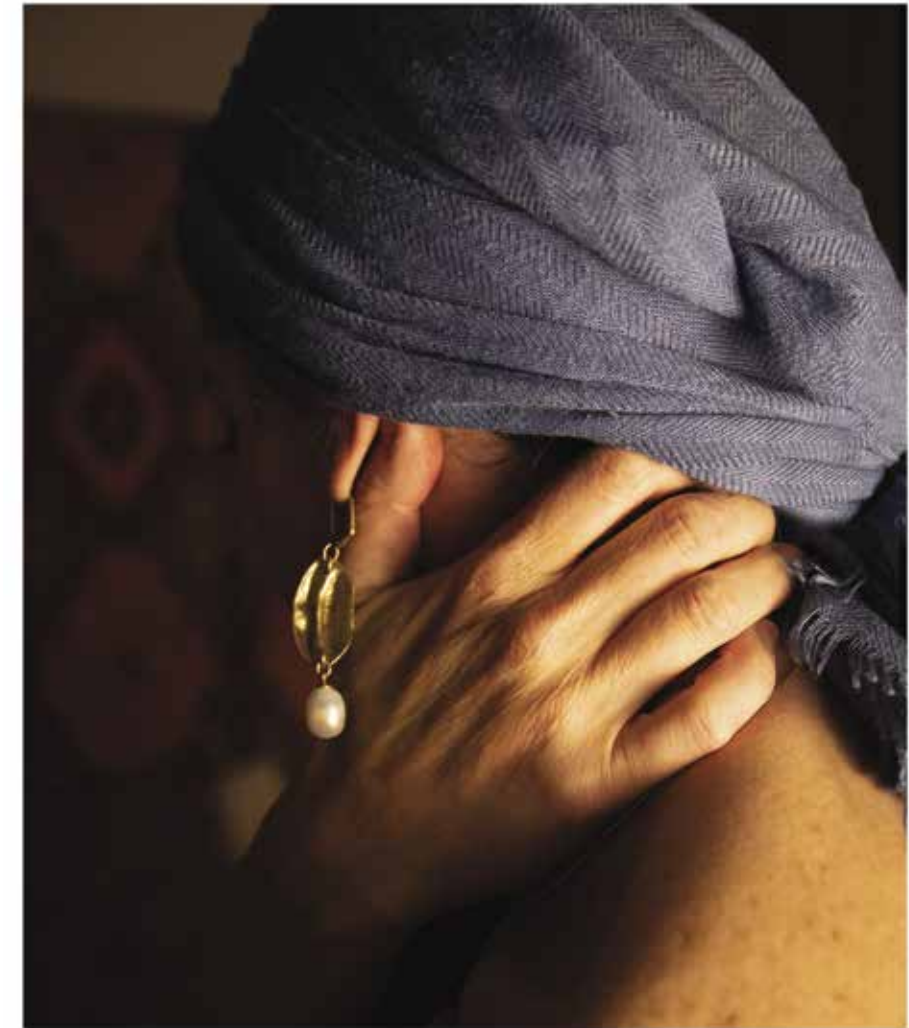
LARA ALCANTARA LANSBERG

FOCUS EXHIBITION: THE HALL OF FAME ART GALLERY, BCC

Born in Venezuela, Alcantara Lansberg's work is informed by a wide variety of historical sources. For this exhibition, the artist created *untamed*, (following page), a photograph inspired by Jacques-Louis David's famous painting *The Death of Marat*, 1793 (Fig. 1), which shows the French revolutionary, Jean-Paul Marat, murdered in his bath during the Reign of Terror. Alcantara Lansberg translates the death of this male politician into one of her ongoing artistic concerns: the difficult position of women in society. As Alcantara Lansberg said, "My work is a deep look at the female dilemma. Women who want to be perfect, women who want to be beautiful, have the perfect home, do what they are supposed to do and yet go through all of this gut-wrenching trauma because that perfection is impossible, and we are never actually able to please all of those who we are supposed to please . . . this is the story of womanhood." Although her photograph is seemingly very different from David's oil painting, Alcantara Lansberg draws a visual parallel between the tub that holds the murdered Marat and a washing machine, the tall backdrop of her photograph and witness to a woman's demise. For Alcantara Lansberg domesticity is a place of violence: the iron in her photograph is as menacing as the knife of the protestor Charlotte Corday, who assassinated Marat and the dried flowers in the foreground suggest the decaying of youth spent in a life of drudgery. Unlike David's portrait that shows Marat's martyred face bathed in light, Alcantara Lansberg deliberately obscures the face of her protagonist, allowing the viewer to see her in the role of "everywoman," embroiled in domestic drama. Alcantara Lansberg's other works, like the self-portrait *holding on tight*, reference both Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, c.1665 (Fig. 2), but nude and wearing a turban, which also carries echoes of Ingres's *Odalisque or the Small Bather*, 1864 (Fig. 3). Finally, *prisoner of my freedom* is a commanding self-portrait of Alcantara Lansberg as artist against the highly romantic backdrop of cloud-streaked skies and serried waters, taking its composition from *Miranda in La Carraca* (Fig. 4), the 1896 masterpiece by Venezuelan-born and Paris-trained 19th-century painter Arturo Michelena, who portrayed Francisco de Miranda. Miranda (1750 - July 14, 1816), a Venezuelan of historical stature in the military and in politics, participated in the Spanish American Wars of Independence, the Napoleonic Wars, and the French and American Revolutions. By consciously adapting Michelena's composition, Alcantara Lansberg stakes a claim for the artist as a revolutionary.



prisoner of my freedom, 2021
Photograph, 42 x 63 inches
Courtesy of the artist



holding on tight, 2022
Photograph, 18 ½ x 21 ½ inches

Opposite
untamed, 2023
Photograph, 33 x 55 inches

Courtesy of the artist

LIZZY ALEJANDRO

ROTUNDA INSTALLATION

Visitors enter the Art Gallery painted blood red, hung with chandeliers, and designed to suggest the *Salon*, the official art exhibition of the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Between 1748 and 1890, the *Salon* was considered the greatest annual or biennial art event in the Western world. Here in *Herstory*, Alejandro's site-specific installation for the exhibition *Framing the Female Gaze*, the viewer is confronted not with the latest contemporary art but a gallery of more than 40 canonical works of Western art history, from the Renaissance through the early 20th century, with a focus on some of the most famous works of 19th-century France, from Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *La Grande Odalisque*, 1814 (Fig. 5), to Gustave Courbet's infamous *The Origin of the World*, 1866 (Fig.6). This contemporary artist's "old" masterpieces, though, are different. Each of her works presents an image of the male gaze designed by the original male artist to provoke desire in the male eye, but now altered by Alejandro. The central female figure of each contemporary "masterpiece" appears as menstruating, which changes and complicates each pictorial narrative. Alejandro said, "Throughout the course of art history, the female body has been portrayed through the male gaze, often being objectified and sexualized. Yet, the female body is shamed for its natural bodily processes, such as menstruation. By superimposing red marker over works of art by male artists, *Herstory* re-contextualizes the narrative through the female lens and acting as a reclamation of the female body and form. Dismantling the notion of women being viewed as objects of desire, *Herstory* reframes the "gaze" by breaking the stigma surrounding menstruation to celebrate the power and beauty of the female body.



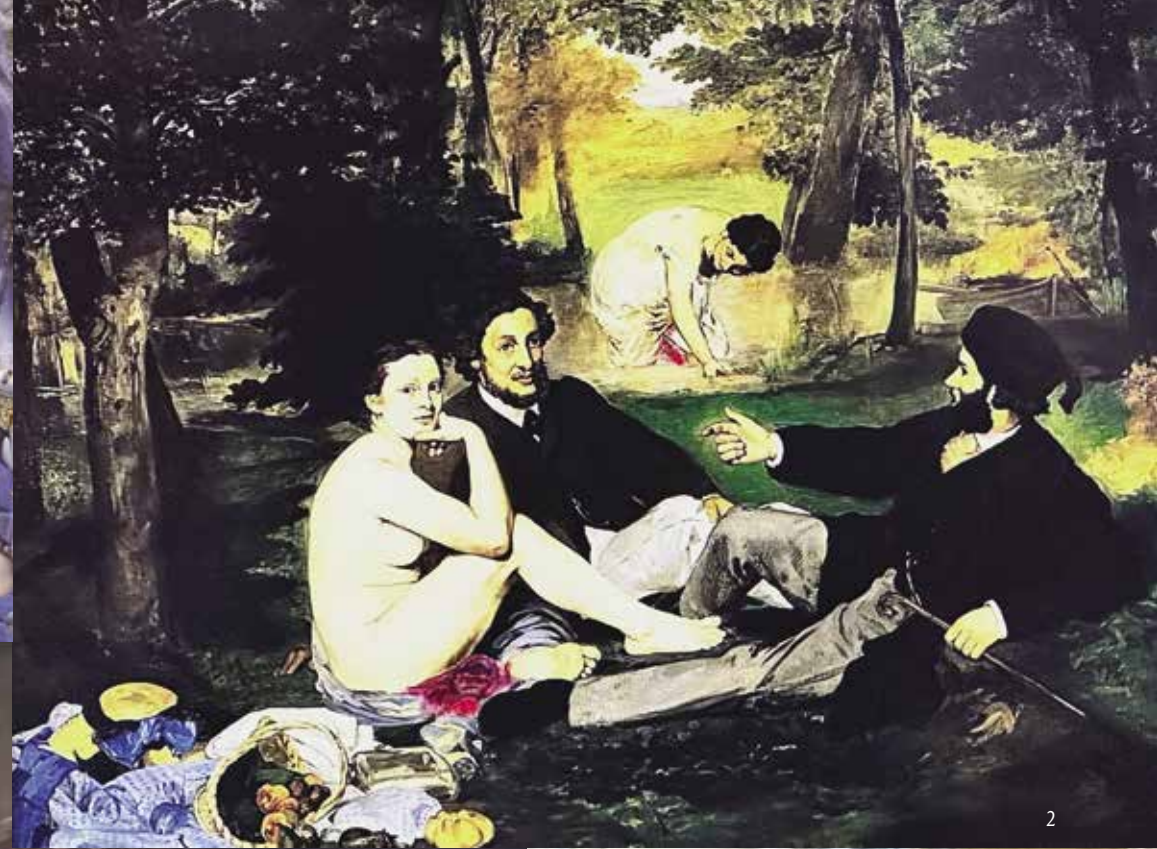
Lizzy Alejandro. *Herstory*, 2023, Rotunda Installation
Forty-five altered images. Mixed media and chandeliers, 319 inches diameter
Courtesy of the artist

Clockwise from top left

1 Altered image, 2003, of the famous oil, *La Grande Odalisque*, painted by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres in 1814 that depicts an odalisque or concubine. Drawn in style from the earlier *Portrait of Madame Récarnier* by Jacques-Louis David, in this book (see Fig. 52), the odalisque assesses her situation and yours in her cool gaze. At The Louvre, Paris



2 Altered image, *The Luncheon on the Grass*, 2003, an oil painting [Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe] created by Édouard Manet between 1862-63. First exhibited at the Salon des Refusés in 1863, it sparked controversy after it was rejected by the Paris Salon, the official art exhibition society of the Académie des Beaux-Arts that juried exhibitions in 19th-century France. At the Musée d'Orsay, Paris



3 Altered image, *The Tub*, 2003, a pastel [Le Tub] first created by Edgar Degas in 1886 and presented at the eighth Impressionist exhibition this same year, is one of several pictures Degas made of women at their ablutions. At the Musée d'Orsay, Paris



4 Altered image, 2003, of *The Slave Market*, [Le Marché d'esclaves] 1866, by Jean-Léon Gérôme, an iconic example of 19th-century Orientalist art. Grounded in the context of the Barbary slave trade, the nude, white woman is passive and resigned to her fate, as she is being inspected for purchase. At the Clark Institute of Art, Williamstown, Massachusetts



5 Altered image, *Models*, 2003, an oil painting [Les Poseuses] first created by Georges Seurat between 1886-88 and exhibited at the fourth Salon des Indépendants, spring 1888. Though painted to prove the style of Pointillism could illustrate figures, one critic called it, "A studio where three nude women, painted in the pointillist manner, expose pathetic, rachitic skeletons smeared with all the colors of the rainbow." At the Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



6 Altered image, *Nymphs and Satyr*, 2003, an oil painting [Nymphes et un satyre] created by William-Adolphe Bouguereau in 1873. First exhibited at the Paris Salon that year, a critic called it "the greatest painting of our generation." At the Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Massachusetts



7 Altered image, 2003. *The Origin of the World* [L'Origine du monde], in which Gustave Courbet portrays a woman by her sex organs, alone. A call for new realism, this 1866 painting revolutionized the portrayal of the female nude, later reframed by women artists from 1970s "vulvic art" to art today.



ELISE ANSEL

Ansel regularly reimagines Renaissance, Baroque, and 19th-century French masterpieces as part of her practice. In *The Red Ribbon* her fluid gestural vocabulary serves as a fascinating counterpoint to the tight, porcelain-like finish of the Neoclassical painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres in his painting, *Louise, Princesse de Broglie, Later the Comtesse d'Haussonville*, 1845 (Fig. 7). Ingres's composition, now at The Frick Collection, New York, inspired Ansel's *Red Ribbon*, though Ansel subtly changes details we see in Ingres; for instance, the red ribbon from which Ansel draws her title appears in the hair of Ingres's countess but, also, is reflected in the mirror behind her. Ansel, though, only paints the hair ornament one time, giving this object of dress subtle emphasis. Ansel's countess wears a slightly more anxious expression than Ingres's contemplating, solipsistic aristocrat. In the Ansel portrait we see, instead, a young woman who appears nervous, suggesting her awareness that she is being observed and judged. Ansel physically changes the woman, too, by giving her a forearm of slightly more typical proportion than Ingres did. In his quest for an overall satisfying composition, this 19th-century male painter was infamous for bestowing on his sitters elongated, at times almost bovine, limbs.

The Red Ribbon (after Ingres), 2015

Oil on linen, 30 x 22 inches

Courtesy of Ellsworth Gallery, Santa Fe, New Mexico



CLAUDIA DORING BAEZ

The great swath of blood-red velvet sweeping the canvas of Doring Baez is in a loose, fluid, contemporary style that belies its historical inspiration. In fact, Baez derives her painting from one of the most famous paintings in all French art—Jacques-Louis David's *The Coronation of Napoleon*, 1807 (Fig. 8). David was considered France's greatest Neoclassical painter and much of his fame rests on his work commissioned to glorify the general turned Emperor. A touchstone of the Louvre's collection, David's huge painting, 33 feet wide, is crammed with scores of political and military figures, who attended the coronation at Notre Dame Cathedral to celebrate Napoleon at the pinnacle of his power. Napoleon broke the tradition of a Catholic pope crowning France's kings by infamously taking the crown and placing it by himself on his head. David depicts the climactic moment that follows when Napoleon, again alone, crowns his wife Joséphine de Beauharnais, making her Empress of the French. Doring Baez focuses her detailed gaze on an unusual feminine element in this testosterone and hubris-filled painting. She says, "Josephine's long cape excites me; the heavy material pulled down by gravity [is] like all women drawn down by biology. I painted it 'a la prima' (an approach where wet paint is applied to previous layers of still-wet paint in a single sitting), hoping for an encounter with an unconscious result."

David—Josephine's Cape During The Coronation of Napoleon, Louvre, 2021
Oil on canvas, 40 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist



CECILY BROWN

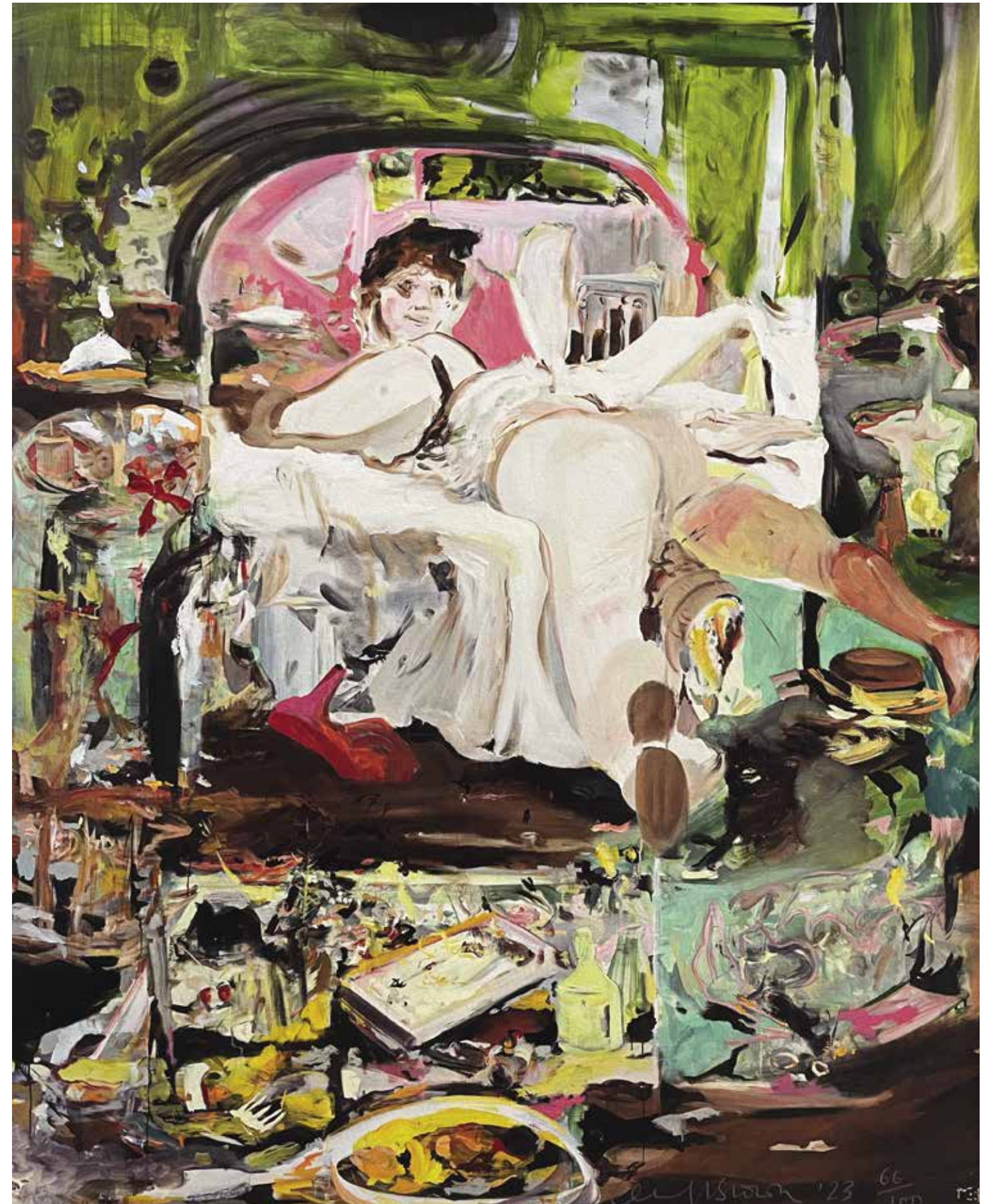
Brown's compositions combine elements of abstraction and figuration, quote famous paintings from art history, amp up eroticism, and imbue her *homages* with a kind of cheeky humor. For *Nana*, Brown draws her title and inspiration from an 1877 canvas also titled *Nana* by French painter Édouard Manet (Fig. 9). "Nana" was a frequently used casual name with a contemptuous overtone for prostitutes in late 19th-century France. This Manet masterpiece shows a lively and beautiful young courtesan standing before a mirror *en deshabille*. Her gaze directly engages the viewer, while her client, an elegantly dressed man, stands far right in the painting. Brown's composition, similar but not identical to Manet's, captures the ethos of his work. She deepens the drama of the narrative by showing us a room in disarray—littered with discarded high heels, half-eaten snacks, and the wreckage of beauty treatments. The room is a metaphor, perhaps, for passion ungoverned. Splayed-legged and lying on her stomach, Nana, her clothes hiked to her waist, looks over her shoulder, offering herself to a person we cannot see because Brown has abolished Manet's male caller from her composition. For whom Nana turns her head remains a mystery, but she does offer a tender smile, forced or genuine, as she gazes out at us with mascara-smudged eyes. In our more sexually overt era, the contrast of this female player with the one created by Manet is striking. Rather than an object purely of man's desire, Brown's *Nana* is a woman with a pulsating libido of her own.

Nana, 2023

Ditone print on Hahnemuhle German etching paper, 19 3/4 x 15 3/4 inches

319 G/M², Edition of 100 + 20 A.P.

Courtesy of Cornelia Svedman



ELINOR CARUCCI

Carucci's cheeky title, *And if I don't get enough attention*, creates multiple questions about both the "male" and the "female gaze." Showing the beautiful young artist entwined with her husband, the image plays with different conventions in portraiture. Carucci is both artist and subject, and she makes her role visually clear by showing us a just visible shutter button in her hand. The artist presents herself nude to reflect how female models have been historically presented, that is, the nudity of women subjected to the male gaze. This role has been repeatedly critiqued by feminist artists such as the Guerilla Girls, a group of artists which fights discrimination against women artists and artists of color. The male partner in Carucci's print remains fully clothed and Carucci further complicates the narrative by allowing her steady gaze to meet the viewer head-on to assert her dominance, an assertion reminiscent of a female nude in Édouard Manet's painting *The Luncheon on the Grass*, 1863 (Fig. 10). Considered Manet's greatest work, it caused a scandal, despite its peaceable title because it portrayed a nude woman among clothed men, but not in a "historicized" or mythical setting. Instead, the male picnickers are enjoying a repast as well as the male gaze in contemporary time. In Carucci's photograph her husband assumes the role of a sleeping beauty, eyes downcast, and vulnerable to the viewer. His arms placed behind his head frame his face as if for presentation, while leaving his body in a vulnerable and traditional "feminine" position, which we also see in Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *Odalisque, Slave, and Eunuch*, 1840 (Fig. 11). And then there is Carucci's title, her wry acknowledgement that the nude body always draws the gaze, whether from a drifting partner or a wayward public.



And if I don't get enough attention, 2002
Chromogenic print, 30 x 40 inches
Courtesy the artist & Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

JORDAN CASTEEL

A painter of great bravura, Jordan Casteel's *Visible Man* series, 2013-14, consists of portraits of her Black male classmates during her second year at the Yale School of Art. The paintings, whose subjects are all unclothed, contain 19th-century French art historical and compositional references, most famously to Jean Auguste Ingres's *The Grande Odalisque*, 1814 (Fig. 5), while they also contain contemporary urgency. Shown here is *Elijah*, whose subject displays earnest sincerity, unlike the more challenging gaze of Sylvia Sleigh's male nude in *Portrait of an Actor: Sean Pratt*, (1994). Sleigh's painting, in this book, revolutionary for its time, contains the divergent elements of the stoic. The nudity in *Elijah* is a form of palpable vulnerability, met by the deeply sympathetic gaze of the artist. Backlit from the window, the figure sits contemplatively, the arrangement of man, bed, and window, a symphony of sun-drenched blue, yellow, and pink. By painting subjects nude and placing them in their home or personal space, surrounded by intimate, distinctive ephemera, Casteel characterizes figures by their landscapes, rather than their clothing. In *Elijah* a prayer candle on the table adds to a sense of quietude, almost of reverence. Recalling Édouard Manet's *Olympia*, 1863 (Fig. 12), Casteel's model directly meets the gaze of the viewer in a distinctively understanding, yet challenging, manner.

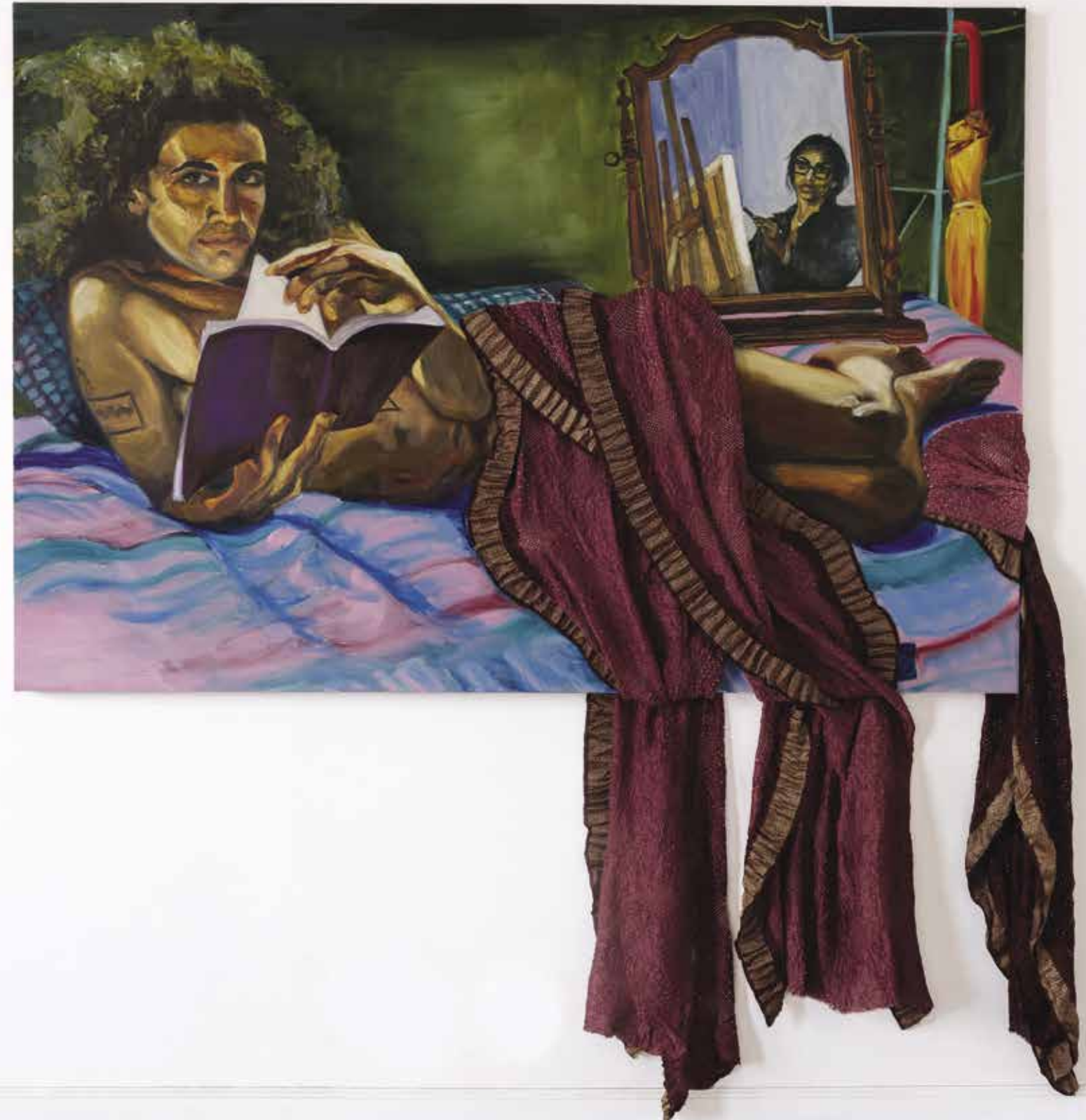
Elijah, 2014
Oil on canvas, 52 x 72 inches
Private Collection



BHASHA CHAKRABARTI

إقرأ, قرب (*Beshouy as Olympia*) reimagines Édouard Manet's painting *Olympia*, 1863 (Fig. 12) in title, scale, and composition. The theme of the historicized odalisque had been painted by numerous earlier painters, such as Ingres, but Manet shocked audiences with his “yellow-bellied odalisque” by updating the brothel scene to contemporary Paris. Chakrabarti says, “Odalisque paintings are generally imbedded within a deeply racialized fantasy and discourse of the orient and oriental woman, where I see the violent objectifications involved in this genre as forms of ‘pornotroping.’ . . . The title of my work translated from Arabic commands the reader to “Come closer. Read.” It is a play on words taken from a review written by the primary subject of this image, Beshouy Botros, titled *A Proximate Language, Approximate Language*. The question of ‘reading’ is foregrounded when the viewer is presented with an imperative to read (in the title) and when the subject of the painting is herself engaged in the act of reading. The intrusion of the book complicates the image of ‘a sedentary woman, fattened for pleasure, exuding nonchalance and indolence that is characteristic of their ignorant minds’ (a direct quote from the painter Delacroix discussing the odalisque). The book alludes to this particular subject’s occupation, as Beshouy is a scholar of history, indicating shockingly, that [this woman] is able to be both an odalisque and a reader. The painting of Beshouy reclaims the generic odalisque fantasy from the white European model through the specificities of their flesh. Their skin is not generically “brown” but is particularized through tattoos on their arms and chest. . . . Finally, it is important to note that I, the artist, present myself in the position of the Black maidservant in Manet’s *Olympia*. This references the fact that, in many ways, the artist is at the service of her model—an offering of a bouquet of flowers, replaced by charcoal and easel.”

إقرأ, قرب (*Beshouy as Olympia*), 2023
Oil on linen, used clothing, 51 x 75 inches x 1¼ inches
Courtesy of the artist



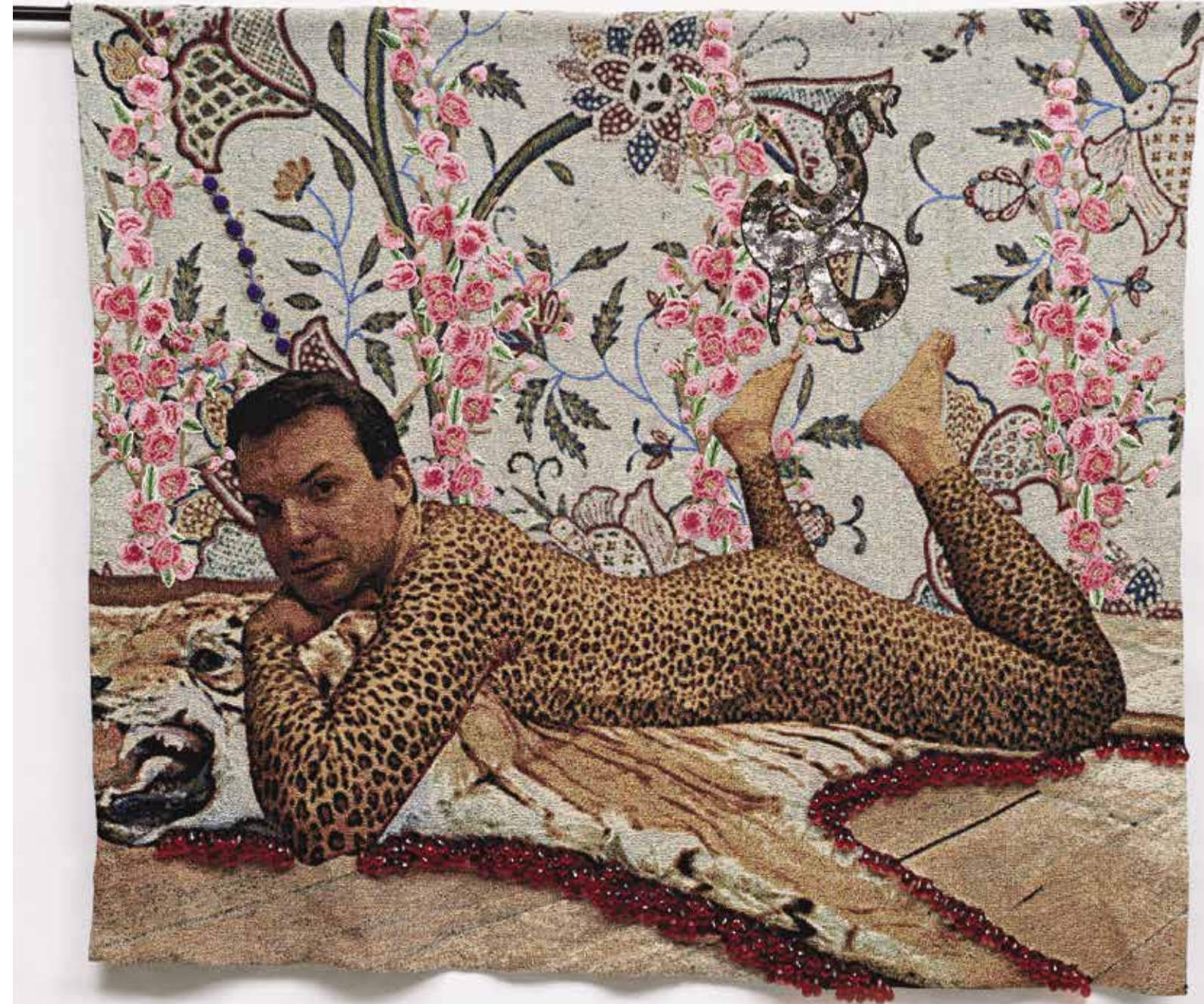
KATIE COMMODORE

The sexy and the good-humored balance each other in Commodore's gorgeous tapestry. Shown with over-the-top brio, this artist creates an almost life-sized portrait of a man, Greg, reclining on a tiger-skin rug set against the background of another rug, this one Indian, brightly patterned and dripping with beads and embroidery. Commodore said, "My goal was to show and celebrate his [Greg's] power and sexuality. . . . Over the past few years, my artwork has concentrated on creating intimate portraits of my friends, often focusing on how they express their sexuality. Not whether they prefer men or women, but sexuality in the broader sense—what is it that makes them feel sexy, how they express that physically, and how has it changed over the years." Commodore's work deepens and complicates the French-inspired male odalisques pioneered by Sylvia Sleigh in the 1970s. In this decade, Commodore dresses the man in her painting as a cat. Sensuality associated with the "feline" has, in French art, been traditionally linked with the feminine or, occasionally, with a subtext of homoeroticism, as in Pierre-Auguste Renoir's, *The Boy with the Cat*, 1868-69 (Fig. 13), a work unique in his oeuvre. Commodore says, "Historians and anthropologists often use the decorative remnants (pots, jewelry, frescos, etc.) of past cultures to gain valuable insight into the lives of the people that created them, the same sort of cultural portrait that can be drawn from our design choices today. It is very important to me that I not come across as judgmental about my subject matter or imagery, but that they stand on their own as portraits of real people, expressing themselves how they choose."

Greg in His Catsuit, 2018

Digitally woven cotton thread applique, plastic beads, and embroidery, 50 ¾ x 57 ½ inches

Courtesy of the artist



MARTHA EDELHEIT

Edelheit has been painting the monumental male nude since the 1960s. *Birds: A View from Lincoln Tower Terrace* comes from the series of “naked city” paintings the artist created between 1965 and 1980. Inspired by French art, she also created another work in this series, *View of Empire State Building from Sheep Meadow, 1970–72*, her own take on Édouard Manet’s *The Luncheon on the Grass, 1863* (Fig. 10). As one critic noted, this series “substitutes the traditional feminine passivity of the reclining nude with unisex hippie torpor. She depicts her subject’s bare flesh and air of disengagement democratically.” In *Birds: A View from Lincoln Tower Terrace* she again replaces, this time the expected Arcadian landscape with an urban backdrop of high-rises and smokestacks. The city, not grimy, is sunbathed in bleached pastels, suggesting the sticky heat of a summer in the city. Her figures are languid, seemingly filled with torpor. The artist draws her grand figural composition from works like the Italian Renaissance painter Sandro Botticelli’s *Venus and Mars, c. 1485* (Fig. 14), and yet the figures, unembarrassed by their nudity, do not imbue the satisfaction of a post-coital embrace. Rather they seem bored, blasé, and disengaged with each other, symbols of modern urban ennui. The sheet on which they sprawl adds a discordantly surreal aspect to the scene. It is printed with pigeons, the most urban of birds, their oversized silhouettes have all the ominousness of a Hitchcock film.



Birds: A View from Lincoln Tower Terrace, 1974
Acrylic on canvas, 54 ½ x 87 inches
© 2023 Martha Edelheit / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York
Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery, New York

CAMILLE ESKELL

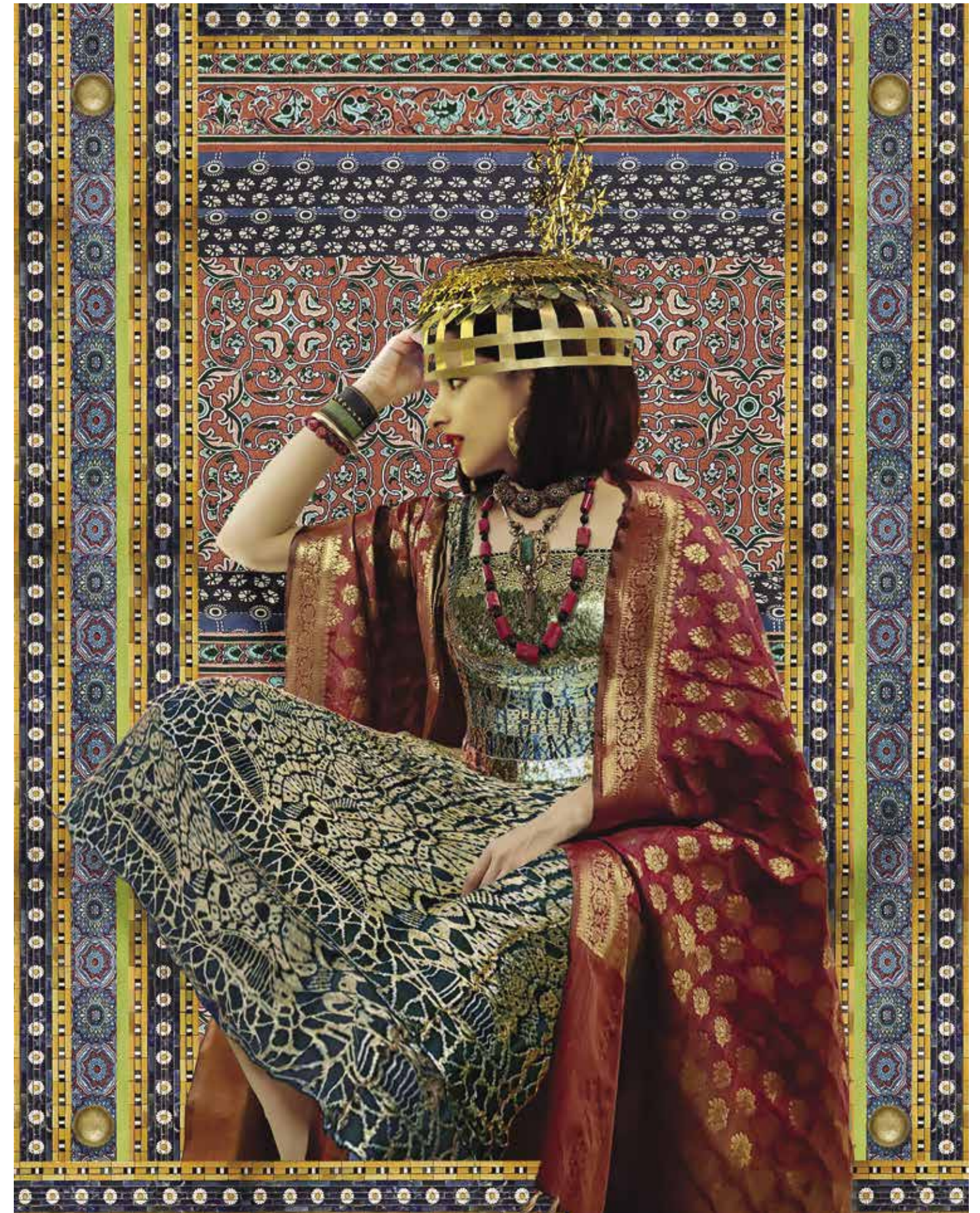
Eskell's ongoing series *The Fez as Storyteller* explores ingrained gender biases in cultural and religious practices seen through the lens of domestic relationships. For her work the artist draws on traditions of French Orientalism and this same movement led other artists, most famously Jean-Léon Gérôme, to create images of harems, such as *The Bath*, c. 1880-1885 (Fig. 15), which fed into European stereotyped fantasies of the Middle East. Their works are now regarded as imbued with colonialist ideas of the "other," although Gérôme was capable of sensitive portraits as *Bashi-Bazouk*, 1868-69 (Fig. 16), an image of a soldier he created with a studio model, after he returned from a trip to the Middle East. In her three *Queens of Babylon*, Eskell reverses the male gaze, celebrating, instead, the images of the women in her family in a fantastical, exoticized fashion. The crowns found in the tomb of Queen Puabi of Ur in ancient Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) inspired this artist's digital collages. Eskell, whose family roots are from that region, uses crowns and other symbols as metaphors for women's strength, dignity, and eminence. The assorted designs in her works combine motifs from the Ishtar Gate, c.557 B.C., of ancient Babylon, including its carvings of lions and rosettes, symbols of the goddess Ishtar and associated with "love, beauty, war, and fertility." Other designs as well as the garments and accessories in the collages are drawn from the artist's personal archive. The collage corners hold antique Jewish stars, creating an entrancing contemporary *assemblage*.

Queens of Babylon: Recall Your Strength, 2023

Digital collage on archival paper

24 x 18 ¾ inches

Courtesy of the artist





Queens of Babylon: Re-find Your Power, 2022
24 x 24 inches

Opposite
Queens of Babylon: Take Back What's Yours, 2022
24 x 24 inches

Each digital collage on archival paper
Courtesy of the artist



LALLA ESSAYDI

Moroccan artist Lalla Essaydi's series of photographs, *Les Femmes du Maroc* (The Women of Morocco), responds directly to the West's perception of Muslim women through the lens of 19th-century Orientalism. European artists treated the oriental cultures of the Near East and North Africa as colorful, exotic, and sensual. Muslim women from this region of the world were presented as sexually passive members of harems in images like Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *The Grande Odalisque*, 1819 (Fig. 5). Rather than Ingres's exoticized fantasy of a white woman with a beckoning look who lounges in a harem setting, Essaydi shows her "Grande Odalisque" draped in white mourning fabric, not nude, with a gaze more wary than inviting. In Essaydi's composition, nearly every surface, including the figure's skin, is scrawled with henna transcribing messages written in Arabic calligraphy—musings on personal freedom, identity, and memory the artist extracted from her own journals. Using calligraphy—a religiously charged Islamic art form typically reserved for men—creates a powerful statement because the woman, silent, bears words and thoughts for all to see, though her society traditionally does not permit her to speak them. The artist says, "In my art, I wish to present myself through multiple lenses—as artist, as Moroccan . . . as traditionalist, as Liberal, as Muslim. In short, I invite viewers to resist stereotypes." By appropriating this Orientalist iconography, Essaydi lays bare its essentially voyeuristic nature.

Les Femmes du Maroc: La Grande Odalisque, 2008
Chromogenic print, 33 x 40 inches, Edition of 15
Courtesy of Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York



ROSE FREYMUTH-FRAZIER

With porcelain skin, closed eyes, and vacuous stares, the beautiful young men in Freymuth-Frazier's work draw inspiration from various sources, but portraits like *Paul Lemoyne*, 1810 (Fig.17), and *Portrait of a Young Man*, 1804 (Fig.17) by the Neoclassicist painter Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres may be the most overt 19th-century French influence in Freymuth-Frazier's *Class Pictures* series. She notes, "I find the sleek rendering of flesh and idealized features of Ingres portraits with their wealthy, placid stares to be seductive in a guilty pleasure kind of way." In floral, feminized backgrounds, she combines the Ingres influence with references to the work of earlier French painters, like Francois Boucher and Jean-Honorè-Fragonard. Freymuth-Frazier's *Class Pictures* are portraits of beautiful young men, inspired by the artist's time living near Columbia University, where she saw its well-heeled, stylish students. She comments that prior to creating this series, her focus had been on painting women she knew. She decided to paint men because "I wanted to create alluring images of delicate, impersonal beauty. Instead of plucking models from the street, and basing the paintings on specific individuals, I chose a more detached method. I turned to stock photos of men's hairstyles to capture the distant and slightly glazed look I was seeking. In doing so, I was able to further objectify these beautiful young men, depicting them as sweet little petits fours ready to be consumed."

Love Seeker, 2022
Oil on linen, 24 x 36 inches
Courtesy of the artist





Small Game Hunter, 2018
Oil on panel, 16 x 20 inches
Courtesy of the artist

SCHEREZADE GARCÍA

García describes the Caribbean as “a place of encounters.” Her work looks at the intersection of vibrant Latin American culture as a cauldron of European, African, and Indigenous influences coming together through a unique and often shocking history. The two women in García’s elaborate, Baroque-inspired paintings *Tigon II* and *Aroma of Cacao* are not portraits of individuals in a traditional sense, rather they are a part of what the artist says is “collective” portraiture, where a community is described, rather than an individual. For García, “This community portrait is the formal outcome of many encounters that make us plural and allude to our ethnicity’s fluidity. All this was informed by the crossing of the Atlantic and its multifarious consequences. Race and the politics of color (formally and conceptually) are essential to me.” García’s work is a powerful artistic reminder that the idea of the collective ethnographic “type” and its racist implications had a strong current in 19th-century Europe and in French art. When the French artist Marie-Guillemine Benoist’s *Portrait of Madeleine* (formerly known as *Portrait of a Negress*), 1800 (Fig. 19) was shown at the *Salon*, one critic derided it as a “black stain.” Recent scholarship has uncovered the sitter’s first name, Madeleine, who is thought to have been brought to France from the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe. Likely born a slave and freed by the Decree of 1794, which abolished slavery in all French colonies, her actual status may have been ambiguous. Benoist was a student of Neoclassical painter Jacques-Louis David and as a rare female artist in Paris at that time (approximately 1799-1815), her career flourished under Napoleon, although cut short by the increasingly conservative Restoration government of King Louis XVIII.

Aroma of Cacao, 2022

63 x 51 inches

Acrylic, charcoal and ink on linen

Courtesy of IBIS Contemporary Art Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana





Tigon II, 2017
66 x 50 inches
Acrylic, charcoal and ink on linen
Courtesy of IBIS Contemporary Art Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana

KATHLEEN GILJE

Gilje paints Robert Rosenblum, noted art historian and curator, in the guise of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *Portrait of Marquis de Pastoret*, 1826 (Fig. 20). Rosenblum was known for his scholarship of European and American art of the mid-18th to 20th centuries and the canvas, completed the year before his death, was painted as the first in a series of works created by Gilje for the 2006 exhibition, *Curators, Critics, and Connoisseurs of Modern and Contemporary Art* at the Francis Naumann Fine Art Gallery. Gilje says, "Originally, I was trained as a conservator of old master paintings at the Museum of Capodimonte, Naples, Italy. Although I no longer restore paintings, I am very familiar with the provenance and unique beauty of old works of art. I wanted to use my knowledge and experience to expand the idea of portraiture. When I began approaching New York art world personalities to paint their portraits, in the manner of old master paintings, it was an invitation to embark on collaboration. Almost without exception, my subjects chose their own paintings from the halls of history. In every case there is a story that gave me much insight into a significant personality and the inspiration to capture it . . . When I suggested to my friend Robert Rosenblum that I would like to do his portrait, we commented on how Robert looked like the Ingres portrait of the Marquis at the Art Institute of Chicago. He said that over the years several other people had made the same comment and that in fact, he playfully remarked, the Marquis, dashing, young and handsome as he is, was his alter ego. As a leading authority and author on Ingres, this was more than just a physical similarity to the painting; it was a spiritual connection and the perfect choice." Ingres's portrait depicts the swaggering young nobleman *de Pastoret* (actually a count at age 32, before his elevation to marquis) wearing the Order of the Legion of Honor, a vision of glamorous masculinity.

Robert Rosenblum as Ingres's Portrait of Marquis de Pastoret, 2005

Oil on linen, 40 ½ x 33 inches

Courtesy of the artist



EUNICE GOLDEN

More than 50 years after their creation, Golden's "male landscapes," which reveal the artist's erotic lust for the male body, retain the power to startle. Golden's works celebrate unabashed female desire, making them revolutionary in American feminist art. The blatant expression of a woman's sexual desire for men remains repressed in "polite" American society, but Golden envisions a world in which such expressions of female sexuality are normalized. The artist continues to express her erotic yearning for the male body in a way that carries something of the same visceral impact as Gustave Courbet's *Origin of the World*, 1866 (Fig.6), the historical work that shocked when it was first shown, and which *Landscape #160* most directly evokes. The relative invisibility of female erotic desire in the post-World War II art world inspired Golden to openly depict her own desire through painting, as the artist was driven by a need to demystify female sexuality and the male nude. Although Abstract Expressionists like Willem de Kooning created distortions of the female nude, few male artists were interested in exploring the potential eroticism of the male nude. Golden's desires are overt and not hidden in coy metaphor. Instead, blatant, they make clear her yearning for the male body. In male landscapes Golden depicts nude, sexually aroused men, calling attention to sex organs and rendering the identity of her models completely anonymous and irrelevant. Names and personalities are absent from the titles. Instead, Golden files the memory of bodies as source material for her compositions and any viewer can project their own desires onto the body Golden eroticizes. In this way Golden mimics the 19th-century historical idealization of the female nude by male painters who systematically stripped their models of their uniqueness.



Landscape #160, 1972
Mixed media on paper, 26 x 51 inches
Courtesy of Guild Hall, East Hampton, New York

JENNA GRIBBON

Shown precariously balanced on the edge of the tub, her toes hanging over the toilet bowl, Gribbon presents a scene of personal grooming that is of startling intimacy that borders on voyeurism. What transforms the image from a fluidly if conservatively painted figure is the daub of neon on the figure's nipple. The brilliantly hued paint acts as a kind of flashing warning, inexorably drawing the eye to what the artist deliberately concealed. Gribbon's work is a consideration of how artists have long objectified women, and she says that she hopes her compositions will "jar people out of what they think they already know about consuming images of naked women." Gribbon is impacted by a wide range of historical influences, but her grooming figure here draws comparisons with Edgar Degas's long line of female bathers, shown in private moments of their intimate toilette, such as his two pastel drawings *Woman Drying Her Foot*, 1885-86 (Fig. 21), and *After the Bath, Woman Drying Herself*, c. 1890-1893 (Fig.22). Degas's considered observations of women that he saw in their most intimate moments are at times modest, though occasionally flagrant. Noting how her own art education has been shaped by the past, Gribbon says that her work is "... about a complicated relationship with the history of painting, not only with the way women have been depicted in painting, but also with the patrilineage of artists from which my work descends. I'm so steeped in the history of the way white men have translated ideas and images into paint, that I'm sure I will never be able to think of a Eurocentric male approach to painting as anything but just painting. . . . I love the work of so many men from this history, but I'm grappling with my own inclination to make work that comes directly from a tradition that would have left me out until very recently, and that continues to exclude many voices."

Toe nail trim, 2021
Oil on linen, 12 x 9 inches
Private Collection, Los Angeles, California



MIMI GROSS

Gross's inspiration for her large-scale "2 1/2 - D" standing sculpture was Eugène Delacroix's famous Orientalist oil painting *Women of Algiers in their Apartment* (Fig 23). Delacroix's painting also had an impact on Pablo Picasso, who created the series *Les Femmes d'Alger*, 1954-55, which he based on the Delacroix composition, a tribute to the earlier French painter. Gross, as a teenager, felt a "fascinating affinity" reading Delacroix's diaries, mesmerized by his descriptions of his travels across Morocco, as well as by his artworks. Delacroix's fantasy glance into a harem in his 1834 painting shows four women enclosed in a lavishly decorated room. Critics have noted the modestly clothed forms of these women, which does not show them eroticized to the extent of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's overt *The Grande Odalisque*, 1814 (Fig.5). Gross transports Delacroix's 19th-century scene to a scene in a contemporary apartment in Lower Manhattan in the 80s. She populates the figures in her scene with her creative friends and neighbors: a singer at the club Danceteria, a studio art assistant, and a dancer. Gross notes that the fourth woman in Delacroix's work, a slave, becomes a DJ in her work. Morphing race and gender, two different people posed for this figure because one model became unavailable in the middle of the project. The *DJ* holds a shiny *Dark Air* album designed to be hit by a projected light to bounce across the faces of the players in her scene, echoing the light Delacroix cascaded across his seated women figures. *Dark Air*, rendered in several models, even a full-size mockup in cardboard, technically challenged Gross. She created the sculpture, a major solo work for her after her divorce from longtime collaborator artist Red Grooms, in her new home, filling it with diverse details of her new life and making the work a state of feminist rebirth.

Dark Air: After Delacroix's Women of Algiers, 1980-81

Oil paint on wood, Plexiglas, mirrored Plexiglas, vinyl, linoleum, aluminum, and Gator Board

109 x 117 x 33 inches

© 2023 Mimi Gross / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Courtesy of Eric Firestone Gallery, New York



GUERRILLA GIRLS

This striking black-and-white interpretation of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's famed work *The Grande Odalisque*, 1814, was created 175 years later by the Guerrilla Girls. Under commission from the Public Art Fund in New York, the Guerrilla Girls designed a billboard on which an odalisque reclines, her face "disguised" in a gorilla mask. The Guerrilla Girls, a collective of female artists who maintain their anonymity by wearing gorilla masks in public, uses facts, humor, and striking imagery to underscore gender and racial discrimination in art and culture. For this project they visited New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art to compare the number of women artists whose work was represented in modern art galleries with the number of naked female bodies featured in artworks on display. The statistics they found blared their point in giant black-and-pink letters and numbers: *Less than 5% of the artists in the Modern Art sections are women, but 85% of the nudes are female*, which could only prompt the question stretched across the top of the brilliant yellow poster (like the odalisque): Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum? The Public Art Fund rejected the poster as a billboard, citing of lack of clarity, so the Guerrilla Girls noted, "We then rented advertising space on NYC buses and ran it ourselves, until the bus company cancelled our lease, saying that the image . . . 'was too suggestive and that the figure appeared to have more than a fan in her hand.'" Nevertheless, the poster made its impact, bringing into the limelight the lack of gender diversity across the art world of the 1980s. The Guerrilla Girls successfully reissued their poster in 2005 and 2012, attesting to its continued relevance. Since forming in 1984 as a response to the *International Survey of Painting and Sculpture* held at the Museum of Modern Art in which less than 10% of the artists were women, Guerilla Girls has been involved in hundreds of projects all over the world. The group's membership has evolved, but their identities remain unknown. Dubbing themselves the "conscience of the art world," the group began a poster series criticizing museums, dealers, curators, critics, and artists who they felt were complicit in the exclusion of women and non-white artists from mainstream exhibitions and publications.



Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum? 1989
Vinyl enlargement, 23 x 50 inches
© Guerrilla Girls, Courtesy of Guerrillagirls.com

HILARY HARKNESS

Harkness's painting, *Girl with a Basket of Flowers* is part of the artist's painting series *Life with Alice & Gertrude* centered on the famed writer Gertrude Stein and her life partner, Alice B. Toklas. Paintings in the series explore their personal relationship, their art collection, and people in their circle in Paris, like American writer Ernest Hemingway. Harkness explains her composition: "On the left side is Alice B. Toklas dressed to seduce Gertrude Stein. Fame came late to Stein and around the time of her American tour she developed a wandering eye. Here, Stein is seated on a sofa in their home dallying with a woman who may remain anonymous. Toklas holds the head of Ernest Hemingway, who was their frequent house guest and Stein's mentee until their falling-out circa 1935. Hemingway spied on their personal life and blabbed to the world, playing a role in Toklas becoming a more laughable than glamorous figure. In researching Hemingway's associations with Stein, it became clear Stein fascinated him sexually and he wanted to bed her. Given the tumultuous nature of their mentor-mentee relationship, I speculate he may have taken his frustration out on Toklas, perhaps cornering her when she was alone in the kitchen. It sounds outlandish, perhaps, but Toklas was a supreme hostess in service of Stein. Alice loved Gertrude and Gertrude loved the world. In the world of my paintings, Toklas doesn't let Hemingway get away with it, at least in her mind. His decapitated head appears in proximity to her in many of the paintings in this series, and though her age varies, his head remains well-preserved." This psycho-sexual drama plays out against a cropped image of Pablo Picasso's *Young Girl with a Flower Basket*, 1905 (Fig 24). A symbol of both innocence and worldly knowledge, the painting depicts a Parisian street girl, named "Linda," whose fate unknown, was painted at a key phase in Picasso's life, his Rose Period, as he made the transition from an impoverished bohemian at the start of 1905 to a successful artist by the end of 1906. As this painting signals the rise of Picasso's success, it also provides the final pictorial footnote in *Framing the Female Gaze*, as the 19th-century French painters gave way to the new, rising Modernism, itself rife with "problematic" images of the male gaze.



Girl with a Basket of Flowers, 2011
Watercolor and colored pencil on paper, 10 x 13 inches
Courtesy of the artist

LEWINALE HAVETTE

Creating a group of intimate domestic scenes in sumptuous painterly style, Havette glorifies the individual in a place of respite and contemplation, then, a couple in a place of romantic refuge, and, finally, the tender intimacies of parenthood. Havette has expressed her admiration for Kehinde Wiley, famous for his portraits of contemporary Black subjects in historicized European settings, where he adapts art's classic poses previously reserved for white kings and their aristocracies. Havette's work, without such obvious historicism, updates the domestic felicities celebrated by 19th-century painter Mary Cassatt in her oil painting *Baby's First Caress*, 1891 (Fig. 25), in which a babe-in-arms fondles its mother's face, as the seated mother rests in an almost womb-like pastel setting. She and her baby, with eyes focused only on each other, give up love to each other. Havette, in her contemporary painting *Man and Child* shows us a male in the role of tender caregiver, but his caring is infused with energy. Standing against a background streaked with color, the baby carried in the crook of his father's powerful arm, they gaze out at us with the confidence of their togetherness and love. *Constellation* (following page) shows a loving mixed-race couple, the artist and her French husband, in a style that beautifully blends the romantic with a cozy domesticity. It is a work that makes the viewer reflect on how changing mores have led to a more open society. Nineteenth-century French artists could only show couples in bed under the most lurid circumstances, usually with a suggestion of prostitution or in scandalous circumstances, like the entwined lesbians in Gustave Courbet's *The Sleepers*, 1866 (Fig. 26). That frank painting, when publicly exhibited in 1872, resulted in a police report being filed against the gallery. *Ignite* (following page), which is a self-portrait of the artist, plays with the trope of the sleeping woman being observed in self-centered reverie, most famously portrayed in Sir Frederic Leighton's *Flaming June*, 1895 (Fig. 27). Here, though, her face partially obscured, the artist plays with the "male gaze" by observing herself, even as she acts as model.

Man and Child, 2023

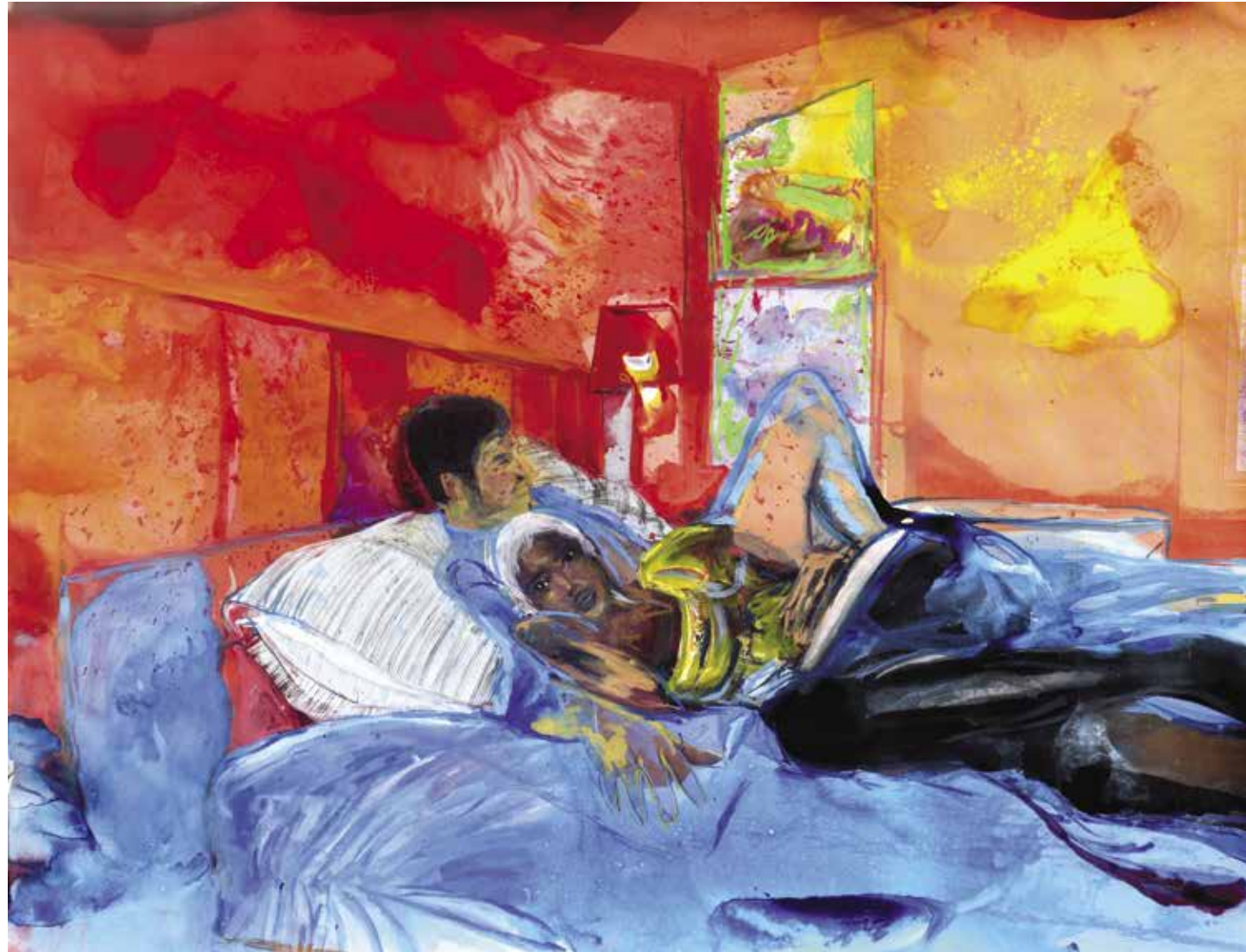
20 x 24 inches

Mixed media

Courtesy of Lewinale Havette and Cierra Britton Gallery, New York



Lewinale Havette



Constellation, 2023
36 x 48 inches

Opposite
Ignite, 2023
40 x 60 inches

Mixed media
Courtesy of Lewinale Havette and Cierra Britton Gallery, NY, NY



VERA ILIATOVA

Édouard Manet's famous painting *The Luncheon on the Grass*, 1862-1863 (Fig. 10), has long been a touchstone for Iliatova. She notes, "I recently revisited it again at the Musee D'Orsay a few months ago and have a postcard of it hanging in my studio." Discussing the influence of Manet on her painting style and *Luncheon on the Grass* in particular, the artist said, "The composite nature of Manet's paintings and the deeply felt connection that he creates between his immediate surroundings and the history of painting have been an important inspiration in my own work." Manet's 1862 painting *Music in the Tuileries Gardens* (Fig. 28) perfectly illustrates the excitement of the public attending a concert in these Parisian gardens, much like the spirit of Iliatova's townsfolk as music fills their square. Manet's crowd, beautifully dressed, permit themselves elegant hubbub as they gather to listen to the language of the music. Iliatova's people, though, follow everyday pursuits—drawing, dipping back and forth on a garden swing, hanging laundry to dry, the music integral to their activity. *While music filled the squares* also draws inspiration from a smaller Manet canvas, *Fishing*, 1862-1863 (Fig. 29), and *Fishing*, in turn, draws compositional inspiration from the earlier Baroque Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens. Early 19th century French painter Eugène Delacroix showed how creativity can move from one century's artist to artists of the next, telling the younger Manet to, "Look at Rubens, draw inspiration from Rubens, copy Rubens. Rubens was God." Despite drawing on historical compositional sources, Iliatova explores the contemporary concerns of physical and psychological dislocation. She said, "All the figures in my paintings are self-portraits in disguise, the stand-ins for my memories of myself and my peers. . . . There is a trauma in having to leave at a formative age the city and the language that was familiar to me, and the incredible grief at witnessing what the country of my birth is currently doing to the world."



While music filled the squares, 2022
Oil on canvas, 30 1/8 x 40 1/8 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Nathalie Karg Gallery, New York

AYANA V. JACKSON

Jackson's title *Anarcha* comes from the names of Black women who suffered brutal experiments at the hands of the surgeon James Marion Sims, during 19th-century enslavement in the United States. A statue honoring Sims was removed from New York City's Bryant Park in 2018, the year after this piece was created. The artist notes, "A lot of enslaved women had a tear between the anus and the vagina that would happen in childbirth, and Sims invented the first speculum . . . Anarcha, Lucy, and Betsey were experimented on the most . . . and I wanted to honor Anarcha. I ended up thinking about historical references of the Black woman's body at leisure in Turkish baths and wanted to place Anarcha within that space." Using costumes and staging fashioned with many details, Jackson created an image of a Black woman who turns away, literally refusing the viewer's gaze. *Anarcha* is a compositional variation on Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *Odalisque or the Small Bather*, 1864 (Fig. 3). Unlike the looseness of the wrapped sarong in *Anarcha*, Jackson, in a second print, *The Vase that Holds the Flowers in her Hair* (following page), creates an image of a figure obliterated by the corseted dress that demands constriction, conjuring recollection of Degas's hardworking dancers.

Anarcha, 2017

Archival pigment print on German etching paper

39 3/8 x 27 1/2 inches

Edition of 8, plus 3 A.P. (#4/8)

Collection of Tiffanye Threadcraft

Courtesy of Mariane Ibrahim



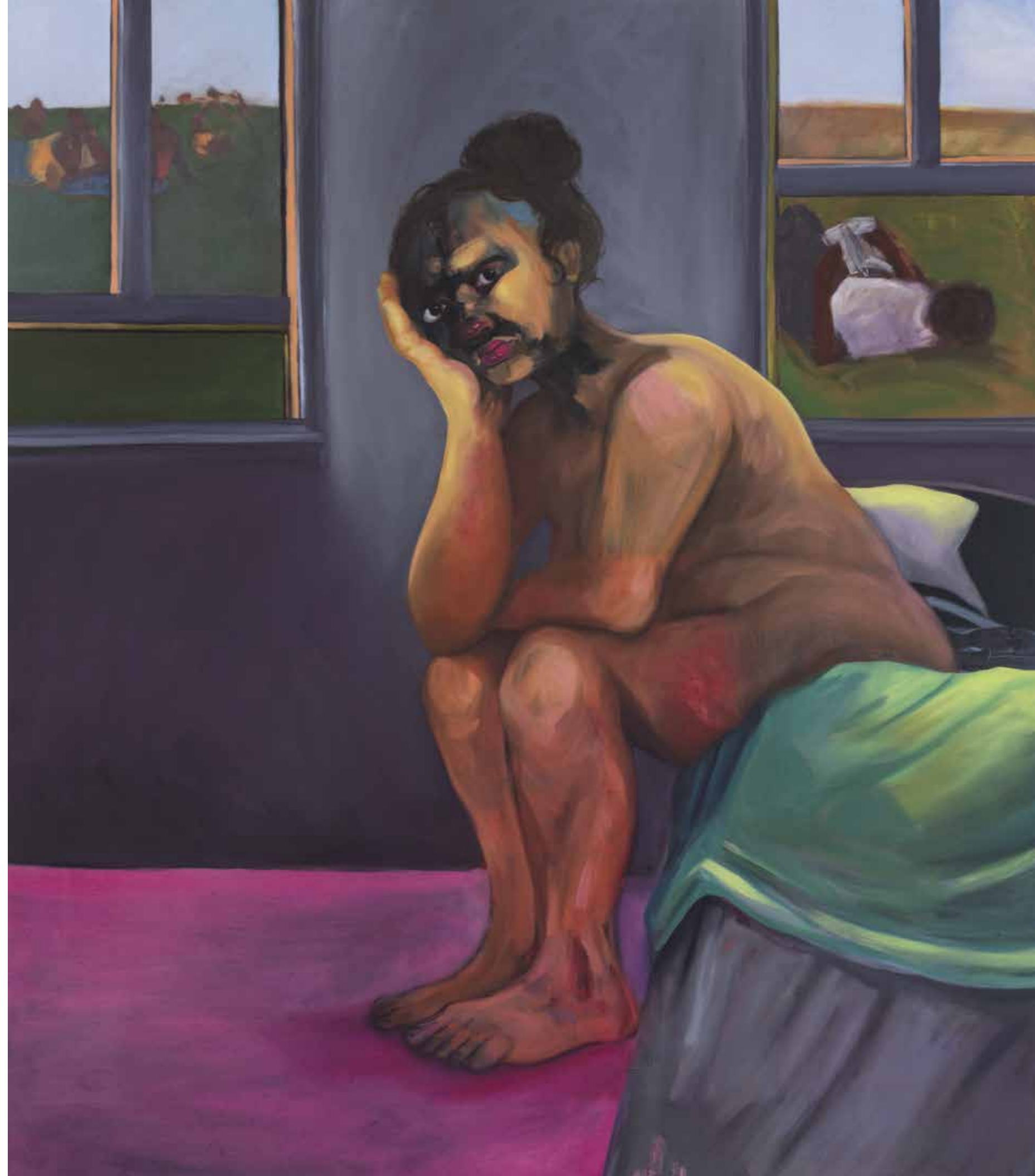


The Vase that Holds the Flowers in her Hair, 2021
Archival pigment print on museum etching paper
39 ³/₈ x 35 ⁷/₈ inches
Edition of 8, plus 3 A.P. (#3/8)
Collection of Tiffanye Threadcraft
Courtesy of Mariane Ibrahim

CHEYENNE JULIEN

Bronx-born artist Cheyenne Julien creates contemplative and painterly self-portraits. In *Can't go out, Can't stay in*, the artist's pose conjures a feeling of deep philosophical contemplation that echoes the famous pose of Auguste Rodin's sculpture *The Thinker*, 1904 (Fig.30). Julien's title suggests a universal feeling of mental paralysis when one can't settle on a course of action. Despite a somber tone, the highlighted touches of the composition, including passages of fuchsia and turquoise, create a vibrancy on the canvas, suggesting the possibility that Julien's glum, motionless figure may be compelled to spring into action. As one critic wrote, "The painting captures, with wry precision, the paralyzing tension between the two selves that you could be between: the self-containment of staying with the soft furnishings inside and the siren call of joining the people lounging in the grass outside the open windows." Critics have also suggested that Julien's work can be compared to the paintings of French painter Pierre Bonnard, who also incorporated beautiful coloration and a painterly style into works that simultaneously suggest a degree of loneliness or psychological alienation. Bonnard's *Dining Room in the Country*, 1913 (Fig. 31), is actually Julien's composition reversed. Hanging over the open window, the resigned, solitary figure is out in the bucolic countryside but appears to contemplate returning to her domestic interior, though with indecision.

Can't go out, Can't stay in, 2019
Oil on canvas, 60 x 52 inches
Private Collection, Atlanta, Georgia



FAY KU

“I can’t separate the Female Gaze from the East Asian gaze,” Ku says. “Everyone always sees from their point of view, an internal viewpoint.” The artist’s *The Jungle Has Eyes* (following page) evokes the intimacy of the women in Paul Gauguin’s *Barbarian Tales*, 1902 (Fig.32), but instead of including a young male figure watching the women, Ku peoples a vastly different background with myriad eyes that suggest a glittering omniscience. Looking at Ku’s composition, it is hard to know if the eyes represent the women looking at the viewer or are a metaphor because they themselves are being observed. Ku said, “As an immigrant brought up in two cultures, I was aware from a young age how worldviews are encoded within the language, social customs and material culture . . . while I try to challenge expectations and constraints, I want to also acknowledge resonances inherited from history as well as the darker elements of our human nature.” In *Throne*, Ku inspired by French Symbolist artist Gustave Moreau’s *Jupiter and Sémélé*, 1894-1895 (Fig. 33), adapted his complex composition of tragic love. Moreau’s painting shows the moment in a classical myth when the king of the gods, Jupiter, is forced to reveal himself to his mortal lover in all his divine splendor. The effect is sublime, but she dies in a volley of lightning and thunder. The overwhelming physical experience portrayed is what one critic has called “quite simply the most sumptuous expression imaginable of an orgasm.”

Throne, 2016
Graphite, acrylic, and oil paint on two layered sheets of drafting film
42 x 30 inches

Following page
The Jungle Has Eyes, 2019
Graphite, oil paint and glitter on cut layered translucent drafting film
21 ½ x 30 inches

Courtesy of the artist





YUSHI LI

The artist gazes serenely at her camera, as she perches atop a nude and beautiful sleeping man. Li, a Chinese artist based in London, consistently interrogates the nature of “the gaze,” turning her lens from male to female. *The Nightmare* is inspired by Henry Fuseli’s 1781 painting (Fig. 34), of the same name, which depicts a demon sitting atop the chest of a sleeping woman. This demon is an incubus, a demon in male form, who, according to folklore, would try to seduce or sexually fall upon the woman as she slept. The painting’s dreamlike and haunting erotic evocation of infatuation and obsession was a huge popular success when it was shown, though critics responded with horrified fascination. Li reflects that in her photograph, “I am the demon who is sitting on this man’s chest. I am neither an incubus nor a succubus (a demon in female form), but something in between. The nudity of the subject suggests an erotic scene, while my turtleneck top and tights refuse to show any sexual seduction towards the man. The ambiguity of my position blurs the boundaries of sexual difference and expands the idea of eroticism.” One of Li’s main compositional differences is that Fuseli’s woman is clothed in her nightgown, while Li’s male figure is completely nude, seemingly to make him more vulnerable to sexual predation. The exposed male nude, his body open to view, did have parallels in 19th-century French painting, often heroized to make the vulnerability of nudity more palatable in works like Joseph-Désiré Court’s *The Death of Hippolytus*, 1828 (Fig. 35). Li has spoken compellingly on how the historically contested male/female gaze dichotomy is being transformed by technology into an all-seeing “digital gaze,” neither male nor female—a gaze in which computer algorithms determine what is presented to our view, and the “Internet gaze,” which constantly looks at us from all sides. She adds, “In the intangible space of the Internet I am a disembodied eye; my identity, my existence even, is always uncertain. My gaze is that of the invisible voyeur in a peep show or the guard in the panopticon prison [a circular prison with cells arranged around a central well from which prisoners could at all times be observed]. But it can also be the maternal gaze upon the child who plays alone secure in the presence of the mother out of sight.”

The Nightmare, 2019
C-type print, 40 x 50 inches
Courtesy of the artist



YUSHI LI,
IN COLLABORATION WITH
STEPH WILSON

Li produces highly staged portraits of nude men that subvert the long history of the male gaze and the objectification and fetishization of East Asian women. In her photograph Li appears fully clothed and in control, while the men that surround Li appear unconcernedly nude. The artist notes the societal complexities surrounding the “female gaze” saying, “When there is an image of a woman, we think the viewer is a man, but if it is of a man, we still think the viewer is a man. I want to make work to show women’s desire for men.” Li became known for her series *My Tinder Boys*, 2017-18, which portrays white men she met through a “kitchen-dating app,” dining or posing au naturel. In *The Feast, inside*, a collaboration with the artist Steph Wilson, the two women artists sit on a sofa in an elegant living room, surrounded by a group of nude men. The indoor figures are posed against a rather sanitized 19th-century style wall mural depicting frolicking men and women in various states of undress in a charmingly outdoor Arcadian scene, where cherubic children lug grapes for Dionysian revels and satyr-like young men with pointed ears play pan flutes. The seeming discordance of the scene is the artist’s evocation of Édouard Manet’s *The Luncheon on the Grass*, 1863 (Fig. 10), with its then startlingly contemporary nude woman sitting with two fully clothed male companions. Although Li’s images can be both beautiful and humorous as they wrestle with gender politics, desire, and sexuality, they are imbued with darker themes of power. The artist describes this discordance, “When I look through the viewfinder, I’m the photographer behind the camera, which hides me and protects me. On the other hand, when I look through the lens, in other words, looking at the viewer, I become both the looker and the looked-at.”



The Feast, inside 2020
C-type print, 41 x 51 inches
Courtesy of Yushi Li

SHONA McANDREW

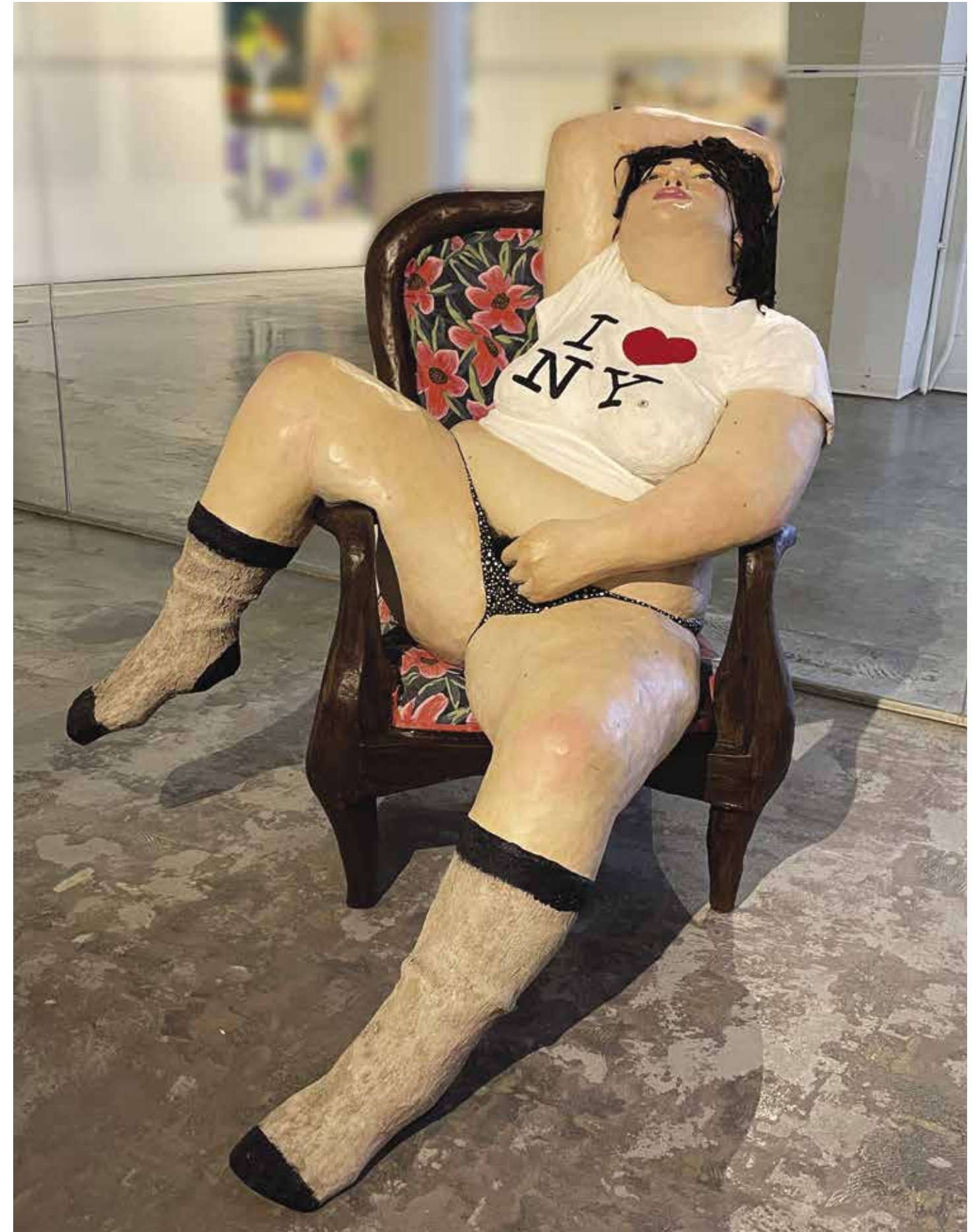
McAndrew says that for the women who see her sculptures, “You see a representation of yourself, and it allows you to let out the breath you have been holding.” The artist, who identifies as plus size, challenges our ideas about body type and who may acceptably be portrayed erotically. She shows the figure, *Norah*, as luxuriating in the comfort of her body. By challenging portrayals of large bodies as self-conscious and inhibited, McAndrew embraces the depictions of plus-size bodies invariably shown in the popular media as “before” pictures. The premise is usually that the individual (most often a woman) is miserable, an unattractive version of a future, skinnier “better” self. She points out that “plus-size bodies are never shown in the present, they’re always about to shift, and I was very intrigued in taking that [idea] over and making bodies that only exist in the moment . . . my women are plus-size, and yes, my women have hairy legs or hairy vaginas, but it’s about her experience as a body, and about her in the moment that she’s in.” The artist has noted that her sculptures’ intimate actions and poses, which portray the most sensual moments of the self alone have great resonance, with a wide variety of viewers. Although portraying a body type that is often neglected in both popular culture and visual “high” art, Nora does share a resonance with a variety of historical poses that signify erotic self-pleasure. Nora’s arm thrown back exposes herself and depicts a kind of vulnerability that can be seen in the male figure in Anne-Louis Girodet de Roussy-Trioson’s moonlight-dappled *The Sleep of Endymion*, 1791 (Fig. 36). In Greek mythology, Endymion was the lover of Selene, the moon, and Girodet shows Endymion in a self-centered ecstasy that echoes Nora’s satisfied solitude.

Norah, 2016-2017

Paper mâché, acrylic, wood, aluminum wire, fabric

46 x 40 x 44 inches

Courtesy of the artist and CHART, New York



MARILYN MINTER

Working, now, on a series that Minter calls *21st-Century Odalisques*, the print *Target* is from another of her series, *21st-Century Bathers*, in which she examines the act of bathing, a topic often depicted in Western art history. For *Target* Minter was inspired by the “male gaze” of 19th-century French artists and their proclivity for picturing women grooming themselves. Minter’s model, arms raised, references Edgar Degas’s many paintings showing women at various stages of bathing and dressing. Gorgeous pastels by Degas like *Seated Bather*, 1899 (Fig. 37) may obscure the sitter’s identity, while others, such as *Woman Having Her Hair Combed*, c. 1886-88 (Fig. 38), are more overt at presenting the woman’s body to the viewer. In *Target* the figure grooming herself discriminates in how she allows the viewer to consume her image, and Minter further adds to the contemporary tone by using a woman of color as its subject. She layers her photograph with additional meaning by including an iconic modern Pop symbol, “the target,” created here from steam on the mirror or on the camera’s lens. Works like Jasper Johns’s *Target with Four Faces*, 1955 (Fig. 39) shows partially obscured faces, overtly equating the target with the act of looking and directing the viewer’s gaze. In Minter’s work, the mirror’s surface acts as a kind of intrusion and protection—it is the boundary between the image and the viewer. Minter says, “We’re used to seeing an art history of [a] bather . . . women in nature, Greeks, all the way to the Expressionists and Impressionists, women constantly grooming themselves . . . I wanted to bring it into the 21st century. So I have the bather in the shower.” Minter artfully balances abstraction with realism, underscoring her fascination with the “female gaze.”

Target, 2017
C-print, 86 x 64 ½ inches
Edition 3 of 3, 2 A.P. (MnM 994.3)
Courtesy of Salon 94, New York



JESSE MOCKRIN

Before the French artist Jacques-Louis David became the premier painter of the Neoclassical art movement, beginning in the 1760s and lasting until the 1850s, he studied with French Rococo artist François Boucher, the definitive painter of the frivolous French *ancien régime*, in the years before France's Revolution (1789-1799). From this period of apprenticeship, David produced *Mademoiselle Guimard as Terpsichore*, 1774-1775 (Fig. 40), a pastiche of Boucher's work. A simpering pastoral scene, worthy of Marie Antoinette's aristocratic/Arcadian Le Hameau, a rustic village built in the gardens of her Trianon estate. David's minor composition is graced with lovely, tumbling roses, which subtly reappear in Mockrin's rondel portrait of a young man, *The Hunter*. Synthesizing past and present, the canvas is from a body of Mockrin's work that showcases K-Pop (Korean popular music) stars, using a color palette and patterns inspired by French Rococo painting. The young men in Mockrin's paintings are dandies, which one critic noted is "perhaps 18th-century parlance for gender fluidity." Mockrin says, "I'm definitely interested in these androgynous faces; a lot of the faces come from Ingres . . . [he] has these amazing facial proportions happening, like the eyes are too far apart. There are always heavy eyelids and deep-set eyes, small mouths, small noses." Beautifully painted, these contemporary works are no more "real" than their 18th and 19th-century predecessors. Mockrin suggests the desire for anatomical youth and perfection is akin to an *Instagram* filter, "the skin is not real, it's got this quality that's like plaster or porcelain. It's not a fleshy, meaty human body. It's some other kind of texture."

The Hunter, 2017
Oil on linen, 28 x 28 inches
© Jesse Mockrin, Private Collection, New York



CHRISTIE NEPTUNE

Light flooding the window behind her, Neptune presents an elegant self-portrait in which she is sheathed in a white gown. Highly alert to her own camera lens, the artist sits upright and staring in a chair with serpentine “s-curve” arms that surround and embrace her. This formal composition recalls the coiling stole of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres’s *Mademoiselle Caroline Rivière*, 1806 (Fig. 41), another woman dressed in white and quietly facing the viewer, holding her thoughts inwards. Neptune’s composition is classically spare, even as it appears luxurious. Another contrast, its historical woodwork appears to remove the room and its inhabitant from a contemporary environment. *Guild of Light* borrows compositionally from 19th-century European traditions of “swagger portraiture,” such as John Singer Sargent’s painting *Portrait of Madame X*, 1884 (Fig.42), a striking portrait of Virginie Gautreau, an American-born Parisian socialite, whose family wealth came from a slave-holding plantation in Louisiana. Neptune wears gold grape earrings, grapes a West Indian symbol of ancestry, and a black spot on her forehead, the *kala tika*, a West Indian adornment believed to ward off evil. *Guild of Light* is part of this artist’s conceptual series, *En Route Towards El Dorado: Deepened Relations and the Descent Back Home*, which considers globalization and modernity in relation to the artist’s native homeland, Guyana, on South America’s northern coast. *En Route Towards El Dorado* takes its name from the legend of El Dorado, a golden city ruled by a mythic king, and the search for it that led to punishing European expeditions to the New World in the 16th and 17th centuries. Guyana was a country largely dependent on the plantation production of sugar, until the discovery of gold inside its boundaries in the mid-19th century; a discovery that transformed its economy and marked the shift toward what Neptune terms “Modern Guyanese” culture, that is a hybridized identity that swirled together Amerindians, formerly enslaved Africans, and indentured South Asians. “For the ‘Modern Guyanese,’” Neptune says, “wealth is a cultural performance activated through the presence of gold,” and Neptune explores a racial and national identity that has shifted into a modern global capitalist world because of the possession of gold.

Guild of Light, 2020
Archival inkjet print, 30 x 30 inches
Courtesy of the artist



DEBORAH ORY & KEN BROWAR

Deborah Ory & Ken Browar's stunning photographs of Misty Copeland, a principal dancer for the American Ballet Theatre (ABT), were inspired by the poses in Edgar Degas's most famous ballerina compositions. They are an opportunity to transcend time to look at work created by a contemporary husband-and-wife artist team that combine points of view for both the female and the male gaze. *NYC Dance Project* was created by the couple, with Browar coming to the project via fashion photography and Ory bringing a background in both professional dance and editorial photography. Together they created this project to showcase dance and dancers based in New York City. After an injury, Ory began to take photographs of the performances in which she would have otherwise danced. Browar's passion for dance began when he lived in Paris and photographed dancers from the Paris Opera Ballet on the same stage on which Degas would have viewed them 150 years ago. The couple said that their Degas series, which includes direct inspiration from works like *Swaying Dancer (Dancer in Green)*, 1877-79 (Fig. 43) and *Dancer*, 1880 (Fig. 44) was, "quite a challenge for us, trying to creatively recreate the paintings, without the process feeling awkward." Copeland, who, in 2015, became ABT's first African American female principal dancer, found posing for Ory & Browar images also a challenge, noting, "It was interesting to be on a shoot and to not have the freedom to just create like I normally do with my body. Trying to recreate what Degas did was difficult. It was amazing just to notice all the small details but also how he still allows you to feel like there's movement." Curator Thelma Golden (The Studio Museum in Harlem) commented on the visual tension between the 14-year-old in Degas's original *Little Dancer*, 1880 (Fig. 45), and Copeland, a mature woman of color in her 30s, "She has knocked aside a long-standing music-box stereotype of the ballerina and replaced it with a thoroughly modern, multicultural image of presence and power."

Misty Copeland, after Degas, Little Dancer, 2015

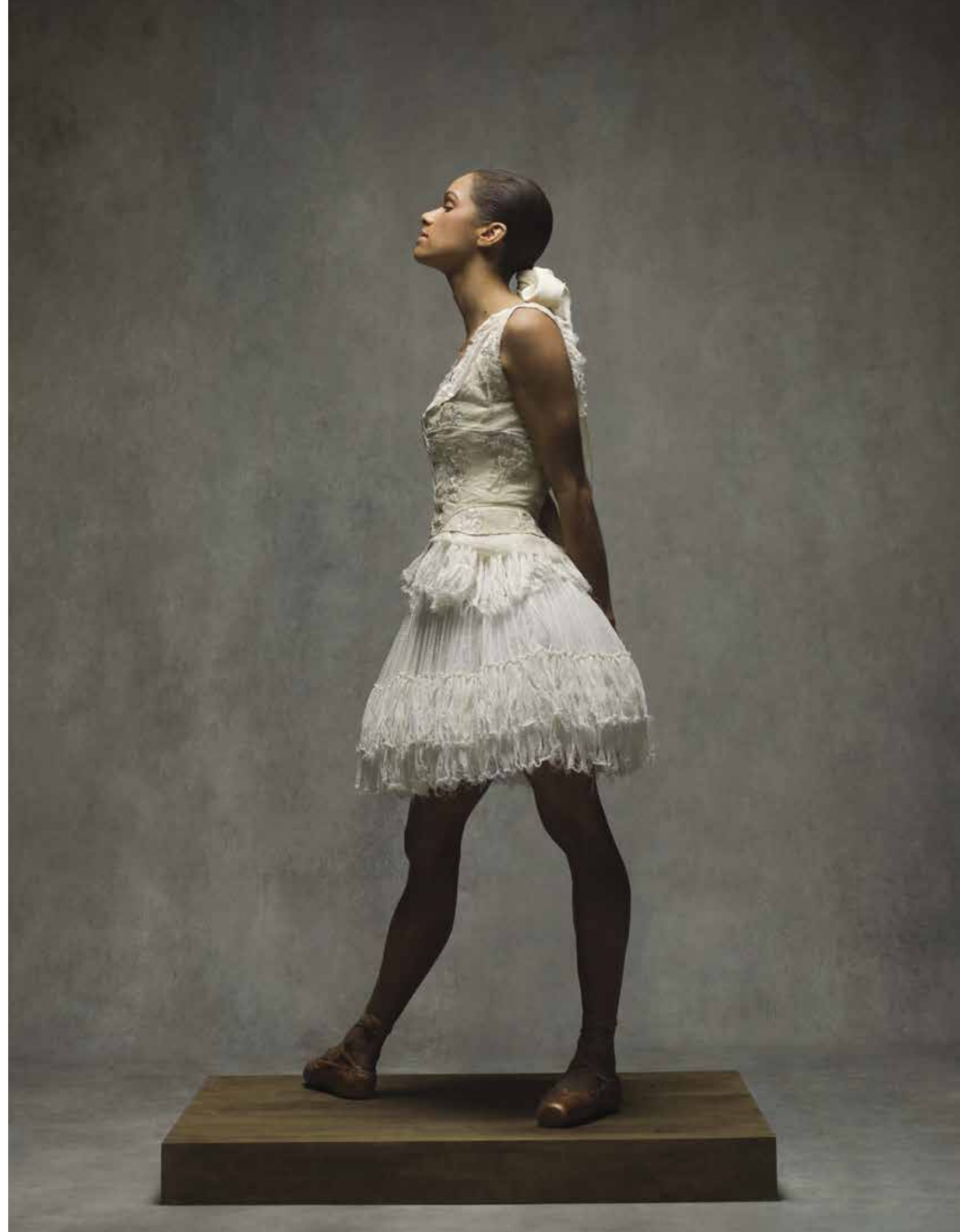
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Misty Copeland, after Degas, Dancer in Green, 2015

Misty Copeland, after Degas, Dancer, 2015

Dye sublimation on aluminum, 50 x 42 inches

Courtesy of the artists





PHYLLIS GAY PALMER

Although the female nude is omnipresent in 19th-century French art, Palmer creates exquisitely rendered male nudes that draw on the long French tradition of the academic male study, most famously known in works like Hippolyte Flandrin's *Study (Young Male Nude Seated Beside the Sea)*, 1835-36 (Fig. 46) and Gustave Courbet's *Study of a Nude Man*, early 1840s (Fig. 47). Though the tradition of the male nude did exist in 19th-century French painting, forbidden suggestions of homosexuality meant male figures were not posed together affectionately, as Palmer portrays them here. The artist said, "All my paintings and sculpture are in one way or another a celebration of our physical bodies. Each . . . figure is based on a drawing of friends who have patiently modeled for me over the years. Whether dancing, playing the flute, or dreaming in a hammock, these paintings and the sculpture can remind us of our best selves." Palmer's work was deeply impacted by her younger brother, who unsuccessfully attempted suicide, when 21 years old. In 1973 he told Palmer he was gay, although it remained a secret from their family. This emotional opening up bonded the siblings, and Palmer went on to make a number of paintings inspired by her brother's "regular self" and "secret self." Palmer has said, "So much of my work that followed aimed to convey the situation of individuals who didn't quite fit the American dream . . . the impetus for *Crouch* is really based on the story of my brother, as are many of my paintings that involve same-sex relationships. In this case the two men were simply good friends and were willing to take off their clothes for me."

Crouch, 1997
Oil and wax on canvas, 36 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist



CECILIA PAREDES

FOCUS EXHIBITION: THE HALL OF FAME ART GALLERY, BCC

Concealment can be enticing or alienating, depending on the viewer's perspective. As human beings we are hardwired by evolution to seek out the features of a face—to find common connection in mutual recognition. Despite or perhaps because of our urge to seek out faces, artists have long recognized the visceral impact of withholding the faces they capture from the viewer. In many images of the female figure subjected to the scrutiny of the traditional male gaze, the model's concealed or averted face may read as a form of resistance. Even as the figure is visually consumed by the viewer, the core identity of the model is withheld. When a female artist uses her own body as an image in her creation, the dynamics of concealment or aversion are even more complicated. Cecilia Paredes's images show lush fabrics framing her body, as she turns from the camera's eye. Paredes, born in Peru, draws upon an array of cultural influences to document her performances in which she uses her body to communicate her ideas of culture, dislocation, identity, and belonging. Photographs like *Hermitage*, 2017, conjure the exoticized decadence of both Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *Odalisque or the Small Bather*, 1864 (Fig. 3), and Onésipe Aguado de las Marismas's famous photograph *Woman Seen from the Back*, c.1862 (Fig. 48), an image suggesting the glamor of 1860s Paris, during Napoleon III's Second Empire reign. Paredes notes the beauty of the fabric backdrops she chooses, "The textile itself is so essential to me. So absolutely essential, like a second skin, almost. I always go, wherever I go, to a textile museum, first thing—to a museum of embroidery to see how they made the silk . . . I really, really do believe in textile, in embroidery, in colors, how they define places, and how important it is."

Hermitage, 2017
33 x 52 inches

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The Dream, 2022
39 x 39 inches

The Secret, 2018
33 x 55 inches

Performance registered in photography
Courtesy of the artist





CELESTE RAPONE

Rapone created *Muscle for Hire* in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, at a time when the artist found herself nostalgic for her adolescence in New Jersey. Her oil painting is part of a series of large-scale works that reflect on “the road not taken,” had Rapone not become an artist, but, rather, stayed with her family in New Jersey. A *horror vacui* drenched in Pepto-Bismol pink, *Muscle for Hire* depicts a woman in a track suit, her arms massively elongated and frantically digging a deep, black hole to nothingness that suggests a giant void in the middle of a soccer field. A composition of conflicted motherhood, it is filled with suburban motifs, including a parking ticket, a water bottle in a carrier, a container of fragile, malnourished seedlings, the wrappers of cough drops, and the silica gel packet you get in the bottom of packaged seaweed, a popular toddler snack. Reflecting on the female gaze, Rapone says, “Most of my paintings depict women never fully at rest, always trying too hard, finding themselves in impossible positions. Manifesting as the body abstracting itself, there is an absolute nod to Ingres’s exaggerated female anatomy—*The Grande Odalisque*, 1814 (Fig. 5) and *Jupiter and Thetis*, 1811 (Fig. 49) in particular, notorious for their anatomical inaccuracies. “Manet is an artist I’ve looked at for years as someone who was one of the first to depict the everyday woman who is not performing for the viewer. His female subjects appear almost ambivalent to viewership, but always aware they’re being looked at. My female figures lack the confidence and ease of Manet’s, and perhaps that difference can be attributed to a female figure being depicted by a male artist versus a female artist. What I’m interested in drawing on is the subject’s relationship to the viewer: simultaneously feeling seen and unseen.”

Muscle for Hire, 2022
Oil on canvas, 67 1/8 x 67 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Aspen



ARLENE RUSH

In the *Twins Cameo* series, Rush incorporates herself as both a male and female protagonist into photographs of paintings. She comments, then, on historical ideas and present-day assumptions by interjecting a male counterpart into a cameo-like frame that usually denotes female beauty. Her images, at once insightful and amusing, hold a mirror up to contemporary society, as they reflect social, historical, and ontological questions. In their elaborate 19th-century style frames, *Twins Cameo III* and *Twins Cameo IV* have direct reference to two of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's most famous paintings—*Portrait of Comtesse d'Haussonville*, 1845 (Fig. 7), and *The Grande Odalisque*, 1814 (Fig. 5). In *III*, Rush replaces the languid visage of Louise de Broglie with her own more animated countenance and then pairs herself with her male doppelgänger in the form of a general drawn from a military portrait of George Washington by the American artist John Trumbull. In *IV*, Rush revisits Ingres on the distaff side of the diptych, this time incorporating herself into his *Odalisque*, pairing with a male possessed of a beautiful body drawn from a contemporary source, but with his sculpted abs, the image references academic figure studies such as Ingres's *Male Torso*, 1800 (Fig. 50). Much of Rush's work speaks to imagination and the fluidity of identity. She recalls that she “was a tomboy who loved to play sports and box with her father—but I also wore my dresses.”

Twins Cameo III (Diptych), 2012

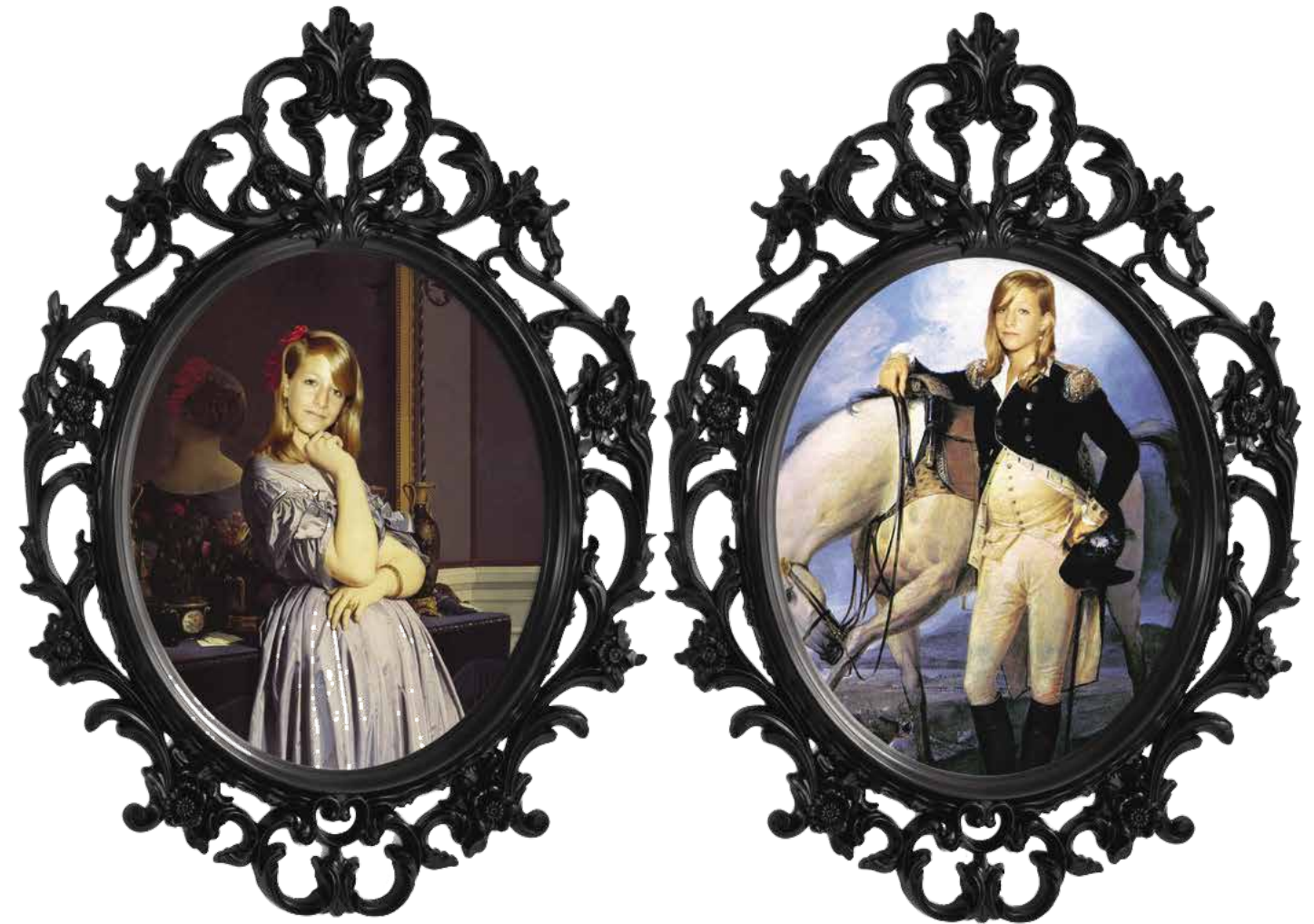
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Twins Cameo IV (Diptych), 2012

Digital prints with frames

33 ½ x 48 x 2 inches

Courtesy of the artist





JULIA SANTOS SOLOMON

Floor Scrapers is part of an early series Solomon created called *Homage to the Masters*.

Fascinated by male beauty in many historical paintings, she was particularly inspired by the French Impressionist Gustave Caillebotte's 1875 artwork (Fig. 51) of the same title and felt a strong empathy for the workers in his scene. Caillebotte's painting is one of the first major representations of the urban proletariat in 19th-century Paris. He gives the nude torsos of his workers the magnificence of history painting's heroes of antiquity in a way that would have shocked bourgeois Parisian audiences at that time. Although there was a long art-historical tradition of painting the rural poor or peasants in rustic or romanticized Arcadian scenes, the grittiness of urban workers as subjects had largely been avoided by 19th-century French artists, until Caillebotte. Painted from a highly angled position and depicting three shirtless parquet planers laboring in Caillebotte's own apartment, some critics have argued that this unusual subject matter is permeated with an undercurrent of homosexual desire. Unlike Courbet or Millet, Caillebotte does not incorporate any obvious social, moralizing or political message about labor in his work, which is presented in straightforward fashion. That this canvas was rejected at the 1875 *Salon* due to "vulgar subject matter," provoked Caillebotte to join the Impressionists. Instead of painting an exact copy of Caillebotte's masterpiece, Santos Solomon mixed eight shades of gray pigment and focused on how her eye saw Caillebotte's picture, feeling the movement with her body as she painted in response to the exertion of the workers. The bold brushstrokes, dramatic light, and diagonals of limbs and floorboards all contribute to the palpable buoyant energy of the painting and give it a more effervescent, swirling quality in contrast to the heaviness of the original.

The Floor Scrapers, 1994 -1995

Acrylic on paper mounted on canvas, 48 x 40 inches

Collection of the Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York

Gift of Henry S. Hacker, 2001



SYLVIA SLEIGH

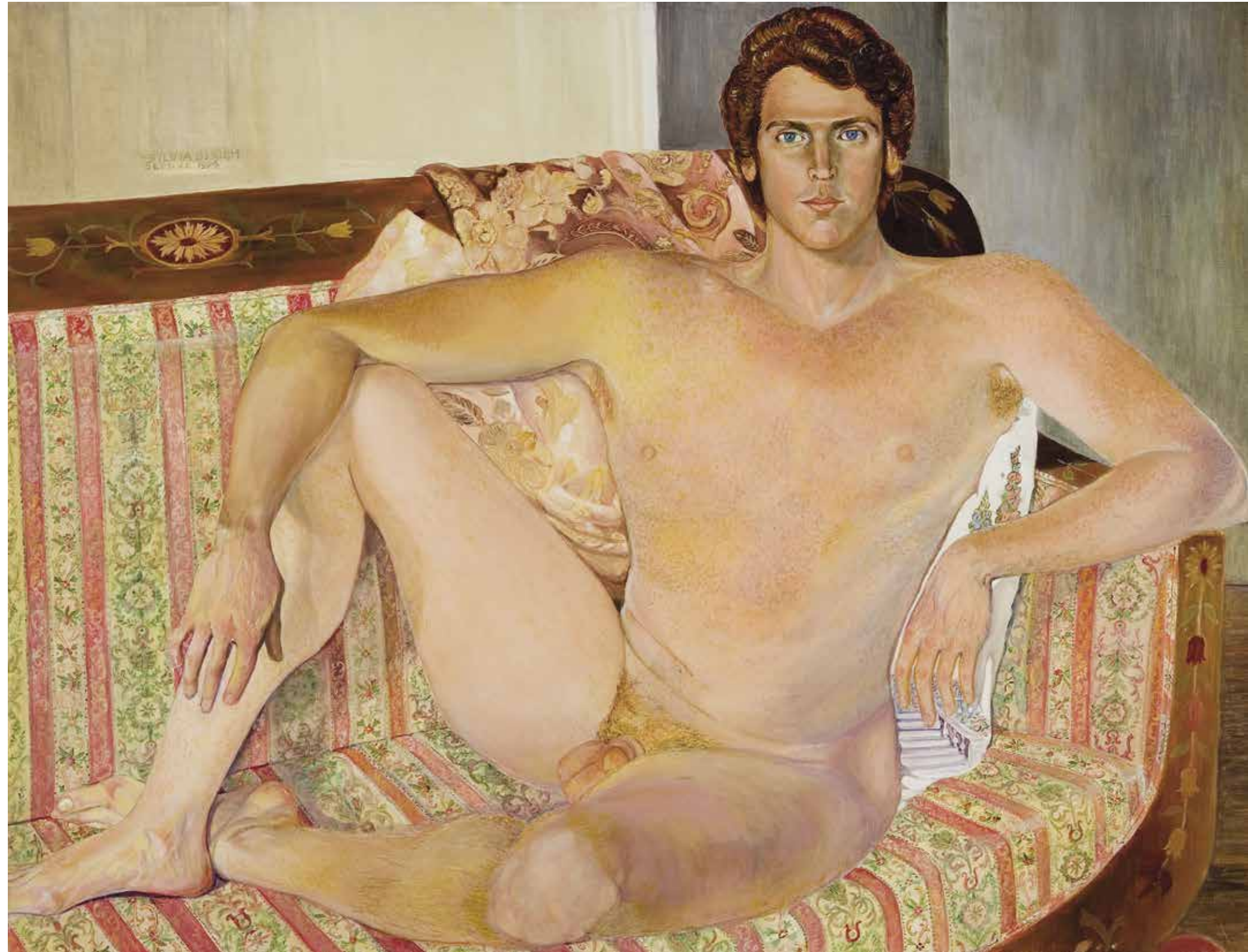
Sleigh is best known for her paintings that reverse the stereotype of the male gaze by putting men in poses and positions which traditionally depicted women. Sleigh commented about her work, "To me, women were often portrayed as sex objects in humiliating poses. I wanted to give my perspective. I liked to portray both man and woman as intelligent and thoughtful people with dignity and humanism that emphasized love and joy." Sleigh painted a series of what might be termed her "male odalisques," but that description is somewhat misleading. Unlike the exoticized and eroticized images of French 19th-century art, Sleigh, a humanist and a feminist, determined to give each sitter the full dignity of their individuality. Sleigh's men are highly alert but passive, receptive, and unmoving, while in much homoerotic male art the figures are muscular and active, or else caught as appealingly vulnerable in sleep and open to the viewer's observing gaze. Here, Sleigh's model, the actor Sean Pratt, is shown as attractively beefy and in the bloom of youth, but the tone is more ambiguous and nuanced than most male homoerotic art. The canvas, which shows Pratt reclining, yet upright and alert, details the elaborate fabric of a French Empire-style 19th-century sofa that recalls Jacques-Louis David's *Portrait of Madame Récamier*, 1800 (Fig. 52). As one critic has written about the ambiguousness of this painting, "One is unsure as to whether Pratt is intended as a sex object, or whether intimacy is created due to the personal connection of painter and subject."

Portrait of an Actor: Sean Pratt, 1994

Oil on linen, 42 ½ x 55 ¾ inches

Courtesy of Rowan University Art Gallery, Sylvia Sleigh Collection

© Estate of Sylvia Sleigh



JESSICA SPENCE

The gaze can be merciless. Female or male, much discussion about social media today is related to society's pressure for appearance, the "right" appearance. Although reversing of male gaze into a female perspective might suggest empowerment, the relentlessness of social media and the need to "perform" for the camera as our appearance is scrutinized by strangers has become more problematic. We are all now subject to another demanding gaze—the "digital gaze." One consequence of this new viewing is a growing resistance to the scrutinization of appearance. As Spence says, "To be fearless is to be able to look [at] yourself in the mirror and accept all that you are. Fearing less is having the wisdom to not getting caught up about other's opinions about you. It is being true to you!" Spence's magnificently painted composition with porcelain-like finish in which brush strokes virtually disappear rivals the technical bravura of 19th-century French academic painters. A slow and meticulous painter, Spence dedicates herself to harnessing academic techniques that can empower women of color. Her figure's back is turned exposing its elaborate coiffure to the viewer, though not its face. *Fearless/Fear-Less* acts as a kind of refusal to engage with the viewer, to be scrutinized and objectified. The turning of the back to turn away from the viewer has historical precedent in works like Onésipe Aguado de las Marismas's famous photograph *Woman Seen from the Back*, c.1862 (Fig. 48). In Spence's painting, though, the figure's face we glimpse looking in a pocket mirror indicates that appearance is still valued, a source of strength and a source of worth.

Fearless/Fear-Less, 2019
Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 30 inches
Courtesy of the artist



DEVORAH SPERBER

At first glance Sperber's installation appears to be a beautiful though abstract arrangement of a mundane object: a spool of colored thread, but thousands of them. Her installation, though, is a magnificent visual trick. A clear acrylic sphere placed five feet in front of her work shrinks and resolves the thread spool "pixels" into one of Auguste Renoir's most famous images, *A Girl with a Watering Can*, 1876 (Fig. 53). The sphere also rotates the image, "flipping" 180 degrees, like the human eye. Sperber says, "At that point there's a real jolt when your brain has to make an adjustment from what you thought was there to what is there, and the word associated with that jolt is 'Wow!' The idea is to directly engage the viewer, so they are having an experience of their own brain in action." Shifting perception functions as a dramatic mechanism to show there is no one truth or reality, that subjective reality versus absolute truth. Sperber's work bridges the present day with art historical images of the past and encourages us to think about the relationship between high art and everyday objects that can be used in the construction of an artwork. Selecting *A Girl with a Watering Can* as the visual basis for *After Renoir*, Sperber engages one of this Impressionist's freshest and most radiant of feminine images. The girl's identity in the Renoir painting has been lost to history, but most likely the artist chose a neighborhood child, as her features appear in other paintings by him, suggesting that she was a favored model in his repertoire.

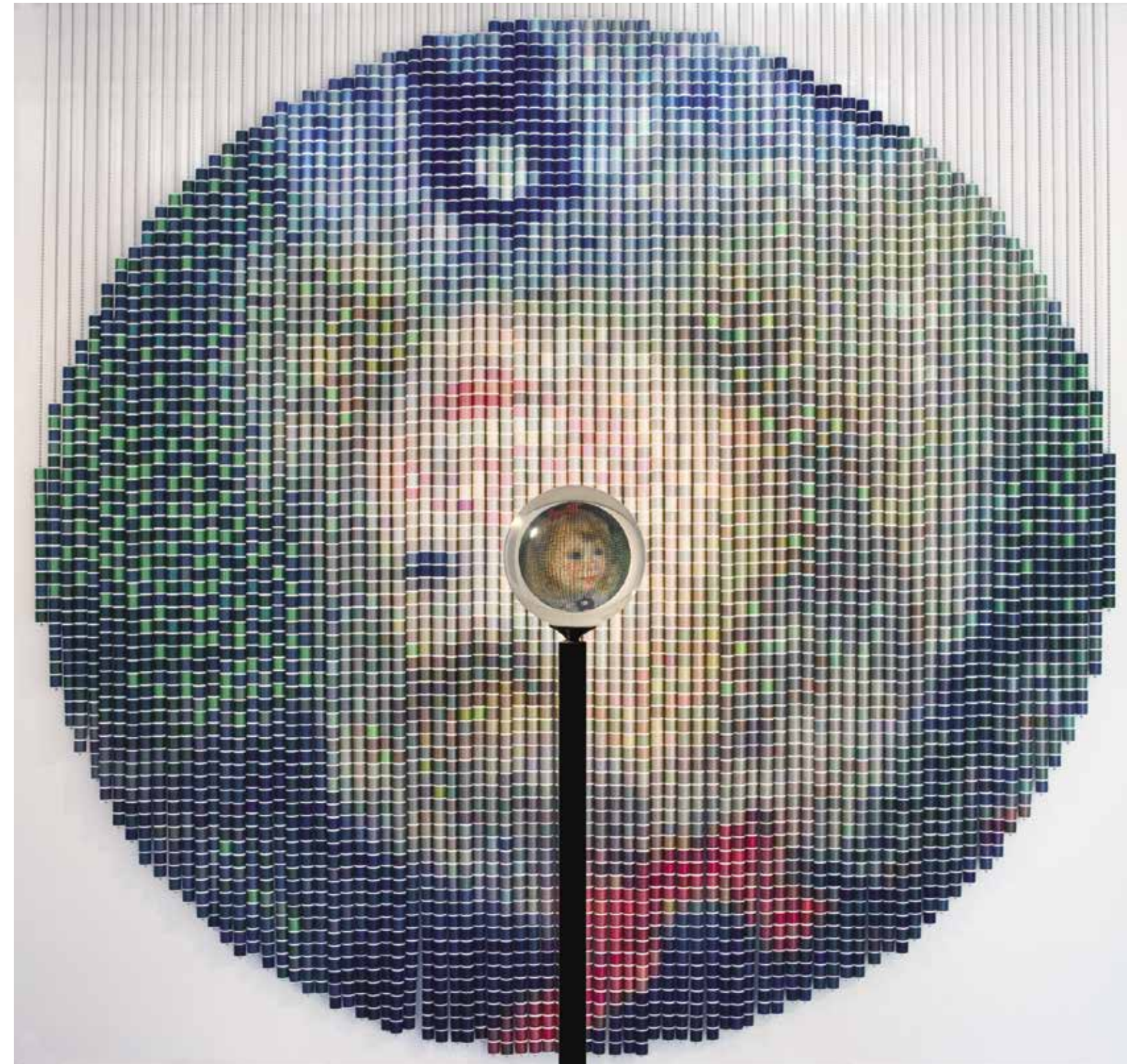
After Renoir, 2006

Spools of thread (5,024), stainless steel ball chain and hanging apparatus, clear acrylic viewing sphere, and metal stand
96 x 100 x 60 inches (distance to viewing sphere)

Following page

After Renoir, 2006. Details

Courtesy of the artist





MICKALENE THOMAS

It is still hard to underestimate the sexual shock of Gustave Courbet's paintings—*The Origin of the World* (Fig. 6) and *The Sleepers* (Fig. 26), both painted in 1866. Ranked among the most explicit artworks of the 19th century, they continue to fascinate and inspire artists in our time. Thomas's *The Sleep: Deux Femmes Noires* directly references Gustave Courbet's *The Sleepers*, 1866 (Fig. 26), and while Courbet's painting shocked viewers with its blatant depiction of lesbianism, Thomas transfigures the French artist's outrageous theme into a normalization of homosexual love. Thomas transforms Courbet's two white women seen through the desiring lens of the heterosexual male gaze into two Black women, bringing power and sexual agency to her models. She also reimagines Courbet's scene by placing the two embracing women on piled and patterned textiles, a fragmented landscape composed from photographs taken during her trip to Africa. Because the lovers' pose is so intimate, the openness of the landscape around them takes on a dream-like quality, while *Sleep's* collection of disparate photographs, prints, colors, and textures mirrors the artist's desire to bring to her work elements from a range of influences. She has noted that this work has similarities to landscapes by British painter David Hockney, but it could also claim inspirational sources from the American collagist Romare Bearden, the Malian photographer Seydou Keita, and the 19th-century Hudson River School painters. It is interesting to compare the ways two of today's artists transform Courbet's work. While Thomas focuses on the romantic agency of gay Black women, Eunice Golden's *Landscape #160*, 1972 focuses on the desire of heterosexual women, transforming not the race but the gender of Courbet's original composition.

Sleep: Deux Femmes Noires, 2013

Woodblock on paper, silkscreen on paper, and photographic elements

32 1/8 x 74 7/8 inches

Courtesy of Mickalene Thomas Studio, New York



SHARON WYBRANTS

Art Guerra Running is a wry nod to motion photography pioneered in the late 19th-century by French polymath Étienne-Jules Marey, *Man Walking*, 1882 (Fig. 54) and English photographer Eadweard Muybridge, both known for their early work in studies of motion in photography. Wybrants recalls the story behind the genesis of her painting and its particular relationship to the female gaze: “I painted *Art Guerra Running* while I was living in Tribeca with my two young daughters, after my divorce. Art had been a close friend for about five years. He was an incredible artist, grinding all his own paint from pure pigments. His colors were so luminous and rich and deep. He was a figurative artist who painted in a fauve, Post-Impressionist manner, but simplifying the figures—mostly voluptuous women. He was getting increasingly bitter because the art world would not recognize any aspect of figurative art at that time . . . I wasn’t worried about being a figurative painter since I was a feminist and we knew we were revolutionaries. We had to redefine what was important in art, so we did! I had a safe haven in SoHo 20 Gallery (formed in 1973), the second women’s gallery co-op in New York City, and the first with an explicitly feminist manifesto. . . . Art and I had had a brief affair, which had ended badly from my point of view, so I was angry. He was a runner and did a lot of working out, so he was very proud of his body, but he was actually pretty funny looking. He had a bald head in the center and flowing, fluffy, reddish hair on the sides, with a great big Groucho Marx mustache. When he asked me if I would like to be in an exhibition about running that he was organizing at a gallery on the Upper East Side, I said, ‘Sure! Give me some photos of you running and I’ll do a painting about you.’ He gave me slides of himself running in the nude! They were different facets of his body, like stop-action motion photography. I thought, this will be fun. I didn’t put clothes on him, I just painted him in the nude, and did not try to make him look handsome. I just painted him the way he looked to me. I didn’t see the show, but when he had come to pick up the painting I had given it to him all wrapped up so he couldn’t see it and he took it up there and he hung it, and I wanted him to be a little shocked and maybe a little embarrassed. It was kind of a “get-back.” I used the metallic gold and renaissance colors to contrast the rather flippant subject matter, and to ground this tongue-in-cheek piece in the history of “Serious Art.”



Art Guerra Running, 1979
Oil on canvas, 48 x 48 inches
Private Collection

JUDITH WYER

In *Barely There* a museum guard peers around a gallery corner to see a visitor looking at a Degas pastel. Looking at unseen visitors, Wyer's guard becomes part of a pointed interaction—the guard is a stand-in for the viewer's gaze. Although the female guard cannot see the visitor directly, her stare does rest on an undressed woman in a painting hanging nearby. In it, a woman's image is loosely based on the Edgar Degas pastel, *After the Bath*, c. 1890-1893 (Fig. 55). Her body, contorted, she lies upon a bed in a pose similar to the notoriously difficult ones Degas demanded of his models. *Glance* (following page) shows a museumgoer contemplating two paintings with figures, one nude and one swathed head to toe in black. Wyer creates a contrast: on one wall she replicates a 1955 Balthus painting *Nude in Front of a Mantel* (Fig. 56), an artist controversial for subjecting women and young girls to the male gaze. Arms raised and body in profile, Balthus's figure presents herself to the viewer, while the woman in the dark dress with binoculars, derived from the Degas sketch *Woman with Field Glasses*, c. 1877 (Fig. 57), pointedly raises the question "Whom is staring at whom?" Wyer's painted museum pieces become the visual equivalent of the dramatic "Pirandello effect"—the play within the play. The museum gallery is always a locus for "the gaze," both female and male. Whatever the gender of the artist, it is the viewer who devours the visual information the artist provides. In Wyer's paintings we stare at people staring at paintings, or people staring at other people who are staring at paintings. These are profoundly alienating and suggest the dislocations we see in the work of Edward Hopper. We are in a kind of Hall of Mirrors. In *A Muse* (following page), a woman warily turns her back on an artist, who stares at her with penetrating gaze. The two soothing landscapes the visitor studies are inspired by Claude Monet: in the center is *Regatta at Sainte-Adresse*, 1867 (Fig. 58), and on the right is a corner of *Snow Scene at Argenteuil* (Fig. 59). The landscapes form a non-threatening backdrop to the charged interpersonal dynamics in the gallery. Wyer says, "The richest experience a viewer can have in the presence of a work of art is to go beyond looking to seeing where meaning can be found and the work of art comes to life. The relationship of the viewer to a work of art inspires a narrative I never tire of painting."

Barely There, 2020
Oil on linen, 18 x 17 inches
Courtesy of Carrie Haddad Gallery, Hudson, New York





A Muse, 2021
Oil on linen, 19 x 22 inches
Courtesy of Carrie Haddad Gallery, Hudson, New York



Glance, 2020
Oil on linen, 15 x 19 inches
Courtesy of Carrie Haddad Gallery, Hudson, New York

ALLISON ZUCKERMAN

Zuckerman says, “A lot of art was made for men by men, and the female figures have been idealized, and they’re submissive and anonymous . . . I want the figures to be intimidating—grotesque but beautiful. So it’s kind of just reclaiming the female form and taking ownership of it.” Zuckerman has certainly achieved her goal of “intimidation” in her massive *Woman at her Toilette*. Making a monumental work from the women of art history, Zuckerman’s composition draws inspiration and incorporates passages from a panoply of historical male artists, ranging from Titian to Roy Lichtenstein. The subject matter of a woman at her toilette, a woman grooming her appearance, was popular in 19th-century Paris. Artists, such as Berthe Morisot in *Woman at Her Toilette*, 1875/80 (Fig. 60), and Georges Seurat in *Young Woman Powdering Herself* (Fig. 61), which he completed just 10 years later, embraced the psychologically compelling theme of a pretty woman simultaneously looking inward contemplatively and then outward to the vanity her mirror reflected. In Zuckerman’s work, though, that soothing trope has gone wildly awry. This contemporary woman at her *toilette* gazes at herself, not in satisfaction but in wild alarm. Her features, made from a collage of parts, lends her a “Bride of Frankenstein” appearance. Nevertheless, in addition to being outrageous, Zuckerman’s women are also funny, imbued with manic energy. One critic described Zuckerman as, “A trickster shaman, paying homage to artistic traditions while squirting hallucinogens into the male gaze.” Zuckerman revels in her wild hodgepodge of art historical references. She says, “Art history is all about appropriation and building upon itself,” adding, “Manet looked to Titian, Picasso looked to Lucas Cranach, and I want to talk about that history and that building. But I’m also taking exclusively from male artists, and I want to be very brash about it and up front.”

Woman at her Toilette, 2017

Acrylic and inkjet on canvas, 125 ¼ x 162 inches
Collection of the Rubell Museum





HISTORICAL PAINTINGS

REFERENCED IN THE EXHIBITION

The dance between the artist and the model, and the shifting roles a person possesses within the playground/battlefield that is artful creation can be dizzying. History, too, looms large for every artist trained in the art historical canon. The “canon,” a concept of individual “greatness,” is increasingly challenged by scholars, but the power of the historical images that inspire today’s artists endures.

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Fig. 1
Jacques-Louis David, 1748-1825
The Death of Marat
[La Mort de Marat], 1793
Oil on canvas, 65 x 50 1/2 inches
Royal Museums of Fine Arts of
Belgium, Brussels

Fig. 2
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 1780-1867
Odalisque or the Small Bather, 1864
Watercolor on paper, 13 1/2 x 9 1/4 inches
Musée Bonnat, Bayonne, France

Fig. 3
Johannes Vermeer, 1632-1675
Girl with a Pearl Earring
[Meisje met de parel], 1665-1667
Oil on canvas, 18 1/4 x 15 1/4 inches
Mauritshuis, The Hague, Netherlands

Fig. 4
Arturo Michelena, 1863-1898
Miranda en La Carraca, 1896
Oil on canvas, 77 1/2 x 96 2/3 inches
Galeria de Arte Nacional, Caracas

Fig. 5
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 1780-1867
La Grande Odalisque, 1814
Oil on canvas, 35 3/4 x 63 3/4 inches
The Louvre, Paris



6



9



HISTORICAL INSPIRATIONS



8



10

Fig. 6
Gustave Courbet, 1819-1877
Origin of the World
[L'Origine du monde], 1866
Oil on canvas, 18 ¼ x 21 ½ inches
Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Fig. 7
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 1780-1867
Portrait of Comtesse d'Houssonville, 1845
Oil on canvas, 51 ⅞ x 36 ¼ inches
The Frick Collection, New York

Fig. 8
Jacques-Louis David, 1748-1825
The Coronation of Napoleon
[Le Sacre de Napoléon], 1805-1807
Oil on canvas, 240 ⅞ x 383 ¼ inches
The Louvre, Paris

Fig. 9
Édouard Manet, 1832-1883
Nana, 1877
Oil on canvas, 60 ⅞ x 45 ¼ inches
Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg, Germany

Fig. 10
Édouard Manet, 1832-1883
The Luncheon on the Grass
[Déjeuner sur l'Herbe, Ancinttitre: LeBain], 1862-1863
Oil on canvas, 35 ¼ x 45 ⅞ inches
Musée d'Orsay, Paris

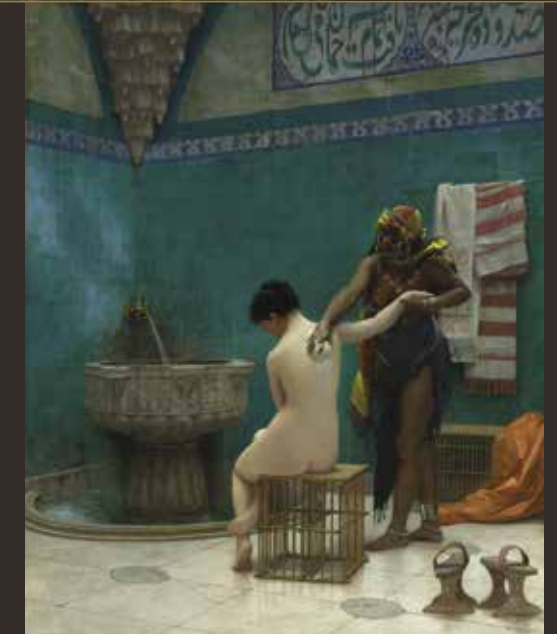
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15

Fig. 11

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 1780-1867
Odalisque, Slave, and Eunuch, 1839-1840
 Oil on canvas, 28 3/8 x 39 1/2 inches
 Harvard University Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts
 Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop, 1943P

Fig. 12

Édouard Manet, 1832-1883
Olympia, 1865
 Oil on canvas, 51 1/8 x 74 3/4 inches
 Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Fig. 13

Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1841-1919
The Boy with the Cat [Le Garçon au chat], 1868-69
 Oil on canvas, 43 3/4 x 26 1/4 inches
 Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Fig. 14

Sandro Botticelli, 1445-1510
Venus and Mars, 1483
 Tempera and oil on poplar
 27.32 x 68.27 inches
 The National Gallery, London

Fig. 15

Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1824-1904
The Bath [Le Bain], 1880-1885
 Oil on canvas, 29 x 23 1/2 inches
 Fine Arts Museums of
 San Francisco, California



17



19



HISTORICAL INSPIRATIONS



18



20

Fig. 16

Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1824-1904
Bashi-Bazouk, 1868-69
 Oil on canvas, 31 ¾ x 26 inches
 The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
 Gift of Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, 2008

Fig. 17

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 1780-1867
Portrait of the Sculptor Paul Lemoyne, 1810-1811
 Oil on canvas, 18 ½ x 14 3/8 inches
 The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri
 Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust, 32-54

Fig. 18

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 1780-1867
Portrait of a Young Man, known as Talma's Nephew
 (Auguste François), 1805
 Oil on canvas, 18.11 x 14.56 inches
 The Louvre, Paris

Fig. 19

Marie-Guillemine Benoist, 1768-1826
Portrait of Madeleine, 1800
 [Titre: Portrait d'une femme noire
 Ancien titre: Portrait de négresse
 Autre titre: Portait présumé de Madeleine]
 Oil on canvas, 32 x 25 inches
 The Louvre, Paris

Fig. 20

Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 1780-1867
Portrait of Amédée-David de Pastoret, le Comte de Pastoret, 1823-26
 Oil on canvas, 40 ½ x 32 ¾ inches
 Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago

21



22



24



23



25

Fig. 21
Edgar Degas, 1834-1917
Woman Drying Her Foot, 1885-86
Pastel on buff wove paper, 19 3/4 x 21 1/4 inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Havemeyer Collection

Fig. 22
Edgar Degas, 1834-1917
After the Bath, Woman drying herself,
[Après le Bain] 1890-95
Pastel on wove paper laid on millboard,
40 3/4 x 38 3/4 inches
National Gallery, London

Fig. 23
Eugène Delacroix, 1798-1863
Women of Algiers in their Apartment
[Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement], 1834
Oil on canvas, 70 7/8 x 90 1/2 inches
The Louvre, Paris, Département des Peintures

Fig. 24
Pablo Picasso, 1881-1973
Young Girl with a Flower Basket
[Fillette à la Corbeille Fleurie], 1905
Oil on canvas, 60 7/8 x 26 inches
Private Collection

Fig. 25
Mary Cassatt, 1844-1926
Baby's First Caress, 1891
Pastel on paper, 29 1/4 x 23 3/4 inches
New Britain Museum of American Art,
New Britain, Connecticut

26



28



27

29

Fig. 26
Gustave Courbet, 1844-1926
The Sleepers [Le Sommeil], 1866
Oil on canvas, 53 ¼ x 78 ¾ inches
Petit Palais, Paris

Fig. 27
Frederic Leighton, 1830-1896
Flaming June, 1895
Oil on canvas, 46 7/8 x 46 7/8 inches
Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico
The Luis A. Ferré Foundation, Inc.

Fig. 28
Edouard Manet, 1832-1883
Music in the Tuileries Gardens
[La Musique aux Tuileries], 1862
Oil on canvas, 30 x 47 ¼ inches
The National Gallery, London

Fig. 29
Edouard Manet, 1832-1883
Fishing [La Pêche], 1862-63
Oil on canvas, 30 ¼ x 48 ½ inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York Purchase,
Mr. and Mrs. Richard J. Bernhard Gift, 1957

30



31



32

34

Fig. 30
Auguste Rodin, 1840-1917
The Thinker [Le Penseur], 1903
Bronze, 28 1/8 x 14 3/16 x 23 7/16 inches
Musée Rodin, Paris

Fig. 31
Pierre Bonnard, 1867-1947
Dining Room in the Country, 1913
Oil on canvas, 64 3/4 x 81 inches
Minneapolis Institute of Art,
Minneapolis

Fig. 32
Paul Gauguin, 1848-1903
Barbarian Tales [Contes barbares], 1902
Oil on canvas, 51.18 x 36.02 inches
Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany

Fig. 33
Gustave Moreau, 1826-1898
Jupiter et Sémélé, 1895
Oil on canvas, 83 1/2 x 46 1/2 inches
Musée national Gustave Moreau, Paris

Fig. 34
Henry Fuseli, 1741-1825
The Nightmare, 1781
Oil on canvas, 40 x 50 inches
Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit

35



38



36



39

Fig. 35
Joseph-Désiré Court, 1797-1865
Death of Hippolytus, 1825
Oil on canvas, 13 ¾ x 18 ½ inches
Musée Fabre, Montpellier

Fig. 36
Anne-Louis Girodet, 1767-1824
The Sleep of Endymion, 1791
Oil on canvas, 78 x 102 ¾ inches
The Louvre, Paris

Fig. 37
Edgar Degas, 1834-1917
Seated Bather, 1899
Pastel on paper, 20 x 20 inches
Private Collection

Fig. 38
Edgar Degas, 1834-1917
Woman Having Her Hair Combed, 1886-88
Pastel on paper, 29 ½ x 23 ⅞ inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Havemeyer Collection

Fig. 39
Jasper Johns, b. 1930
Target With Four Faces, 1955
Encaustic on newspaper and cloth over canvas surmounted by four tinted plaster faces
in wood box with hinged front, 33 ⅞ x 26 x 3 inches
The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Scull
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HISTORICAL INSPIRATIONS



41



44



45

Fig. 40
Jacques-Louis David, 1748-1825
Mademoiselle Guimard as Terpsichore,
1773-1775
Oil on canvas, 47 x 77 inches
Private Collection

Fig. 41
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 1780-1867
Mademoiselle Caroline Rivière, 1805-06
Oil on canvas, 39 1/8 x 27 1/2 inches
The Louvre, Paris

Fig. 42
John Singer Sargent, 1856-1925
Portrait of Madame X, 1883-84
Oil on canvas, 82 1/8 x 43 1/4 inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,
Arthur Hoppock Hearn Fund, 1916

Fig. 43
Edgar Degas, 1834-1917
Swaying Dancer (Dancer in Green),
[Danseuses basculant; Danseuses vertes],
1877-1879
Pastel and gouache on paper,
25 1/4 x 14 1/8 inches
Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

Fig. 44
Edgar Degas, 1834-1917
Dancer, 1880
Pastel and charcoal on blue-gray wove paper,
19 1/4 x 12 1/2 inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg
Collection, Gift of Walter H. and Leonore
Annenberg, 2001, Bequest of Walter H.
Annenberg, 2002

Fig. 45
Edgar Degas, 1834-1917
The Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer
[La Petite Danseuse de quatorze ans], 1879-1881
Bronze, wax, silk, wood base.
38 1/2 H x 17 1/4 W x 14 3/8 D
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon

46



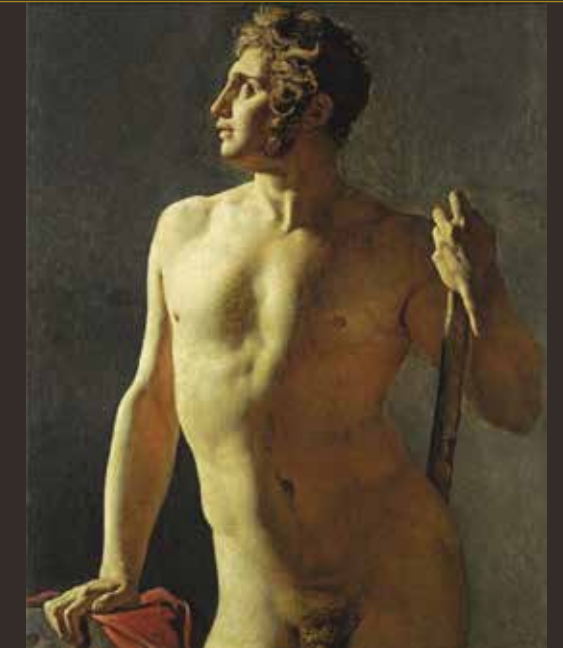
48



47



49



50

Fig. 46
Jean-Hippolyte Flandrin, 1809-1864
Study (Young Male Nude Seated Beside the Sea)
[Jeune Homme nu assis au bord de la mer, figure d'étude], 1836
Oil on canvas, 38 ½ x 48 ¾ inches
The Louvre, Paris

Fig. 47
Study of a Nude Man, Early 1840s, attributed to Gustave Courbet, 1819-1877
Oil on canvas, 29 x 33 ½ inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Bequest of Nanette B. Kelekian, 2020

Fig. 48
Onésime Aguado de las Marismas, 1830-1893
Woman Seen from the Back, 1862
Salted paper print from glass negative, 12 ½ x 10 ½ inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Gilman Collection, Purchase, Joyce F. Menschel Gift, 2005

Fig. 49
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 1780-1867
Jupiter et Thétis, 1811
Oil on canvas, 127.55 x 102.36 inches
Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence

Fig. 50
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, 1780-1867
Male Torso, 1800
Oil on canvas, 40 ¼ x 31 ½ inches
École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Montauban

53



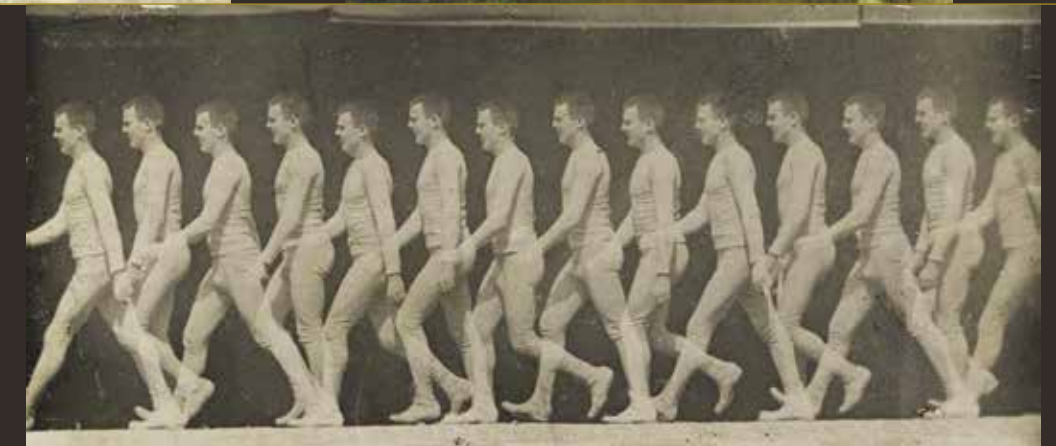
55



51



52



54

Fig. 51
Gustave Caillebotte, 1848-1894
The Floor Scrapers
[Les raboteurs de parquet], 1875
Oil on canvas, 40 1/8 x 57 7/8 inches
Musée d'Orsay, Paris

Fig. 52
Jacques-Louis David, 1748-1825
Portrait of Madame Recamier, 1800
Oil on canvas, 68 1/2 x 88 1/2 inches
The Louvre, Paris

Fig. 53
Pierre-Auguste Renoir, 1841-1919
A Girl with a Watering Can, 1876
Oil on canvas, 39 3/8 x 28 3/4 inches
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Fig. 54
Étienne-Jules Marey, 1830-1904
Man Walking, 1882
Albumen print, 1 3/8 x 3 3/4 inches
Private Collection

Fig. 55
Edgar Degas, 1834 - 1917
After the Bath, 1895
Pastel on paper, 30 1/2 x 33 1/8 inches
Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.



56

Fig. 56
Balthus (Balthasar Klossowski), 1908-2001
Nude in Front of a Mantel, 1955
Oil on canvas, 75 x 64 ½ inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Robert Lehman Collection, 1975
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61



59



Fig. 59
Claude Monet, 1840-1926
Snow Scene at Argenteuil
[Rue sous la neige, Argenteuil], 1875
Oil on canvas, 28 x 36 inches
The National Gallery, London



58

Fig. 58
Claude Monet, 1840-1926
Regatta at Sainte-Adresse, 1867
Oil on canvas, 29 ⅞ x 40 inches
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Bequest of William Church Osborn, 1951



Fig. 57
Edgar Degas, 1834-1917
Woman with Field Glasses, c. 1877
Oil on cardboard, 18 ⅞ x 12 ⅞ inches
Albertinum, Galerie Neue Meister,
Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden



60

Fig. 60
Berthe Morisot, 1841-1895
Woman at Her Toilette, 1875-1880
Oil on canvas, 23 ¾ x 31 ⅞ inches
Art Institute Chicago, Stickney Fund

Fig. 61
Georges Seurat, 1859-1891
Young Woman Powdering Herself
[Jeune femme se poudrant], 1888-90
Oil on canvas, 37 ⅞ x 31 ⅞ inches
The Courtauld Gallery, London

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