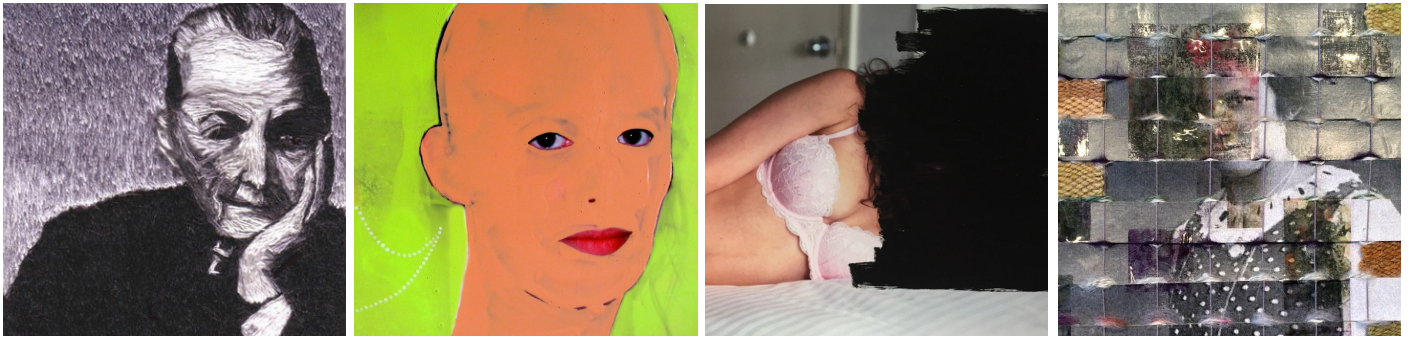


PERSONA: PROCESS PORTRAITURE

marcia goldenstein • judith page • leah schrager • gail skudera

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The Cluster Gallery is pleased to present “Persona: Process Portraiture”, a group exhibition featuring works by four contemporary artists, Marcia Goldenstein, Judith Page, Leah Schrager, and Gail Skudera. The exhibition will be on view from October 7 through October 28, 2017, with a public opening reception on October 7, 7-9pm.

Curated by T. Michael Martin, “Persona: Process Portraiture” brings together four contemporary artists currently working with and expanding the definition of portraiture through a variety of processes. In this exhibition, the work of Marcia Goldenstein, Judith Page, Leah Schrager, and Gail Skudera originates from photographic portraits that are physically manipulated or altered by combining other mediums and multiple techniques. Through this modification of found photographic images or original portraits the artist reveals new meanings and constructs new questions. The figure in each new piece is redefined and a different identity is revealed or left ambiguous, allowing the viewer freedom to compose new definitions.

Marcia Goldenstein recently created a series of stitched portraits of women artists. She states, “Representing women artists in ‘stitches’ is my metaphor for a laugh at the criticism they often encountered.” Choosing the traditional craft of embroidery and thread as her mark-making material Goldenstein ironically uses techniques and materials that are historically associated with “women’s work” to discuss the importance of her subjects and alter the perceptions of their identity through portraiture.

Each piece in the “Portraits in Plasma” series by Judith Page begins with a specific identifiable portrait of an individual that, after manipulation, morphs into an ambiguous and more expressive image. The blend of photography and painting enables Page to reveal more about the character of the subject than the original photograph. These changes can take place in a passionate explosion of paint, yet more often Page’s process is deliberate and meditative. She describes the results as “an expressive vision rather than a depiction.” The photographic fragments left visible and surrounded by paint are the eyes, mouth, teeth, and bits of skin. These fragments create what Page refers to as a “reliquary” where one can glimpse, through the layers of paint, the now vague identity left behind in the altered portrait.

Leah Schrager is invested in using her image and likeness in her art to expand the language of self-portraiture. Her current works start from portraits taken of her by studio assistants or photos originated from selfies. Schrager uses selfies as a conceptual basis to speak about new issues pertaining to gaze and censorship in art. Her photographic manipulations explore the artistic value and merit of these seemingly casual digital portraits. Schrager’s portraits emphasize an importance for society to consider these images as a florid kind of psychological investigation based historically in self-portraiture.

The process of weaving and layering animates Gail Skudera’s painted and collaged works. She begins with a found or family photograph, and then through multiple processes, weaving, drawing, photo-transfer, and collage, she alters the original image. Skudera deconstructs the photographic image and authors a new story within each piece through the application of varied processes. Nostalgia intertwines with the contemporary and blends into a narrative as viewers find themselves seeking a meaning and simultaneously projecting their desires and personal interpretations into the work.

– April 2018 Guest Curator: T. Michael Martin, Curator/Director of University Galleries at Murray State University

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