



Palo Gallery Presents *Whose Muse*
A Contemporary Survey of 21st Century Portraiture
April 12, 2024 – June 2, 2024



Yuwei Tu, *Loneliness is Still Time Spent with the World*, 2022.

Palo Gallery is pleased to present *Whose Muse*, a new exhibition exploring the legacy of portraiture in the 21st century with works by historic, established, and emerging artists. *Whose Muse* draws inspiration from a historically powerful tool of representation: portraiture painting. Featured artists include Lorenzo Amos, Miriam Berman, Sara Berman, Louise Bourgeois, Nell Brookefield, Michal Chelbin, Auudi Dorsey, Natalie Frank, Lucian Freud, Joana Galego, Catherine Goodman, Charlie Gosling, George Grosz, Lewinale Havette, Phoebe Helander, Jane Hilton, Esme Hodsoll, Sergey Kononov, Maria Kreyn, Ronan Day-Lewis, Asher Liftin, Susan Meiselas, Jonathan Meese, Rodrigo Moynihan, Lisa Ross, David Smalling, Dash Snow, Astrid

Styma, Yuwei Tu, Frances Waite, Rachel Wolf, Deanio X, Teona Yamanidze, Robert Zeller, and Leah Ke Yi Zheng. *Whose Muse* explores contemporary portraiture through the evolving concept of identity and what it means to be seen.

Throughout history, portraiture has served as a powerful tool for regimes and individuals of various classes to express power, opinion, and personality. Classical portraiture retained its compelling narrative even through the advent of photography. Many of the world's most iconic works highlight the diverse purposes found in portraiture, such as Leonardo DaVinci's *Mona Lisa*, Jan Van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait*, and Adélaïde Labille-Guiard's *Self Portrait with Two Pupils*.

For contemporary audiences, the act of viewing a portrait takes place in seconds, often on a phone screen rather than through prolonged contemplation of a painting, photograph, or sculpture. *Whose Muse* spotlights the challenges of capturing the nuances of personality, power, and propaganda and emphasizes that portraiture is not a lost art but rather one that has become increasingly difficult to master. In a culture constantly pulled away from the intimate and the individual, portraiture offers an intensely personal connection well beyond the three-second examination of a selfie.

The deluge of hundreds of pictures flooding social media has diminished the profound impact of historic portraiture. The artists featured in *Whose Muse* showcase the evolution of this medium, through works by artists ranging from Lucian Freud to Louise Bourgeois. As portraiture styles have shifted, so too has the relationship between the artist and sitter. The days of grueling sessions endured by figurative artists to capture the essence and spirit of their subjects have diminished; such intimate moments are now reserved for artists brave enough to stare unflinchingly into the human experience. The superficial mirage of social media now forces artists to navigate the challenges and complexities of portraiture by focusing on authentic representation, personal commitment, and vulnerability. *Whose Muse* chooses to highlight the demanding nature of portraiture and encourages a return to the art of prolonged contemplation.

About Palo Gallery

Established in 2018 in New York City by third-generation art collector and dealer Paul Henkel, Palo Gallery brings to bear a tradition of art scholarship and patronage, working as a true thought partner with artists to realize their visions and create dynamic presentations. Extensive research by the Palo curatorial team ensures that each exhibition is advised by the art historical



Louise Bourgeois, *Ear*, 2004.

canon and contemporary cultural touchpoints. In 2022, Palo Gallery opened its new 3,400-square-foot flagship space designed by Selldorf Architects in the NoHo district of Manhattan as the only dedicated partner showcasing Vica by Annabelle Selldorf. A destination of discovery, Palo Gallery's multifaceted program ranges from tightly curated, thematic group exhibitions to insightful art historically informed solo exhibitions spanning a breadth of artistic endeavors.

Since its inception, Palo Gallery has sought to incorporate thematic elements into its curatorial practice – whether it be group shows or solo presentations. Early exhibitions marked the gallery's foray into concept-driven presentations focusing on themes of memory and our most primitive instincts. *Memories Manifest* (2021) saw seven artists working in response to each other and the theme of memory, while *Primordial* (2021) investigated the ways that thoughts, emotions, reactions, and experiences speak to our most primitive instincts. The large-scale *Real Wild* (2022) presented an array of representations and interpretations of iconography from the American Wild West, a setting in which many of us have a collective archetype that the exhibition sought to re-contextualize. Building on the success of these conceptual group exhibitions, Palo has continued navigating contemporary cultural topics via art historical narratives with a number of solo exhibitions. Today, the gallery continues to showcase thematic presentations that offer Palo Gallery and its artists a unique opportunity to explore pivotal cultural and historical topics at a level that transcends those achieved via a standard solo exhibition. Palo Gallery is located at 30 Bond St., New York, NY.

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