

Artsy: '5 Must-See Figurative Painting Shows You Can View Online', by Daria Harper April 21, 2020



While galleries have temporarily closed worldwide due to COVID-19, we can still get inspired by the work of contemporary artists. As part of Artsy's Art Keeps Going campaign, we're exploring shows that have been impacted by art spaces going dark. Each week, we're featuring five exhibitions that you can access via Artsy, with insights from the artists and our editors. This week, we're sharing a selection of work by leading figurative painters at galleries from London to San Francisco.

Genesis Tramaine

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Almine Rech, London



Installation view of Genesis Tramaine, *Bearer of Good News*, 2020. Courtesy of [Almine Rech Gallery](#).

ALMINE RECH

The works in Genesis Tramaine's first solo exhibition at Almine Rech are far more than a series of portraits. "Each work is a gospel song," Tramaine told Artsy. "They are portals." Deeply inspired by the 1980s graffiti scene in New York, Tramaine creates striking depictions of Black people. Her characters illustrate her interest in the real and the imagined—disparate realms that meet harmoniously in her frames. In this show, titled "Parables of Nana," Tramaine continues to explore the shape, definition, and emotion of Black expressions.



Genesis Tramaine

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"The show is a reflection of the conjunction of my understanding of lessons that my nana gave me, embedded ancestral messages and prayers," Tramaine said. One piece, *Bearer of Good News* (2020), feels especially relevant; it reminds us of the positive change that often lives on the other side of adversity. The work depicts a seemingly collaged figure against an electric green background; bold strokes of yellow, black, and blue break up the frame. *Parable of Nana* (2020) shows a face with multiple sets of eyes and mouths against a deep red background. The figure appears to be experiencing several emotions at once.

Tramaine described her artistic process as intensely spiritual. Alongside oil, acrylic, and spray paints, she lists Yeshua, a Hebrew word meaning "Son of God," as a material in each of the works in the exhibition. "Parables of Nana," she noted, came out of a vision she had. The divine place from which her vibrant work is born shines brilliantly during a time that feels increasingly gray.

—Daria Harper

[See the show on Artsy.](#)