ALMINE RECH

# Nathaniel Mary Quinn
# This is Life

## Dec 1, 2018 — Mar 3, 2019 | MMoCA, Madison, WI

*Nathaniel Mary Quinn: This is Life* will be on view in MMoCA's State Street Gallery from December 1, 2018 through March 3, 2019. The exhibition features seventeen of the artist's mixed-media works on paper, created from 2014 to 2018. During this crucial four year period Quinn developed and refined the collage-like technique now synonymous with his name.

Quinn's portraits initially appear to be pieced together from newspaper and magazine clippings. The artist, however, renders everything by hand. Using black charcoal and soft pastel over gouache—with careful interjections of oil paint, paint stick, and oil pastel—he masterfully manipulates his various mediums to create unconventional depictions of individuals from his past. Rather than replicating a physical likeness, Quinn's abstracted compositions express psychological dimensions of identity.

Mirroring his understanding that an individual's sense of self is constructed from a multitude of influences, memories, and experiences, Quinn references disparate sources of imagery—from comic books to Dutch Baroque art—to compose each artwork.

Preferring complexity and ambiguity overmimetic, or "truthful", renderings of appearance, Quinn's portraits actually reflect a more accurate truth about the human condition. Quinn spoke to this in a recent interview, stating; "It's important as a people to embrace who we are and embrace our differences. It's in our difference that we can see the similarities we share, which is that we are all complex. We are all beautiful and grotesque, we are all broken in some way, and in the midst of being broken we find ways to embrace our brokenness and carry on life. But we are all like this. Happiness, grief, joy ... this is life."

Giving image to the universal messiness of humanness, Quinn opens an important space to consider alternative ways of imagining, representing, and understanding ourselves and the world around us.

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