

NEW YORK ACADEMY OF ART presents

# ABOUT FACE

Curated by Scott Avett and David Kratz



**PRESS COVERAGE**

# ABOUT FACE

Press Coverage

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### SCENE ART FULL

## FACE VALUE

NEW YORK ACADEMY OF ART'S LATEST EXHIBITION AT THE SOUTHAMPTON ARTS CENTER PAINTS A FEW UNLIKELY PORTRAITS.  
BY STEPHANIE MURG



"I like characters who are not smiling—they're sort of blank," Cindy Sherman once said. "It makes the viewer come up with the narrative." The artist's enigmatic expression is one of some 70 stories waiting to be told in the New York Academy of Art's "About Face: Contemporary Portraiture," on view through September 17 at the Southampton Arts Center. Spanning painting, photography, and sculpture, the exhibition is a reminder of the enduring power of portraits in an age of infinite, transient selfies.

"The human figure, particularly the face, is the visual key to our emotions," says Scott Avett, lead singer of folk-rock band the Avett Brothers, who curated the show with Academy President David Kratz (both Avett and Kratz are also painters, with works in the show). "We are all immediately drawn to familiar expressions and positions that we recognize and relate to, either through association, curiosity, or longing."

The work of Academy artists is featured alongside that of celebrated East Enders such as Sherman, Eric Fischl, and Ralph Gibson. "The talent is legendary," adds Avett.

Expressive canvases by the likes of Dana Schutz, Nicole Eisenman, and Mickalene Thomas draw visitors into the heart of the survey. Laurie Simmons is represented by two large-scale photographs from her recent "How We See" series, in which prismatically lit models appear to glare through closed eyelids painted to look like open eyes. The doll-like effect, at once mesmerizing and unsettling, is echoed in Peter Drake's *Doughboy*, a painting that transforms a toy soldier into a grizzled war veteran.

"Every face tells a story if you take the time to read it," says Kratz. "This is a way to present some of those stories—the ones that are particularly relevant today. We get a pretty complete picture of how contemporary artists are looking at the world around them and, I dare say, themselves." July 28–September 17, 25 Jobs Lane, Southampton, 631-283-0967; southamptonartscenter.org ■

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Scott Avett, *Lacinda* (2001); Edgar Jerins, *Sarah 16* (2016); Esteban Ocampo-Giraldo, *Selfie After Valentine's Day* (2017); David Kratz, *Self-Portrait (David With Head on Pillow)* (2008); Phillip Thomas, *Selves Portrait* (2015); Scott Avett, *Fatherhood* (2013).



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK ACADEMY OF ART



Laurie Simmons, *Tatiana (Green)*, 2015. Courtesy of the New York Academy of Art.

## Editors' Picks: 9 Things to See in New York This Week

### "About Face" at the Southampton Arts Center

The New York Academy of Art had enlisted musician and painter Scott Avett, of the Avett Brothers, to co-curate this portraiture exhibition with school president David Kratz. It's the institution's second-ever outing in the Hamptons, featuring an all-star cast of artists including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Will Cotton, Nicole Eisenman, Eric Fischl, Alex Katz, Alice Neel, Dana Schutz, Cindy Sherman, Laurie Simmons, and Mickalene Thomas. In response to the increasing prevalence of the selfie, the show encourages "viewers to slow down and consider the story inherent in every human face."

**Location:** Southampton Arts Center, 25 Jobs Lane, Southampton

**Price:** Free

**Time:** Opening reception, 6 p.m.–8 p.m.; Thursday–Sunday, 12 p.m.–6 p.m.

—Sarah Cascone

# ABOUT FACE

## Press Coverage



### A CLOSER LOOK

A neglected art form has its day in the sun, and we take a peek behind the Iron Curtain—and at ourselves. —Sahar Khan

At the Parrish Art Museum, art gets real with *From Lens to Eye to Hand: Photorealism 1969 to Today*, an exhibit that studies the birth of the once groundbreaking movement and what it's grown into today. The show features 73 paintings, watercolors and other works on paper, some never before exhibited in an American museum, from 35 artists who include founding fathers Chuck Close and Richard Estes. The genre originated in 1960s New York and California and was derided as a fad reacting to pop and performance art. It gained traction in the '70s and set the stage for contemporary artists like Raphaella Spence and Anthony Brunelli, who use digital image-making to adapt photorealism to the 21st century. *Lens to Eye*, however, focuses on the minute brushstrokes of early masters like Ralph Goings, who captures the customerless interior of a roadside diner in "Miss Albany Diner," and John Salt, who depicts a sun-bleached junkyard in "Albuquerque Wreck Yard," infusing ordinary scenes with extraordinary poignancy. Aug. 6-Jan. 21, 2018, 279 Montauk Highway, Water Mill, parrishart.org

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At the Parrish Art Museum, art gets real with *From Lens to Eye to Hand: Photorealism 1969 to Today*, an exhibit that studies the birth of the once groundbreaking movement and what it's grown into over the ensuing five decades. The show features 73 paintings, watercolors and other works on paper, some never before exhibited in an American museum, from 35 artists who include founding fathers Chuck Close and Richard Estes. The genre originated in 1960s New York and California and was derided as a fad reacting to pop and performance art. It gained traction in the '70s and set the stage for contemporary artists like Raphaella Spence and Anthony Brunelli, who use digital image-making to adapt photorealism to the 21st century. *Lens to Eye*, however, focuses on the minute brushstrokes of early masters like Ralph Goings, who captures the customerless interior of a roadside diner in "Miss Albany Diner," and John Salt, who depicts a sun-bleached junkyard in "Albuquerque Wreck Yard," infusing ordinary scenes with extraordinary poignancy. Aug. 6-Jan. 21, 2018, 279 Montauk Highway, Water Mill, parrishart.org

exhibit pulls back the dusty drapes to showcase rare works from former Soviet bloc artists who, despite the Communist Party's strict regulations on art, created pieces inspired by the genre, which they were exposed to during travel or contact with Western artists. Many Soviet artists fled to the West, but this show focuses on those who remained behind and continued to make unsanctioned works, even while facing danger from the regime. The paintings, by artists such as Andrej Jemec from Slovenia and Tadeusz Kantor from Poland, encapsulate abstract expressionism's improvisation, intuitive imagery and, perhaps most importantly, emotional appeal of a universally understood visual language. Aug. 3-Oct. 28, 830 Springs-Fireplace Road, East Hampton, pkhouse.org

The Cold War is hot again, at least the in art world. Thanks to an unending barrage of news on the current administration's Russia-related scandals, it seems appropriate to turn an artistic eye toward the land that once represented the greatest threat to America. The Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center did just that with *Abstract Expressionism Behind the Iron Curtain*. The

The prestigious New York Academy of Art makes its way out East with *About Face*, a study of contemporary portraiture at the Southampton Arts Center that sheds light on the manifold ways people examine each other and themselves through art. In the selfie era, we have become inured to just glancing at a countenance before moving on to the next. But in keeping with the tradition of the Academy's mission of promoting figurative work, these 70 paintings, sculptures and photographs by heavyweights such as Jean-Michel Basquiat, Cindy Sherman, Alex Katz and Eric Fischl, as well as Academy faculty and alumni, invite the viewer to linger on the details of a face and ponder the story it tells for longer than a quick swipe left. Through Sept. 17, 25 Jobs Lane, Southampton, southamptonartscenter.org ■

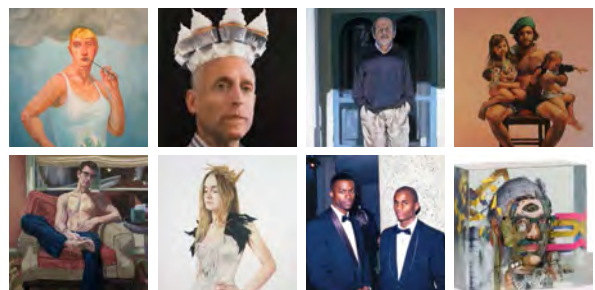
# Wmagazine

## A First Look at Some Eclectic Faces in the Hamptons, From Cindy Sherman to Leonardo DiCaprio



Next Friday, the likes of Cindy Sherman and Mickalene Thomas, along with more than 50 other artists, are sending some of their most prized portraits out east to the Hamptons for “About Face,” the New York Academy of Art’s annual summer exhibition at the Southampton Arts Center. And despite being co-curated this time around by an Academy newcomer, Scott Avett of the band the Avett Brothers, there’ll be plenty of familiar faces, too: Leonardo DiCaprio will be showing up thanks to one of Yung Jake’s emoji masterpieces, taking his place alongside the writer E. L. Doctorow, as painted by Eric Fischl, and Bob Colacello, who can be seen through a hunk of Dustin Yellin-constructed glass. Preview those works, plus a Jean-Michel Basquiat owned by the artist’s pal, the late Glenn O’Brien, here.

July 22, 2017 | by Stephanie Eckardt



Cindy Sherman, *Untitled*, 1982.  
Courtesy of the artist and Metro Pictures, New York

## The Contemporary Portraiture Explored In “About Face”

Kristen Catalano



Just my Imagination by Nick Gebhart.

This summer, the New York Academy of Art will once again partner with Southampton Arts Center for a thrilling exhibition that examines the diverse ways human beings are presented in today's art.

About Face, which was co-curated by artist and musician Scott Avett and Academy President David Kratz, features over 70 works of sculpture, painting and photography, with pieces from John Alexander, Steven Assael, Scott Avett, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Berenice Bell, Margaret Bowland, Monica Cook, Will Cotton, Allan Saint Denis, Peter Drake, Richard Dupont, Matthew Alfonso Durante, Nicole Eisenman, Heidi Elbers, Eric Fischl, Audrey Flack, Steve Forster, Nick Gebhart, Ralph Gibson, Alonsa Guevara, Lyle Ashton Harris, Jacob Hayes, Mark Heming, Patty Horing, Judith Hudson, Sara Issakharian, Yung Jake, Edgar Jerins, Alex Katz, Sophia Kayafas, David Kratz, James Linkous,

Damian Loeb, Liz Markus, Kim McCarty, Michael Meadors, Steve Mumford, Gary Murphy, James Nares, Alice Neel, Esteban Ocampo-Giraldo, Rebecca Orcutt, Eric Pedersen, Naudline Pierre, Larry Rivers, Randall Rosenthal, Tony Scherman, Dana Schutz, Andrew Sendor, Cindy Sherman, Bernardo Siciliano, Laurie Simmons, Billy Sullivan, Mickalene Thomas, Phillip Thomas, Jorge Vascano, Anna Wakitsch, Mitra Walter, Tun Ping Wang, and Lucy Winton showcased.

“The show focuses on contemporary portraiture,” noted co-curator David Kratz. “From Eric Fischl's expressive realism to Mickalene Thomas's in-your-face presentation to Will Cotton's idealized perfection to the tautness of Jacob Hayes' everyday scenes, we get a pretty complete picture of how contemporary artists are looking at the world around them and, I dare say, themselves.”

This exhibition allows viewers to slow down and consider the story present in every human face. This theme is closely tied to the Academy's founding mission of promoting the tradition of figurative work in the context of contemporary art. The New York Academy of Art is a not-for-profit education and cultural institution that combines intensive training with active discourse. The Academy employs major exhibitions, an educational program, and a speaker series in order to serve as a creative and intellectual center for artists.

About Face will be on view Friday, July 28 through Sunday, September 17. An opening reception will be held on Friday, July 28, from 6 to 8 p.m., and an artist talk moderated by the curators will be presented on Friday, August 25. Admission to the opening reception is free.

Southampton Arts Center is located at 25 Jobs Lane in Southampton. For more information call 631-283-0967 or visit [www.southamptonartscenter.org](http://www.southamptonartscenter.org).

# The Southampton Press

SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 100 YEARS

## New York Academy Of Art Returns To The Southampton Arts Center For ‘About Face’



Jul 25, 2017 8:42 AM

By Julia Halsey

Just like snowflakes, no two portraits are quite the same.

This fact will become clear after viewing “About Face,” an exhibition of more than 70 contemporary sculptures, paintings and photographs by students, faculty and supporters of the Tribeca-based New York Academy of Art.

Co-curated by David Kratz, the president of the academy, and Scott Avett, an artist and a musician in the folk band The Avett Brothers, this exhibition will be the nonprofit university’s second at the Southampton Arts Center following last year’s “Water|Bodies.” This year’s show surveys contemporary portraiture from established artists such as Eric Fischl, Damian Loeb, Larry Rivers and Dana Schutz, and emerging artists as well.

The show’s curatorial theme ties closely with the New York Academy of Art’s founding mission of promoting the use of traditional figurative methods and techniques in contemporary art. The school was founded 37 years ago by Andy Warhol and Stuart Pivar, who were worried that, with the growth of unconventional art, the traditional skills of fine art making were being lost in the process.

“What was in fashion then was critical theory, conceptual work, and abstractness. The fine skills of painting, drawing and sculpture were not really in fashion at the time,” Mr. Kratz said in an interview at his Southampton home. “What we do is we teach people those skills, but in the service of making vital contemporary art.”

First year students of the academy go through what Mr. Kratz calls “boot camp,” where intensive technique training takes place. “Once they get that whole array of skills in their arsenal, then the next year they’re required to do work that is uniquely personal to them,” said Mr. Kratz, who believes that this approach gives the academy’s students an extra edge in the art world.

“Our mission is to give people the skills that they need to be able to articulate their creative vision. It’s a great mix,” he noted.

He is particularly excited for “About Face” because it reflects the values the academy instills in its students.

“This show is taking something that the school focuses on—depicting people—but putting it in the context of what is happening with some of the most innovative, leading thinkers in that field now,” he said. “It’s a mix of very celebrated, big-deal artists who are doing figurative work and then academy alumni who are doing the same thing.”

Mr. Kratz said that after his wonderful experience curating a show at the Southampton Arts Center last year, he had he couldn’t resist returning for another one.

“The Southampton Arts Center gives us a really great way to tell the story of the school in the context of the current arts scene,” he said. “And the work just looks so beautiful in there.”

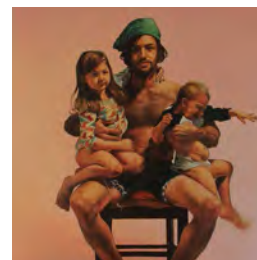
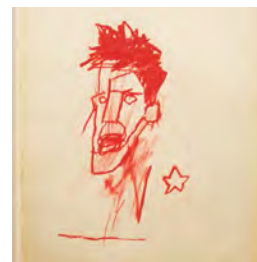
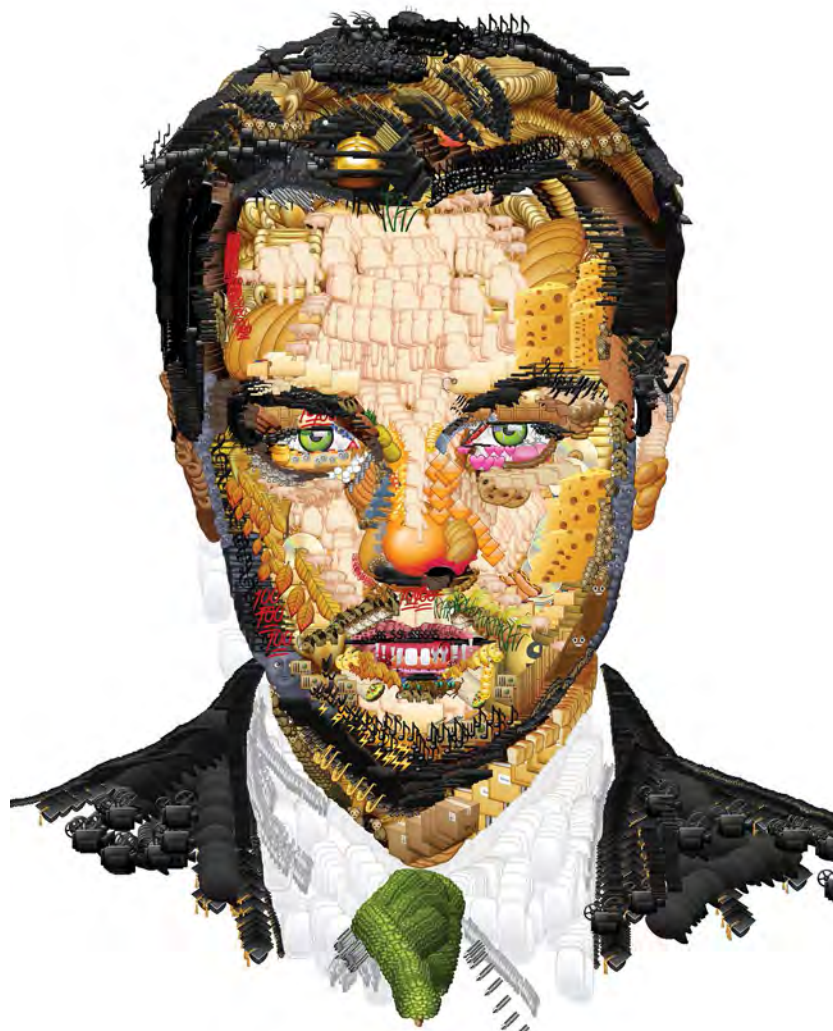
“About Face” will be on view at the Southampton Arts Center from Friday, July 28, through Sunday, September 17. An opening reception will take place July 28 from 6 to 8 p.m., and an artist talk will be presented on Friday, August 25. For more information, call 631-283-0967 or visit [southamptonartscenter.org](http://southamptonartscenter.org).



# ABOUT FACE

Press Coverage

## GUEST *of a* GUEST



## II Must-See Pieces At The Southampton Arts Center

Drawings, paintings, sculptures, photos and digital works - oh my! Tomorrow evening, Friday, July 28th, from 6-8 pm at the Southampton Arts Center (25 Jobs Lane) all are invited to the opening night of the New York Academy of Art's big Hamptons exhibition, About Face.

Featuring works by over 60 art world names to know, including Cindy Sherman, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Laurie Simmons, Dustin Yellin, Eric Fischl, Alex Katz and more, the exhibit will be on view until September 17th.

Click through for a GofG VIP preview of some of the pieces!

by Christie Grimm · July 27, 2017



## Scott Avett Lends a Curatorial Hand

Avett has curated “About Face” for the New York Academy of Art.

By Kristen Tauer on July 28, 2017

Scott Avett, of The Avett Brothers band, has lent a hand to the New York Academy of Art to curate the organization’s summer show at the Southampton Arts Center. Opening today and running through Sept. 17, “About Face” features works by friends of the academy, the Southampton art community, and two paintings by Avett, who is a trained professional painter.

His relationship with NYAA was born from a conversation and subsequent studio visit with neo expressionist painter Eric Fischl, who went on to introduce Avett to NYAA president David Kratz. “David reached out and asked if I was interested in curating, and it’s not something I’ve ever done officially,” says the North Carolina-based Avett. “I have to say ‘officially,’ because I feel like curating is going on all the time. In a creative world you’re just sort of doing it, placing things, composing things all the time.”

Working in collaboration with Kratz, Avett saw the exhibit, which is themed around contemporary portraiture, from inception to final installation.

“It’s so much like writing up a set list or choreographing a night on stage — it’s just completely parallel, and it was very similar to working with a partner, like how I work with my brother [Seth Avett],” Avett says of the collaborative creative and curatorial process. “David is obviously well connected there and a leader there and so he was able to guide me and I was able to react and edit how I would see fit...It’s important to be able to play off of somebody.”

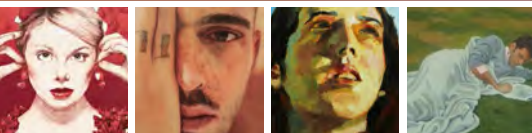
The show includes work by a range of artists, including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Will Cotton, Alex Katz, Laurie Simmons and Dustin Yellin. Avett has two of his own portraits included as well — one he painted shortly after graduating from college, and a more recent self-portrait.

“‘Lacinda’ is from right after I got out of school,” he explains. “I was living in the Charlotte area and...I was hiring people, I would pay them to come sit for an hour. 10×12 [canvas], sit for an hour, I’ll paint whatever happens, you go, and go on to the next. And this was one of those that I did. I did a lot of them — I probably did 20 or so, and I sold most of them early in my career just to pay rent and to keep going.” Avett’s other piece in the exhibit, “Fatherhood / Who’s Bleeding?” is a large-scale 106×65 canvas depicting him sitting on a chair holding his two young children. It’s part of a series that he’s been working on since 2007, depicting intimate “moments” in his life.

A major limiting factor in Avett’s time to create fine art is his other artistic venture, music. He notes that while complimentary, the two practices are oftentimes at odds with one another.

“I’ve been back and forth with it all my life,” he says. “I think they have to be at odds with each other for me. I like that in music, I like that in my visual journey,” he says. “I must say that I wonder sometimes, ‘What if I gave myself only to one? What would happen? How would it affect it?’ and, ‘Is it even possible?’ It never has been before, I just can’t put either of them [painting or music] down,” he continues. “When it comes to expressing, and writing, and creating a song, I’ve just come to believe you have to be all in to make it what it can be. So that’s an open-ended answer there, I haven’t come to the solution yet.”

Scott Avett’s “Fatherhood,” painted in oil, on canvas.



In September, he’ll be the focus of another artist’s portrait — Judd Apatow and Michael Bonfiglio’s documentary “May It Last: A Portrait of the Avett Brothers,” which will premiere in theatres for one night only on Sept. 12.

“It’s a very candid look at my brother and I, about our lives,” Avett describes. “We asked ourselves quite a few times while they were making the film, ‘What is this? What is it about? Where’s the sensational hook? Is there not one? Can it be good without one? Is there one?’”

“It’s spawned some great conversations with Judd and with other artists,” he adds.

## Contemporary Portraiture at Southampton Arts

An exhibition of work by 70 artists presented by the New York Academy of Art

By Mark Segal | July 27, 2017 - 12:17pm



“About Face,” an exhibition of work by 70 artists presented by the New York Academy of Art, will open tomorrow at the Southampton Arts Center with a reception from 6 to 8 p.m. and remain on view through Sept. 17. Organized by the artist and musician Scott Avett and David Kratz, an artist and president of the academy, the show marks the second collaboration between the two institutions.

“The arts center invited us to do it again,” said Mr. Kratz, referring to last year’s show “Water/Bodies.” “I think that was one of the best attended shows they have had.”

The idea for this year’s exhibition came from Simone Levinson, co-chair of the center’s board, who suggested the subject of contemporary portraiture. “It’s something that is of interest to everybody,” she said, “and it is in keeping with the tradition of the academy,”

The show includes paintings, sculpture, drawings, and photography by 70 artists, among them Jean-Michel Basquiat, Will Cotton, Nicole Eisenman, Eric Fischl, Alex Katz, Alice Neel, Larry Rivers, Cindy Sherman, Laurie Simmons, and Billy Sullivan. Works by academy alumni, faculty, and students will be also be on view.

The theme of portraiture is closely tied to the academy’s founding mission of promoting the tradition of figurative work in the context of contemporary art. Of the two-year M.F.A. program, which is limited to 100 students, Mr. Kratz said, “The training is largely figurative, but students do all kinds of things besides that, including abstract work.”

Mr. Avett is one-half of the Avett Brothers, a band from North Carolina that combines bluegrass, country, punk,

pop, rock, and folk. They sold out the Barclays Center in March.

“Scott is a great musician, but also a very talented figurative painter,” said Mr. Kratz. “I asked him to put this show together with me because I really respect his eye. We sat down and made a very aspirational list of the artists we wanted. Ninety percent of the people we asked agreed to participate.” The works came from galleries, private collections, and the artists themselves.

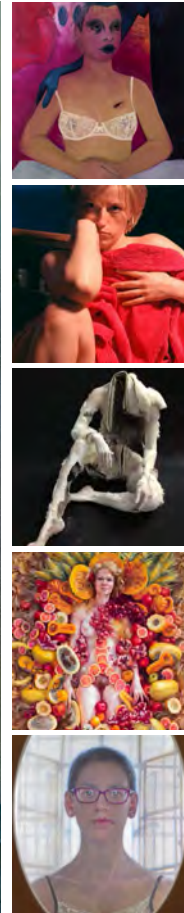
“How you look at a face says a lot about who you are and what you’re thinking about, and that is very apparent in the show,” said Mr. Kratz. “We start with Alice Neel. For me, she represents the beginning of a certain through line of American portraiture. Hers are modern, very candid reflections of who the person is.”

Among the themes of the show are racial and gender identity, social commentary, the subject of beauty, and the roles people play in society. Lyle Ashton Harris is represented by a photograph of two African-American waiters in uniform. “It’s a haunting image. They look as if they’re from another time, but he’s a young, contemporary artist.”

The show includes a selection of Basquiat drawings from his sketchbooks that have never been exhibited. Other works include Mr. Fischl’s portrait of E.L. Doctorow, an early painting by Alex Katz with a lot of texture and gesture, and a photograph by Cindy Sherman. “I love that one because she’s not dressed up. It’s honest.”

A light, almost transparent portrait by Billy Sullivan of the artist Keith Sonnier offers a stark contrast to a large painting by Steve Mumford of a solitary soldier on a vast battlefield in Iraq, where Mr. Mumford was embedded with Iraqi troops.

Both Mr. Avett and Mr. Kratz have works in the exhibition. “I torture my guests and relatives who expect a beach vacation by telling them they have to come to my studio and sit for three hours,” said Mr. Kratz, who has a house in Southampton as well as in New York City.



Tiny Dancer by Margaret Bowland, 2016. Photo: Courtesy of the New York Academy of Art

## *What's in a Face?*

By **Chloe Fein** August 2, 2017 5:30 pm

The New York Academy of Art's new exhibition "About Face," on view at Southampton Arts Center, explores the stories behind the faces in images we see — in selfies, photographs, and paintings. The show features 70 works by celebrated contemporary artists Cindy Sherman, Alice Neel, Laurie Simmons, and others, alongside art by the academy's recent MFA graduates. The pieces on view are all portraits, but different in each artist's contemporary approach.

One striking piece is an oil painting by New York Academy of Art faculty member Margaret Bowland, titled *Tiny Dancer*, shown above, which depicts a young girl with her face covered in blue paint. She wears a bridal dress with \$5 bills rolled up like roses on her shoulders. Bowland said the bills nod to Lincoln's presidency and the civil-rights era. She explained: "In this painting I'm showing who this girl is, but I know the world will only accept its own projections of [her]. ... Your first apprehension of this girl is that she's beautiful, and then secondarily you think: Why is she covered in paint? And: Why are the \$5 bills also misted in paint? As women, we've been taught since we're small that we're supposed to be the best we can be, only if we are beautiful enough, only if we are good projection screens."

Her use of blue paint plays with historical notions of beauty as well. "So many cultures have covered themselves in paint: the Geisha in Japan, Queen Elizabeth," she said. "[The] first impulse was to cover young women in paint after they were no longer innocent to make them appear as though they still were."

See artwork by Cindy Sherman, Laurie Simmons, Alonsa Guevara, and more featured artists in the slideshow ahead. "About Face" is on view until September 17 at the Southampton Arts Center. Curators will moderate an artist talk on August 25.



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