

Xenia: Crossroads in Portrait Painting

On View January 11 – February 15
Opening Reception January 16, 6:00-8:00PM

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Xenia: Crossroads in Portrait Painting*, an exhibition that explores the resurgence of portraiture as an incisive platform through which to consider the nature and meaning of identity. As our globalized society becomes increasingly marked by emigration, resettlement, and technological interconnectedness, so too have notions of the self become exponentially fractured and complex. Through the work of seventeen artists, *Xenia: Crossroads in Portrait Painting* captures the ways in which artists are leveraging the power of the portrait to express these intricacies, exposing the relationship between identity, place, and shifting social norms. The exhibition will be on view from January 11 through February 15, 2020, across both of Marianne Boesky Gallery's Chelsea locations at 507 and 509 West 24th Street.

Xenia: Crossroads in Portrait Painting will feature new and recent works by a wide range of artists, including Polina Barskaya, Amoako Bofofo, Cristina Canale, Somaya Critchlow, Ndidi Emefiele, Maria Farrar, Nona Garcia, Cindy Ji Hye Kim, Doron Langberg, Otis Quaiocoe, Laura Sanders, Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, Rodel Tapaya, Salman Toor, Hannah van Bart, Robin F Williams, and Chloe Wise. The group of artists were born and currently live across five continents and over twenty countries, many having relocated by choice or necessity.

Across their vivid and insightful portraits, the individual is depicted as both of singular and communal experience, and as reflecting multiple signifiers of acceptance, displacement, environment, consumerism, and cultural references. In instances, the figure is amputated, aggregated, and multi-aculturated; it is shown within empty expanses and amongst other bodies and objects. Yet despite the spectrum of perspectives and the various formal and conceptual approaches, the artists' visions are united by a central sense of humanity.

This connection is also encapsulated in the exhibition title, which takes its name from the ancient Greek concept of "xenia" or "guest-friendship". This notion is mentioned in Teju Cole and Fazal Sheik's 2019 book, *Human Archipelago*, and refers to the extension of generosity to visitors from afar. Together, the artists' work speaks to the multicentricity of factors that shape identity—thus highlighting that "otherness" is purely notional. And at the same time, the act of painting another being can be seen as an act of xenia itself.

"Throughout art history, portraits have served as indicators of social values and personal circumstances. The incredible reemergence of the genre speaks to its ongoing power to reflect our perceptions of ourselves and the world we occupy. I find particularly fascinating the depth and diversity of approaches contemporary artists are taking to portraiture, and the way that their work so aptly encapsulates the complexity of identifying who you are and where you're from today. *Xenia* offers a sampling of some of the most exciting voices

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

509 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

reshaping portraiture within contemporary practice and speaks to art's incredible ability to connect with social and political dialogues," said Marianne Boesky.

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For more information about the artists featured in *Xenia*, please contact Gallery Director Mary Mitsch at mary@boeskygallery.com or 212.680.9889. For press inquiries, please contact Alina Sumajin, PAVE Communications and Consulting, at alina@paveconsult.com or 646-369-2050.

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