

CYNTHIA-REEVES

March 2016

IDENTITY Opens at CYNTHIA-REEVES, Walpole, New Hampshire



CYNTHIA-REEVES is pleased to present **IDENTITY**, a group exhibition exploring sociological perspectives on persona through the work of [Dawn Black](#), [Danielle Julian Norton](#), and [Lionel Smit](#). The show opens on Saturday, March 19 and is on view through April 16 at The Barn, 28 Main Street in Walpole, New Hampshire.

Dawn Black's beautifully rendered watercolors highlight the conscious decisions we make around our physical identity, and how cultural influences and circumstances promote or impinge on a true sense of self. Her Conceal Project examines the practice of masquerade and the exaggeration of the persona in relation to this elusive 'identity', which, in its entirety, includes hundreds of postcard-scale drawings. Each is a different vignette that elucidates some quarter of contemporary culture, from portraits of Middle America to those on the extreme fringes of society.

"I am particularly interested in the various permutations of social practices that engender power hierarchies. The religious and ethnic nuances of power—who are the meek, who are the shameless, and when do the roles interchange? Societal practices of masquerade, uniforms, religious dress, etc. muddle conceptions of power and identity. It is provoking how a disguise (even a uniform) engenders the wearer powerful through his or her clandestine anonymity. Even more disturbing is the disguise's paradoxical virtue of allowing the concealed individual to be his or her authentic self. Which identity is authentic, the intrinsic self or the identity acquired through masquerade or do they create a third identity through a blending of the two? These



questions define my work as I seek to negotiate identity and the power of the individual.” – Dawn Black

This project, which is excerpted in this exhibition, along with other larger scale works by Black were internationally exhibited at the Columbus Museum (Columbus, Georgia); Marche d’Acqua (Fabriano, Italy); McColl Center for Art + Innovation (Charlotte, North Carolina); The Fundacion Pedro Cano (Blanco, Spain), and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art (New Orleans, Louisiana), among others.

Image: Dawn Black, *Dominion*, (2014), ink, watercolor and gouache, 35 ¾ x 33 ins, (90.8 x 83.82 cm).

Danielle Julian Norton, a visual artist working in multi-media installation, video, sculpture, and photography, has explored the role of the artist’s identity in a variety of complex projects. In this exhibition, her approach to portraiture examines the role of the artist, his/her identity, and the construction of meaning. These portraits are excavated from myths and narratives embedded both in a public cultural history and her own personal sense of myth.



Danielle Julian Norton, *Portrait I*, (2011), archival digital pigment print, 90 x 75 ins, (228.6 x 190.5 cm), Edition of 3 + AP

In her stark black and white “Portrait” series, Norton has created a series of staged tableaux, which feature her as the central character. The images play on traditional portraiture, with the artist averting her gaze from the viewer. The tableau is fantasy; yet, the questions behind the imagery are clear: who is the artist, and how does the artist reveal himself/herself. “These photographs draw on the form and character of historical photography...while questioning the position of the contemporary artist and the relentless pursuit to make art by staging and performing to expectations of them as artist.” (On Danielle Julian Norton, Bureau for Open Culture, 2012)

Danielle Julian Norton received a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Notre Dame (South Bend, IN), and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Columbus College of Art and Design (Columbus, OH), where she currently serves as professor of Fine Art. Her artist

residencies include the Headlands Center for the Arts (Sausalito, CA); Vermont Studio Center (Johnson, VT); Bemis Center (Omaha, NE); and Anderson Ranch (Snowmass Village, CO). Norton has exhibited at the Midwest Museum of American Art (Elkhart, IN); San Angelo Museum of Fine Art (San Angelo, TX); and the Columbus Museum of Art (Columbus, OH).



Lionel Smit is considered one of South Africa's strongest artists, best known for his contemporary portraiture executed through monumental canvases and sculptures. Each of his works offers us an entry point into the variety and richness that lies beneath every face – a task he undertakes with great sensitivity. "My fascination with portraiture and the abstraction of color plays a dualistic role in my artistic expression and creation. The combination of the representation of human form, and the mercurial quality of emotions, translated by color, line and form, is what inspires the imaginative and abstract essence of the work." - Lionel Smit

Image: Lionel Smit, Divert Head Fragment 2, (2011), resin, hand finished with automotive paint, 21 ½ x 13 ½ x 13 ½ ins, (54.61 x 34.29 x 34.29 cm), edition 6/12.

For Smit, the Cape Malayan women epitomize hybrid identity within a South African context, and reflect the disintegration of identity in an increasingly globalized society. Clearly focused on the dialogue between the figurative and expressive abstraction, his exploration of this mixed identity is marked by an austerity and restraint. Smit's figures, nonetheless, remain highly charged with the emotive and gestural energy of his creative process.

Based in Strand, Cape Town, Smit has achieved success all over the world, including sell-out exhibitions in London and Hong Kong. His works have been exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery in London where it received the Viewer's Choice Award, as well as selected as the 'face' of the BP Portrait Award 2013 for all campaigns. In recent years he has also been honored with a Ministerial Award from the Department of Culture for Visual Art in South Africa.

CYNTHIA-REEVES represents an international roster of established artists who share a process-apparent sensibility in their art. We are committed to artwork that demonstrates an authentic voice, an innovative use of materials and an appreciation of the mark in diverse media: site-based installation, video, sculpture, painting and works on paper. A sub-text to the gallery's program is artwork that provokes a discourse around the convergence of art and science, as well as our relationship to the natural world – a discourse essential to the examination of contemporary art and culture within the context of these broader challenges. For more information, please visit online at CYNTHIA-REEVES.com, or call 212 714 0044.