ALMINE RECH

Genesis Tramaine
Facing Giants'

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Painting has been free from the purpose of narrating the lives of Saints for a long time: of the emancipations characterizing the history of the avant-gardes, this one might be the oldest. But Genesis Tramaine, an American mathematician, former algebra teacher in her forties, turned totally self-taught “devotional painter,” features the lives of saints in her canvases and has some revelations to make.

“I think it’s important that you paint a real narrative, an honest reflection. I don’t think [my saints] look like saints as they have been given to us...[those] were false narratives,” explains Genesis Tramaine. She elaborates, “The images of saints that we know and that are projected at us are all white with blond hair—and we all know that that is not true.” She has also forged a style that makes her portraits (she only paints portraits) immediately recognizable and openly shares their stylistic lineage: George Condo, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Francis Bacon, etc. Moreover, the whole history of the portrait comes together in this unprecedented fresco.

Genesis Tramaine has created some fifteen canvases and drawings for the exhibition 'Facing Giants". Shown for the first time at the Consortium Museum, these new works continue her singular project.

“I’m a devotional painter and I’m excited to debut my show 'Facing Giants", a collection of my worship works and my service works which are works on canvas and works on paper. This hasn’t been done in some time. I scaled back and scaled in, I’m working on smaller works, I’m working on a smaller canvas space, and the energy in the work is as large as works that may have been seen before. I’ve also delved into new material that I’m happy to expose in these smaller works.
These are biblical saints who have faced giants whether those giants are actual giants or giants like fear, love, acceptance or non-acceptance, the giants of facing God and not being accepted, giants of judgments... those who have sat in the mud, if you would, and found a way to persevere. And I wanted to spend as much time as I could with those energies and those narratives, as a tool of self-encouragement and as a tool of encouragement for others. It’s very important for the narrative of the content that I’m painting to be as strong as the physical painting.

The idea that I’m painting something that I cannot see, that I’m telling you I see, that I can’t prove to you that I’ve seen, other than the evidence of the work... I know that I live in this mystified world, a sort of dreamlike state, I live there, I occupy that space comfortably, and I think the idea of coming out of that space with physical matter is incredible but also crazy. I can’t make it make sense. I just have to show the proof or the evidence of the worship work that I’ve been over. But I think the deeper I go into Genesis, the closer to myself I can get, I can get closer to God.”