

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE | March 2, 2016 | Austin Forbord > austin@dzinestore.com

DZINE Gallery | #portrait | March 25, 2016 – September 25, 2016

Johnna Arnold, Nina Katz, Laura Levine, Danielle Nelson Mourning, Kari Orvik, Lucky Rapp, Jessie Thatcher, Matthew MacCaul Turner and Carolyn Quartermaine

The group exhibition #portrait is displayed concurrently with a solo exhibition of photographs by the renowned music portrait photographer Laura Levine, titled *Laura Levine: ALTHIPHOPINDYPUNK Picture Show: Intimate Portraits of the Music Scene, 1980-1995*.

Opening Reception:

DZINE Gallery

Friday, March 25, 6-9pm

128 Utah Street, San Francisco, CA 94103

DZINE Gallery is pleased to present #portrait, an exploration of the contemporary portrait in various media including painting on canvas, works on paper, contemporary photography utilizing the historical method of tintype, staged narrative photography, 20th century street photography, music portrait photography, iPhoneography, mixed media, video and 8mm short film.

How do people present themselves to the world? How does the artist or photographer approach the portrait to reveal the essence or inner psychology of a subject, or their own political, social, spiritual or aesthetic concerns? The nature of what constitutes a portrait engenders debate. Must a portrait include the face? What is the viewer's participation in defining and understanding a portrait? Artist Nina Katz, whose work is featured in this exhibition, says, "The portrait serves not so much to provide the answers to questions, but provides the questions themselves, and points to the importance of asking them."

The portrait has a long history in the art of Western tradition and has been used as a vehicle for allegory, an expression of power and propaganda, as personification of the state in coins and paper currency, and as advancing cultural aesthetic ideals and gender norms. The portrait can bring to life those who lived many centuries ago, such as the Fayum portraits that adorned mummy cases of Roman Egypt, the personages of Renaissance in portraits by Bronzino and Ghirlandaio, and as biography in Rembrandt's self portraits. *Vermeer's Girl with a Pearl Earring* was not considered a portrait at the time of its execution, but as a "tronie," or a character study not intended to depict an identifiable person. The portrait can upturn a royal court, such as Holbein's *Ann of Cleves* (1539), when England's Henry the VIII discovered that the portrait of his bride was far more flattering than the subject in person, and he forthwith had the marriage annulled. Or the portrait can provoke scandal, as in John Singer Sargent's *Madame X* (Madame Pierre Gatreau, 1884) with the figure's intense pallor and the erotic suggestion of one strap of Gatreau's dress dangling from her shoulder.

The invention of photography allowed for the democratization of the portrait, when many more people could afford to have their portrait taken, in both straightforward representations and in aesthetic composition. Beginning a career in the 1970s, photographer Cindy Sherman's conceptual portraits represent a kind of contemporary tronie in imagined film stills and character studies. Today, the portrait is a necessary tool in online social interaction, in facial recognition security surveillance, and in new formats including digital cameras and iPhoneography. Photo sharing sites such as Instagram have allowed for the globalization of portraiture in ways we have perhaps not yet comprehended. The artists in this exhibition utilize the portrait in their art in contemporary ways in painting, photography, mixed media, film and video and expand into new media and new definitions of the enduring artistic legacy that is the portrait.

San Francisco Bay artist Nina Katz presents a series of paintings on canvas for this exhibition. Katz says of her work, "What emerges is not so much a representation of the person, but a representation of the mystery, the 'unknowability' of each one that, in the end, is where the essence of all of us resides. I do not paint directly, but 'around' my subjects, to the point where each picture isolates them at the same time it emphasizes the ambiguity of what biography is in its essence." We are delighted to announce that Nina Katz has just been named a semifinalist for the prestigious BP Portrait Award by the National Portrait Gallery in London.

Photographer Kari Orvik presents a new work specially commissioned for this exhibition: a large-scale diptych titled *Millicent I and II*, a metal dye sublimation print from original tintype. Orvik incorporates the historical process of tintype in her work, but there is no historicism in Orvik's contemporary approach to portraiture. Orvik's compelling work creates new paradigms in her process and in representation of gender, ethnicity and social involvement. Orvik shares, "Mutual trust between the photographer and the subject is a big part of my process. There is a certain generosity that goes both ways. This is another aspect of documenting my neighborhood and the exchange between individuals. My biggest fear was in the history of objectification. I wanted this to be rooted in the exchange and in honesty. Originally, I was not going to include the face, but felt by the end of the session that could not be separated to maintain the idea behind the work. What I saw was a woman who was very comfortable in her body and confident in herself."

Danielle Nelson Mourning presents a series of works of photography, film and video that highlight the artist's shifts in psyche from 2005 to the present. In large-scale photographs taken in Marks, Mississippi and a super 8 film titled *Memories of a Pleasant Visit*, Mourning uses the self-portrait to honor her ancestry and explore "the veil of time" between the physical

and the supernatural. In *Infinitely Comforting*, a polyptych photograph shows the artist upside down with opaque skin and in a vintage dress, recalling the crucifixion. In *Enlightenment*, a large-scale work of photography enriched with gold leaf, the artist shows herself climbing a massive meditation dome in India. Mourning positions herself as her uncle who has chosen to live in silent meditation in the Himalayas for the last 20 years. Mourning says of her work, "What moves us and makes us feel human? I am inspired by the sacred feminine, the goddess in spiritual Christian texts. I experienced a paradigm shift by donning the clothes of a 1950's housewife, and in exploring the different roles of women in a spiritual path. My portraits are now more abstract, and the work shows an evolution to multidisciplinary work. In all the work there are issues of gender and psychology. My interest is in emotional work with an awareness of a woman's spirit and psyche."

Johnna Arnold presents a series of photographic self-portraits in urban and industrial settings. Arnold's work is concerned with the relationship between herself and massive networks of modern day efficiency, such as the freeway system. Arnold has previously shown at DZINE Gallery in the group exhibition, "...And Everything in Between," and has shown video work in the gallery's Pattern Language exhibition.

Architect, designer and fine art photographer Matthew MacCaul Turner presents his award winning series of photography, originally shot in Polaroid side film, that combine an interest in street photography and portraiture. In Turner's *Paris Metro* series, solitary figures in repose dissolve into the background of crumbling walls, where the figures themselves could be a torn and faded advertisement or a wisp of smoke. Turner creates a layered narrative, resurrecting collective memory by scavenging disused and decaying spaces and their transient inhabitants, lost in their own thoughts and in their environment. Turner unpredictably pushes the boundaries of a medium that responds to light, shadow and depth of field.

Lucky Rapp presents new work for this exhibition with a series of mixed media relief panels. Rapp's witty *Mustache* series plays with the idea of characteristics on a face that can alternately define a person as well as act as a disguise. In a large-scale work titled *Forever*, Rapp uses her own profile in a contemporary interpretation of the silhouette, a mode of portraiture popularized in the early 19th century.

Jessie Thatcher shows her process in her multiple aperture pinhole series with two works of photography that include her use of the iPhone for exploration and sharing, and a digital camera in the production of the series. Thatcher shares, "I look for found, everyday objects that can resemble a lens. The spontaneous quality of the iPhone allows for my exploration, and the ability to link to Instagram is integral to my process and documentation."

Acclaimed multidisciplinary artist Carolyn Quartermaine, whose work of photography has been featured in *Black and White* magazine and whose design work was recently on the cover of *Vogue Living*, presents two works of iPhoneography from a new series, *Chercheuse de Reves*. Photographed on location in Morocco, Quartermaine's photography is cinematic, recalling both the films of Nicholas Roeg and the early 20th century autochromes set in Morocco of French photographer, Gabriel Veyre. Quartermaine is interested in a longer, elliptical narrative in her work, where the images are mosaic-like montages of sensation and pause. In these self-portraits, Quartermaine presents character studies, employing accouterment and setting to advance narrative. Quartermaine shares her process while photographing in Morocco: "There is the flow, the swish, the shape, the glitter, and then you turn a corner and suddenly there is a building site obscured in red drapery, like a nomadic tent, an art piece...or a shadow."

The exhibition comes full circle, returning to Nina Katz and her series *Portraits: New York Times Obituaries, 2009-2010*. *The New York Times* obituaries are well known for their journalistic qualities. They capture history and feature individuals who are not, for the most part, household names but who have made a wrinkle in the social fabric. Captivated by these lives and their stories, Nina undertook a daily practice of drawing a portrait provided with each article. This process resulted in 365-sketched portraits in 12 Moleskine books from January 12, 2009-January 11, 2010. The close examination of each portrait provides an emotional and personal connection to each person's life. As the year wore on, thought was given to whom to add to the collection: should it be the boxer who, for a brief moment in the 1940's, carried the title, or the felon whose life is all but forgotten but whose crime is remembered? A portrait can be many things, and in this series Katz shows how a portrait can be about the entirety of a life and the human experience; the portrait has the potential to be a full and eloquent commentary of the human condition.

Combined with this group exhibition is a solo exhibition, Laura Levine: ALTHIPHOPINDYPUNK Picture Show: Intimate Portraits of the Music Scene, 1980-1995, the first San Francisco exhibition of the work of the acclaimed music photographer and multidisciplinary artist, Laura Levine. Levine's intimate photographic portraits of artists from the punk, early hip-hop, New Wave, No Wave, and early downtown New York City music scene of the 1980s have been previously exhibited at New York's *Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)*, *Steven Kasher Gallery*, and the *Brooklyn Museum*, and are in the permanent collections of the *Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Museum*, the *Museum of Fine Arts (Houston)*, and the *Smithsonian Institution's National Portrait Gallery*. Levine's work includes iconic images of Bjork, R.E.M., The Clash, Lou Reed & John Cale, Joey Ramone, Madonna, Iggy Pop & Chrissie Hynde, and Tina Weymouth & Grandmaster Flash, among others.

DZINE welcomes San Francisco based designer Chris Baisa as our featured designer for the exhibition, inaugurating our representation of Delinear, his line of modern, handcrafted rugs, in our showroom.