

X Collection 202

Portrait of a Man

Jun 29 — Oct 20, 2024 | X Museum, Beijing, China

George Rouy is part of *Portrait of Man*, at X Museum, Beijing, China.

Following ‘Collection as Poem in the Age of Ephemerality’ in 2020 and ‘X PINK 101’ in 2023, X Museum will present its third collection exhibition, titled *Portrait of a Man* in the summer of 2024. The exhibition features male figures created by 61 international contemporary artists in recent years, including paintings, sculptures, and photographs, alongside relevant research materials, publications, and videos. Departing from a historical review of male portraiture, the exhibition delves into the complexities and multifaceted implications of male image and identity, and explores how contemporary artists learn and unlearn from the past.

Portrait of a Man is a common title in countless male portraits throughout art history. In these works, figures are anonymous, their specific identities often went unnoticed or unrecorded, hidden behind this generic title. As subjects of depiction, men have thus transitioned from narrators to the object bearing the gaze. In these works, the details of their faces and bodies are externalized through their expressions, postures, costumes, subtle interactions between multiple figures, and the surrounding environment revealed as internalized social symbols. These elements embody the social lifestyles of that time. Through this classic theme and title, the exhibition attempts to reveal the enduring significance of portraiture today, and revisits the memory and expectations associated with male representation.

The works in the exhibition are consistent in exploring identity, inevitably imbued with a sense of vulnerability exposed through the artist’s exaggerated portrayal of the body. The recurring scenes of domestic environments and self-portraits in the works may reflect harsh scrutiny of everyday life, as well as deeper inner conflicts. Basil’s works often reveal aspects of his personal life, highlighting the intense conflict between self-examination and the gaze of the other. Delicate bodies and self-portraits in various forms serve as the primary clues in the artist’s works, almost inviting the viewer to engage in dialogue and analysis. However, in most of the works, the secret gaze from the ‘artist’ carries a sense of skepticism, creating an unsettling atmosphere in contrast with the rich details of mundane life.

The participating artists in this exhibition come from 20 countries and different generations born between 1950 and 2000, with the majority born after 1980. Their works, created from diverse perspectives, connect and resonate with each other to form a realm that constantly challenges established perceptions, guiding viewers to explore the significance of male portraiture. The Director of X Museum, You Yang, emphasized the significance of this collection exhibition, stating: ‘The awareness of collection and documentation constitutes the core of our institution. The exhibition marks the first collection showcase since my appointment at X Museum. Owing to the diligent research conducted by our young curatorial team into the history of painting and contemporary art trends, we anticipate that the exhibition will engage a multifaceted audience and readership. It underscores the cultural function of the museum within its historical framework, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and mutual support across various sectors.’

We extend our deepest gratitude to our board members and patrons for their unwavering support in fostering the museum's growth and development. We especially appreciate the contributions of our chief sponsor, Mercedes-Benz; our annual public practice project sponsor, Phillips; and our paint sponsor, Tikkurila, to this exhibition. Throughout the exhibition period, a series of public practice events will be conducted, focusing on the exhibited works. These events are planned to encourage meaningful dialogues among art practitioners, scholars, and the audiences. Additionally, we aim to build broad connections through offline lectures, live exhibition tours, and flexible ticketing policies. For detailed information on activities and ticketing, please visit the X Museum's official website, WeChat official account, and other social media platforms.

Artists :

Trey Abdella, Felipe Baeza, Sarah Ball, Hernan Bas, Alexander Basil, William Brickel, Emanuel de Carvalho, Dominic Chambers, Skyler Chen, Chen Wei, Jean Claracq, Henry Curchod, dagou, Oh de Laval, Leonardo Devito, Kyle Dunn, Fan Yang-tsung, Alessandro Fogo, Alex Foxton, Fu Liang, Alex Gardner, Mathis Gasser, Adrian Geller, Roberto Gil de Montes, Gongkan, Jake Grewal, Ken Gun Min, Caleb Hahne Quintana, Christopher Hartmann, Faris Heizer, Killion Huang, Morteza Khakshoor, Heesoo Kim, Sang Woo Kim, Vojtěch Kovařík, Nika Kutateladze, Austin Lee, Li Ran, Liang Hao, Brandon Lipchik, Ma Hailun, Jonny Negron, Julien Nguyen, Antonio Obá, Alexis Ralaivao, Francisco Rodríguez, George Rouy, Dongwook Suh, Sun Yifei, Tan Yongqing, Thew Smoak, Tian Jianxin, Wang Xiao, Wei Minghui, Issy Wood, Xie Lei, Mayuka Yamamoto, Yan Bing, Yang Bodu, Zearo, Zhang Haoya.