



BEYOND REALITY

OPERA GALLERY

BEYOND REALITY

A COLLECTION OF HYPERREALIST ARTWORKS FEATURING
VALTER CASOTTO, MIKE DARGAS, JOHN HUMPHREYS,
LEE JUNG WOONG, NICOLAE MANIU, MICHAEL MOEBIUS,
YIGAL OZERI, MARC SIJAN & TIGRAN TSITOGHDZIAN

14 - 28 DECEMBER 2018

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P R E F A C E

Opera Gallery is proud to present 'Beyond Reality', a collective exhibition of world-leading hyperrealist artists, including internationally acclaimed Valter Casotto, Mike Dargas, Lee Jung Woong, Nicolae Maniu, Marc Sijan, Tigran Tsitoghdzian, John Humphreys, and Yigal Ozeri. 'Beyond Reality' features artworks that challenge the viewers' perception, making them question whether what they are looking at is real life or art.

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, Western art has often pursued realism. With the rise and fame of abstract painting in the 20th century, such aspiration became, arguably, less desirable. From the late 1960s there was a return in popularity of highly realistically rendered painting. The term 'hyper-realism' was established at that time to define the rebirth of such high fidelity realism in art. This movement has since greatly developed in Europe and America and it continues to enthral, perplex and amuse art lovers all over the world.

We carefully selected and now curate this group of artists, renowned in their specific field, to celebrate their extraordinary level of technical prowess and their virtuosity in simulating their alternative reality. We offer an engaging selection that we hope is as accessible as it is enlightening to all. We are delighted to exhibit these outstanding hyperrealist artworks, which offer a new take on reality and, simultaneously, take the viewer beyond the day-to-day.

Gilles Dyan | Chairman and Founder of Opera Gallery Group

Federica Beretta | Director of Opera Gallery London

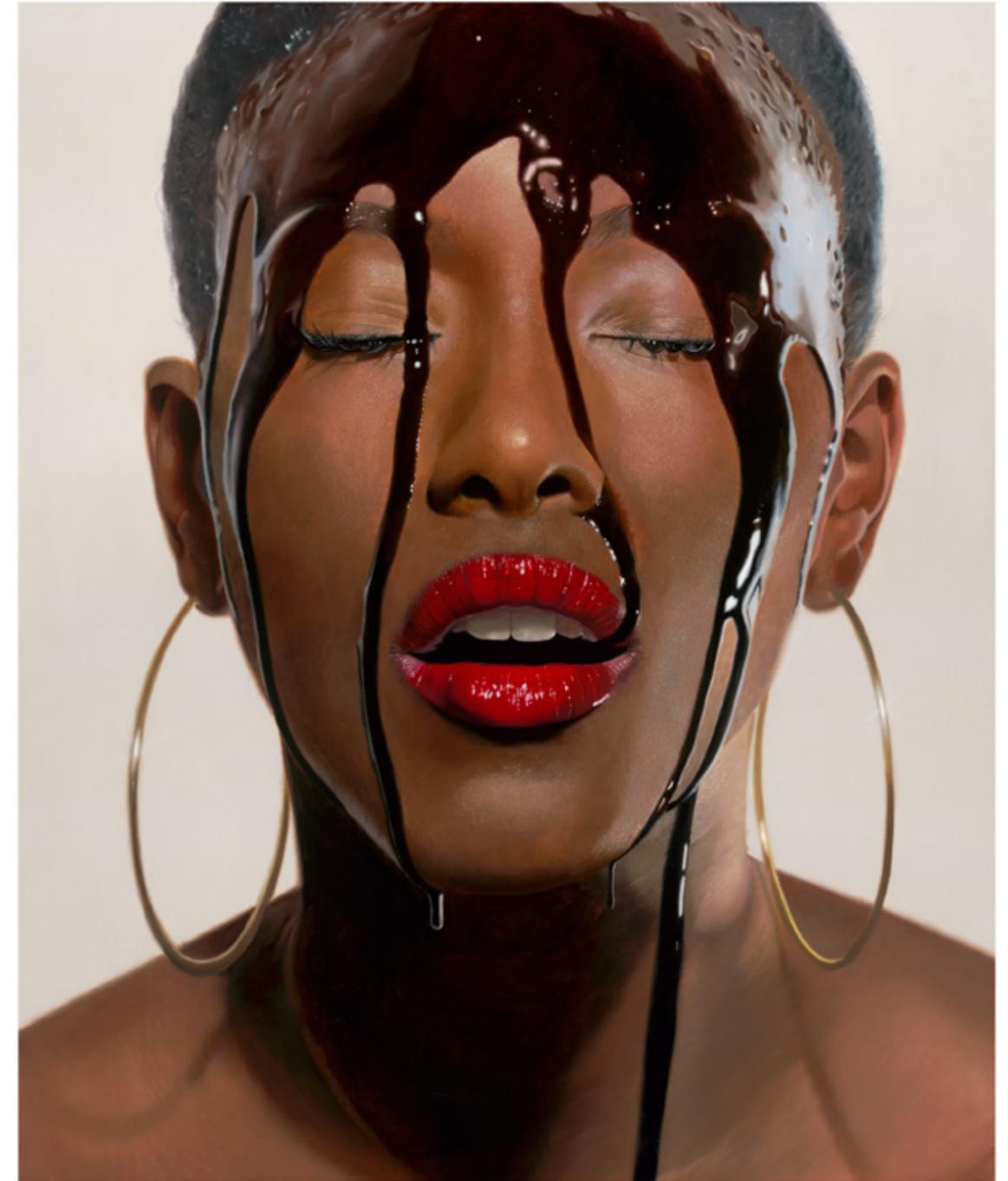
Mike Dargas

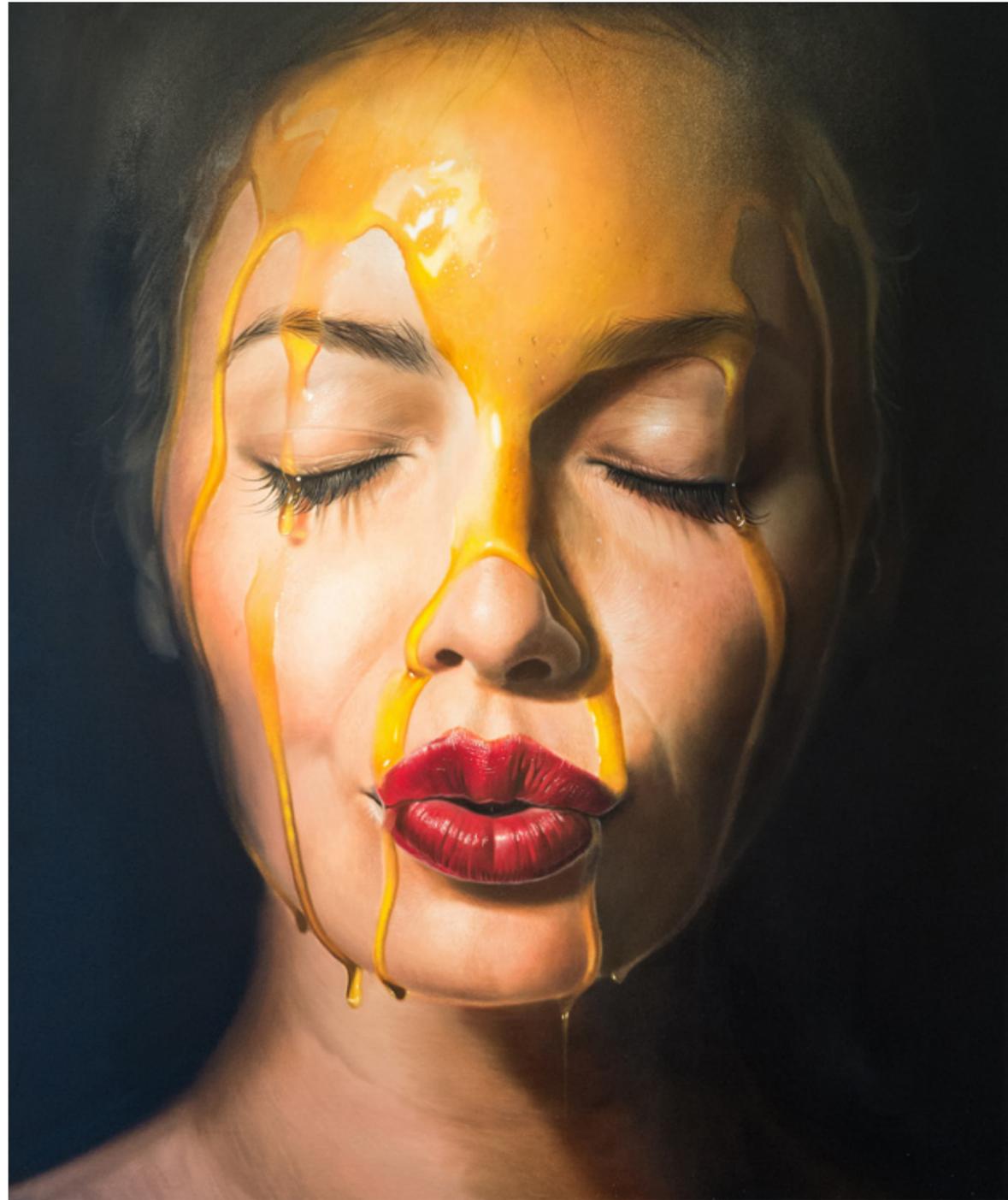
Mike Dargas was born in 1983 in Cologne, Germany, where he still lives and works. He started oil painting from a young age. At age eleven, Mike Dargas exhibited his talent publicly, drawing old masters paintings with pastel and chalk on the pavement in front of the Cologne cathedral. He then got accepted in an art school, from which he graduated after a year and a half, the only child in a class of adults. There, he learnt different techniques, and received a training that led him to master three dimensional arts, like wooden sculptures. In his early twenties, he built himself a solid reputation in the tattoo art scene and won numerous prizes and awards.

Inspired by artists such as Dalí, Caravaggio and HR Giger, Mike Dargas studied various techniques and since his youth developed a passion for realism, which he narrowed down over the years to hyperrealism. The extremely precise technique with oil paint gives, like a photography, a snapshot of the moment. The artist studies his subjects with such intensity, that each portrait pictures a profile of increasing intimate closeness. In his portraits, Mike Dargas is not limited to certain types. He paints young and old, beautiful and dark, fragile and strong people. They are lost in their thoughts, show inner conflict or convey a unique or even holy calmness. The perfection of his technique serves his goal to tend towards the perfect image, reaching for the soul within each single one. Through his works, Mike Dargas challenges us to take a closer look, to understand the nature of human being and to question our own emotional perception.

Black Velvet, 2018

Oil on canvas . 72 x 56 in | 183 x 142 cm





I Disappear, 2017

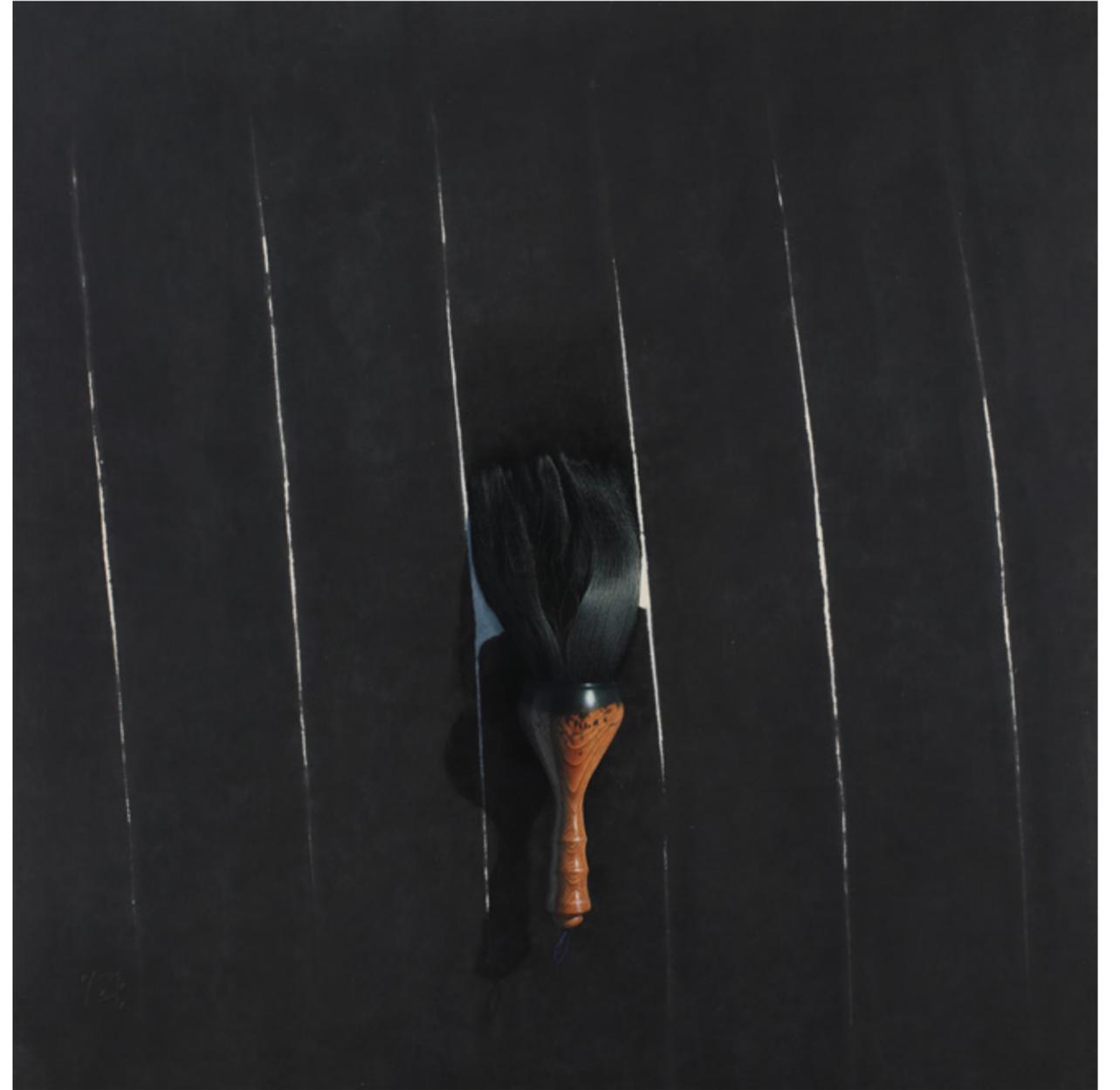
Oil on canvas . 72 x 60 in | 183 x 152.5 cm

Lee Jung Woong

Korean artist Lee Jung Woong was born in South Korea in 1963. He is best known for his meticulous trompe-l'oeil oil paintings on Korean rice paper that depict traditional Chinese brushes saturated with ebony ink. The hyperrealistic, reflexive works both celebrate and question the incessant influence of traditional Chinese painting on contemporary Asian art. Lee's perfectly rendered brushes, shadows, and splatters – reproduced at a larger-than-life scale on massive canvases – imbue his work with a humorous, Pop Art inspired quality that connects ancient techniques with contemporary perspectives. Lee has exhibited extensively in Korean biennales, fairs, museums and galleries. He is also exhibited and collected internationally.

Brush Blue, 2018

Oil and mixed media on canvas . 55.1 x 55.1 in | 140 x 140 cm





Brush, 2018

Oil and mixed media on canvas . 51.2 x 63.8 in | 130.1 x 162.1 cm

Nicolae Maniu

Nicolae Maniu was born in 1944 in Romania. He graduated from the Ion Andreescu Arts Institute's Sculpture Department in 1969. In 1983, he moved to Cologne, Germany, and in 1993 he settled in Paris, France.

Since 1971, Maniu has participated in regional, national and international exhibitions organized by the Romanian Ministry of Culture. Since, the artist had numerous personal and group exhibitions in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, The Netherlands, and France. Various galleries have presented Maniu at international art fairs in Basel, Geneva, Rome, Barcelona, Brussels, Hamburg, New York, and Miami.

His paintings are part of numerous important private and public art collections all over the world, such as the National Art Museum in Cluj-Napoca, the Contemporary Art Museum in Galati, both in Romania, and the Albrecht Dürer Museum in Nuremberg, Germany, and many more.



Caliope, 2003

Oil on canvas . 15 x 18.1 in | 38 x 46 cm



Le Cadeau, 2006

Oil on canvas . 60 x 90 in | 97 x 146 cm

Michael Moebius

Michael Moebius was born in 1968, in the city of Pirna, Germany. Having developed a love for art at an early age, cartooning became his first passion. But in the then-communist East Germany, more pragmatic pursuits were the order of the day. Art would have to be put on the back burner while a formal education was pursued, and Moebius decided on a career in engineering and construction. It was during a stint working in a parallel field of architectural illustration that the artist happened upon a book featuring the pin-ups of Alberto Vargas. A new love affair took root, and he decided that figurative art would be his life's work. He started studying painting at the academy of arts in Dresden, and in 1998 he got a big breakthrough. It was at this time, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, that Moebius was able to make his way to the United States. His talent as a painter and photographer was readily apparent, and he quickly became a sought-after favorite of collectors. Moebius' work has already been part of major exhibitions throughout the US. His collector base and publishers include Playboy, Procter & Gamble, Laura Biagiotti, Vogue, Vanity Fair and other well-known companies.

Tiffany Blue II, 2018

Oil on canvas . 68 x 48 in | 173 x 122 cm



Yigal Ozeri

New York City based Israeli artist Yigal Ozeri (b. 1958) is best known for his large-scale cinematic portraits of distinctive young women in rich prodigious landscapes. With tinges of Pre-Raphaelite aesthetics, Ozeri brings an ethereal and uninhibited sensibility to his paintings. His portraits denote art historical foundations in Romanticism, while also offering contemporary notions of sensual femininity.

Rooted in Carl Jung's concept of anima, Ozeri's depictions of a revitalised connectivity to nature prompt a confrontation of subconsciously effeminate identity and reinstate the beauty of innocent authentic experience. His photorealistic oil paintings convey the spirit of his subjects, giving way to a seductive power. As a result, the viewer is compelled to gaze into the allegorical domain between reality and fantasy.

Ozeri has shown extensively around the world including solo exhibits in Spain, China, The Netherlands, France, Germany and Mexico. His work is featured on the cover and included in the book *Photorealism and the Digital Age*. He was recently part of an international traveling museum show titled '50 Years of Hyperrealistic Painting' that was showcased in a number of venues including: Museum Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid, Museo de Bellas Artes in Bilbao, Rotterdam Kunsthal in The Netherlands and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in the UK. His work is also in the permanent collections of: the Whitney Museum of American Art, the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, the Jewish Museum in New York, the New York Public Library, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art and the Albertina in Vienna, among others.



Untitled (Olya and Zuzanna), 2017

Oil on paper . 42 x 60 in | 106.5 x 152.5 cm



Untitled (Olya #2), 2015

Oil on canvas . 42 x 60 in | 106.7 x 152.4 cm



Untitled (Olya in the Field), 2017

Oil on paper . 42 x 60 in | 106.7 x 152.4 cm



Untitled (Megan), 2017

Oil on paper . 42 x 60 in | 106.7 x 152.4 cm



Untitled (Kaori), 2017
Oil on paper . 42 x 60 in | 106.5 x 152.5 cm

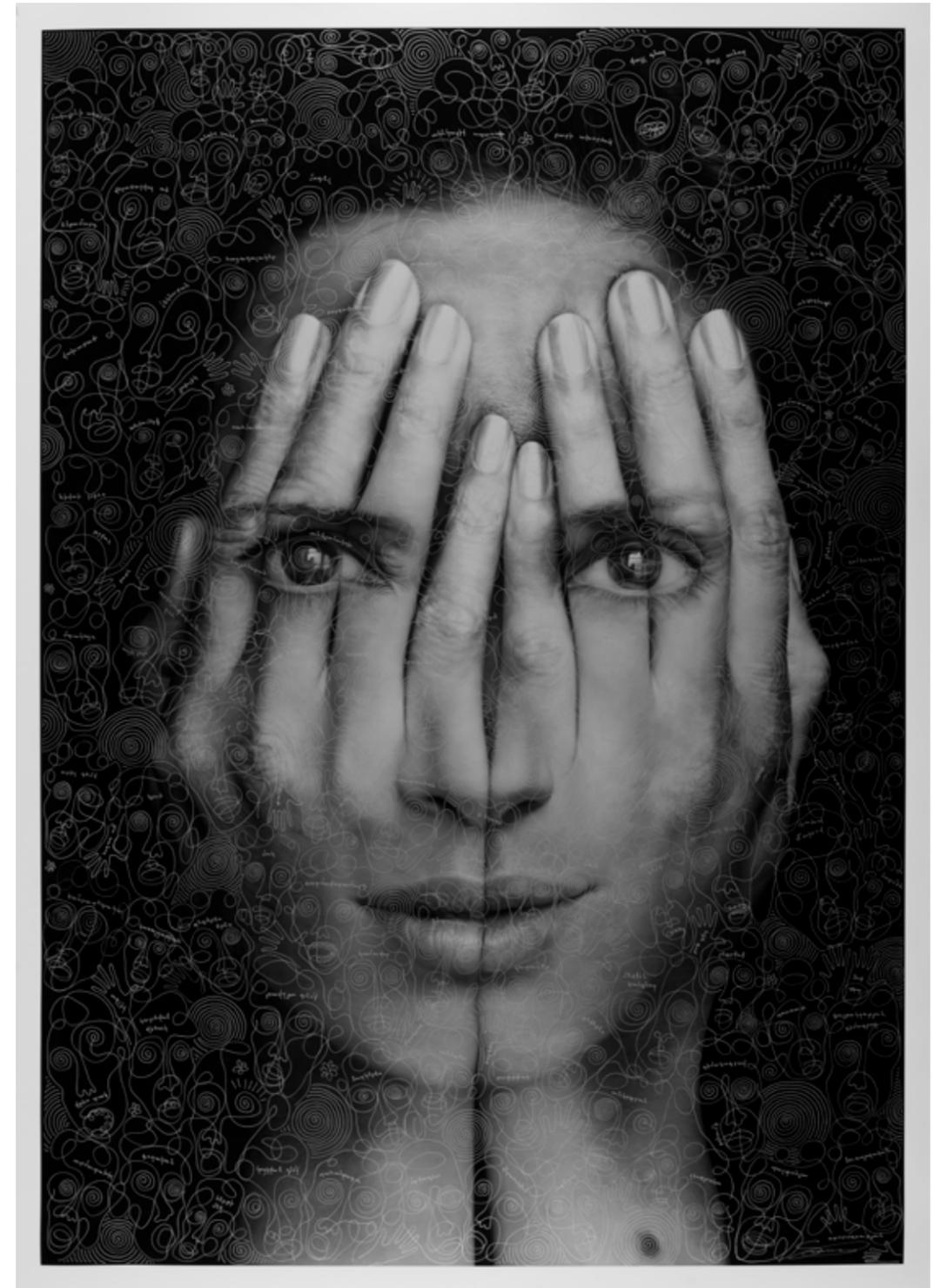
Tigran Tsitoghzyan

Tigran Tsitoghzyan is a New York City-based visual artist. He was born in Yerevan, Armenia, in 1976. In 1986, by the age of ten, over hundred of Tigran's childhood paintings were chosen by Henrik Igutyian to be displayed in a solo exhibition in Armenia which thereafter traveled to the US, Russia, Japan and Spain.

Ten years later he migrated to Europe and then later in 2009 to the US. Since then and from New York with his new series, his technic and images are experiencing a phenomenal uprise that comprises both art quality and a bold, intriguing, personal expression with a growing resonance on the international scene.

Mirror II, 2018

Mixed media on paper . 80.7 x 50.4 in | 205 x 128 cm





Artviewers, 2018

Oil on canvas . 80 x 80 in | 203.2 x 203.2 cm



Mirror Metamorphosis, 2018

Mixed media on paper . 41 x 41 in | 104.1 x 104.1 cm

Valter Casotto

Valter Casotto was born in 1980 in Padua, Italy and currently lives and works in London, England.

Casotto has worked on numerous TV productions as a camera operator and TV format creator. He has worked as the senior prosthetic makeup artist in the film industry, on films such as Harry Potter, X-Men: First Class, Prometheus and The Hobbit. Running parallel to his work in the film industry, he has continued to work on his personal projects, including design work, painting, video projects and sculptures. Visually inspired and influenced by a combination of William Turner's pictorial art, HR Giger's visionary surrealist work and Bernini's Baroque sculptural art, his preferred techniques are those of video and sculpture which he recently brought together in his project 'We Will Never Meet at that Age'. He created a self-portrait of his own ageing physiognomy and had it applied to himself, documenting his parents' reaction to seeing their son at an age they will never meet in real life with a moving image piece, thus creating an impossible time breach in the fabric of his parents' existence.

Casotto has exhibited in numerous venues across Europe.



Baby Artists (Paul, Maurizio, Damien), 2018

Silicon, fibreglass, wood, fishing line, and oil paint . 27.6 x 47.2 x 47.2 in | 70 x 120 x 120 cm



Black Star, 2018

Silicon, fibreglass, wood, fishing line and oil colours . 24.8 x 63 x 11.4 in | 63 x 160 x 29 cm

John Humphreys

John Humphreys was born in Salford and studied at Rochdale Art College, Gloucestershire College of Art and Design and The Royal Academy of Arts Schools. Having worked in the film industry, he fuses fine art with his experience with special effects, creating sculptures that confuse the viewer.

His concern with distorted dimensions presents a fresh and interesting way of exploring portrait sculpture, making the viewer work hard to correct the information they are presented with. His sculpture is both surreal and superreal, challenging conventional perceptions of space and hinting at a fourth dimension.

Although a fine art sculptor, he has worked in film and television including projects such as Doctor Who, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Rob Roy, Max Headroom and Alexander. He also created the Alien for Alien Autopsy, the black and white film that launched worldwide controversy around a UFO crash near Roswell, New Mexico.

The sculptures are initially modeled in clay, further moulded in silicone, then cast into fiberglass and finally painted with many fine layers of translucent acrylic colour for depth. The eyes are painted with resin and natural pigments and as with the skin, in many layers to further build the three dimensional illusion. The hair is treated in a stylised way, again designed to lead the eye astray. The hypnotic effect of these sculptures renders most observers transfixed and alienated for a moment in time as their judgment of the human condition is temporally diverted.

Humphreys' work is exhibited and collected internationally.

Baby Jesus, 2007

Fibreglass painted with acrylic . Edition of 8 . 18.5 x 16.5 x 15.7 in | 47 x 42 x 40 cm





Ipsius Imago a Latere Extensa, 2010

Fibreglass painted with acrylic . Edition of 8 . 18.5 x 12.6 x 17.3 in | 47 x 32 x 44 cm

The Queen, 2018

Fibreglass painted with acrylic . Edition of 6 . 25.6 x 26.4 x 17.7 in | 65 x 67 x 45 cm





Ms Grey

Fibreglass painted with acrylic . Edition of 8 . 28.7 x 14.2 x 17.3 in | 73 x 36 x 44 cm

Marc Sijan

Marc Sijan was born in Serbia in 1946. He is currently based in Milwaukee, USA. The sculptor's unique version of hyperrealistic portraiture has situated him as one of the most innovative, technically sophisticated and limitless American artists working today. Sijan received his BA in Art Education from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in 1968, and went on to earn his Master of Science in Art in 1971, undertaking an intense study of anatomy and biology. Sijan's meticulous creative process begins with the construction of a plaster mould from a live model. He then uses a magnifying glass to sculpt the interior of the mould in order to assure accurate detail, before casting the figure in resin. Realistic flesh tones are then achieved with multiple layers of oil paint and varnish, a process that takes around six months to complete. The resulting creations are so life-like as to almost be on the verge of movement.

Communicating a deep sense of humanism, Sijan's works stray from the traditional rules of hyperrealism in its exclusion of narrative elements, human emotion and political value. The artist depicts people who are often overlooked by society, such as blue-collar workers, cleaning staff, and the overweight, turning the ordinary into inexplicable works of art. He does not shy from showing their imperfections, from the pores in the skin and tiny hairs, to age spots and blemishes. In Sijan's version of hyper-illusion, his sculptures become tender amalgamations of the elements that comprise each and every one of us, tangible stories from the gamut of humanity.

Big Man Security Guard (Bald with Keys), 2016

Polyester resin and oil paint . 68 x 24 x 22 in | 172.5 x 61 x 56 cm





Butler, 2018

Polyester resin and oil paint . 68.1 x 25 x 23 in | 173 x 63.5 x 58.5 cm

Standing Guard (SS), 2018

Polyester resin and oil paint . 70.1 x 18 x 16.9 in | 178 x 45.7 x 43 cm





Standing Guard (MS), 2018

Polyester resin and oil paint . 72 x 20.1 x 28 in | 183 x 51 x 71 cm

Maid, 2018

Polyester resin and oil paint . 64 x 24 x 62.4 in | 162.5 x 61 x 158.5 cm





Seated Guard (Blue Shirt), 2018

Polyester resin and oil paint . 56.3 x 21 x 24 in | 143 x 53.3 x 61 cm

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Cover detail: Tigran Tsitoghzyan *Artviewers*, 2018

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