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Previews

“Portrait in Phase”
By Debra Koppman



Four Los Angeles-based artists connected by an interest in portraiture and its relationship to time and history will be exhibiting their work in *Portrait in Phase* at the Brand Library Art Galleries.

In Alexandra Wiesenfeld’s large-scale paintings, landscape and portrait are intertwined as odd, surreal landscapes visited by solitary figures. Childlike silhouettes tell little about the individuals pictured, but the positioning of the figures at the edge of the space suggests disassociation, lack of connection and the brink of impending disaster. These tension-filled environments intriguingly create a portrait of a state of mind.

Phung Huynh’s elaborate and detailed paintings on wood function through caricature to tell oblique tales of cultural assimilation and identity. Huynh’s elongated *Piss Painting* (2008) features what might be many fat Baby Buddhas, some rolling on the ground, seemingly being tropped on and overtaken by more Baby Buddhas, wings attached to their wrists, rooster plumage fixed to their heads. For Huynh, the portrait is of the family in a state of cultural flux.

Jane Gott’s approach to portraiture is the most rooted in historical tradition, referencing Renaissance style and technique. Using live models over extended periods of time, Gotts refers simultaneously to past and present, as the portrait is a record of time itself.

Deb Diehl’s silhouette portraits are created through video projection, referencing a similar form popular in the nineteenth century. Playing with the romanticized practice of self-presentation, Diehl captures her own shadow while attempting to hold a regal pose. Other seemingly random items, such as nails, a miniature sleeveless blouse, and one stiletto-heeled shoe, fall behind her to create added mystery and potential meaning. For Diehl, portraiture presents a state of self-deception.

Portrait in Phase by Deb Diehl, Jane Gotts, Phung Huynh and Alexandra Wiesenfeld will be on view November 8 through December 19 at the Brand Library Art Galleries, 1601 W. Mountain Street, Glendale, California.