

Expo of the week

NATHANIEL MARY QUINN: ALWAYS FELT, RARELY SEEN ●●●●
 > 1314, Almine Rech, www.alminerech.com

Interwoven portraits

EN The US painter Nathaniel Mary Quinn has developed a distinct technique of fragmentating images to unearth the multiple identities of his subjects. This is his first exhibition in Brussels.

— GILLES BECHET

A contorted mouth, an eye coming loose, a nose being squashed, an ear coming unstuck. Nathaniel Mary Quinn's portraits are at first unsettling, and then enchanting. What might appear to be a Dadaist collage is in fact entirely executed on paper or canvas. The artist juxtaposes different elements of disparate faces, and he does the same with techniques, working in a combination of charcoal, pastels, and oil and gouache paint, each of which add a texture and feel of their own.

Today more than ever, the media love stories. With Nathaniel Mary Quinn, they have a good one. Born into a poor family in an impoverished Chicago neighbourhood, he received a scholarship to a private school in Indiana thanks to his precocious gift for drawing. At the age of fifteen, he had to cope with the death of his mother and with losing touch with the rest of his family, but he persevered. In an article for *Vogue* following the success of his first London exhibition, he explained how his particular technique came to him in a vision. Instinctively piecing together fragments of images, he realised, on taking a step back, that he had painted a portrait of his brother Charles, whom he had not seen for years.

The series of works on display at Almine Rech were completed in a few months in Paris, far from his home base of New York, but that didn't change the nature of his work. When he is working, Nathaniel Mary Quinn surrounds himself with images which he cuts out of magazines and newspapers or finds on the Internet. When he is composing his portraits, he doesn't think, he says: he feels.

He thinks only of the forms, composition, colours, and balance. In this human patchwork, all types of features and skin colours are mixed together like the fragments of a buried identity rising to the surface. Alongside his many works on paper, he also presents a few oils on canvas, in a larger format, in which the faces have a body dressed up in accessories like at the theatre. A Renaissance hat here, a fur shawl there, like a homage to art history. Channelling the ghosts of Picasso, Bacon, and Rubens as if diffracted through the prism of a kaleidoscope. Sometimes almost grotesque. Nathaniel Mary Quinn's compositions are never aggressive. They maintain a certain distance, even though, at the centre of the jigsaw puzzle of colours and materials, there is often an eye, staring out at you to draw you back into the image.



BRUZZ | REVIEWS



Top expo

BENOÎT PLATÉUS
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In his first solo exhibition, the Belgian artist presents works which, through the nature of the medium or the artistic approach, reveal the strangeness and ambiguity of our day-to-day environment. (- 204, Wieb)

RÉPARATION
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In a big old town house, a few contemporary artists explore our need to heal. With intimacy, poetry, and irony, their answers render our frailties even more beautiful. (- 204, Maison des Arts)

MAARTEN VANDEN EYNDE ●●●●

Humankind has begun a race against the clock to avoid self-destruction. Maarten Vanden Eynde explores science and nature with insight and poetry. How do we apply the brakes? (- 307, Messias De Clerq)

NL Dit is de eerste Brusselse tentoonstelling van Nathaniel Mary Quinn, een Amerikaanse schilder die de mensen die zijn pad kruist(en) tijdens zijn woestige leven verwerkt in gefragmenteerde beelden.

FR Première exposition bruxelloise pour le peintre américain Nathaniel Mary Quinn qui déesse typique une technique de fragmentation de l'image pour faire remonter à la surface l'identité multiple de ses sujets.