

Vanitas Contemporary Presents:

'PHORIA'

New works by Ferris Martinez

Opening: 10/09/21 // On view: 10/9-11/2



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909 Sutter st. San Francisco, CA 94109 // www.vanitascontemporary.com //

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Stemming from a childhood love of Renaissance art and graphic novels, the work of Ferris Martinez focuses largely around the representational, with particular emphasis given to portraiture and the human figure.

Recently this approach has shifted towards the incorporation of more abstract elements and less reliance on static reference materials, undergirded by a larger technical investigation into color and more intuitive mark making as seen through the prism of using figures from pop culture and friends as models.

This is part of a lifelong process of trying to describe the internal state, the vibrant impressions and forces – whether for better or worse – that rule us, that govern our perception of ourselves and outward expression. And while all art is - by its nature – at least somewhat reflexively descriptive of the individual maker, what is far more exciting is trying to externalize the intimate and the hidden of not just the artist, but of others as well.

PHORIA:

pho-ria | \ pfō-rē-ah \

any of various tendencies of the lines of vision to deviate from the normal when binocular fusion of the retinal images is prevented

To all things, there is a vibrant hidden
experience, an inner form that renders
and guides much of our ordered life.

This new body of work then seeks to remove some of the all-too-familiar polish, and to examine those kaleidoscopic eddies waiting just below the surface.

In Dialogue with Ferris Martinez

- Interview by Anastasia Burke for 'PHORIA'

Explain in two sentences the meaning of the show title.

From my esteemed internet research - so of course you know everything from here on out is sacrosanct - there are several different kinds of phoria, but generally speaking it is described as when one's eyes are not in alignment, which can result in several kinds of ocular conditions - such as double vision. What drew me to this word then, aside of course from the lovely sonic quality of it (phoria - just listen to that...there's something, I don't know, softly mythic about it), is how it implies hidden selves, how outward appearance doesn't necessarily comport to the internal, how there isn't one definite shape to any given thing; we can never see the whole form, but perhaps we can catch glimpses from time to time.

Same question as above, but elaborate on how it relates to your work.

This body of work (and if I think about it, just about everything I've ever painted) is to some degree an attempt to describe more than just surface appearance, more than just the reference material. To that end, I usually start with a concept, an emotion, and then I try to craft an image around that initial idea - the meaning comes first, and then I build the flesh around it. It's at this point - this synthesis of outward presentation and inner experience - that the work (albeit, not always) graduates from pigment on canvas, and starts to take on a dual existence: the obvious forward-facing luster, undergirded by a hidden (and hopefully more engaging) interior.

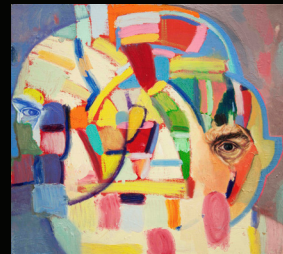
This is the heart of the show, that what we see is often just gossamer, concealing something far richer and engaging.

Why portraiture?

I've asked myself this question a lot lately - why, exactly, do I paint what I paint, especially since portraiture is such a well-trodden subject matter, that so many already do with such more skill than myself? I mean, that is a rather sardonic way of looking at things, but admittedly there is some truth to the statement.

I'm not really sure I consider myself a portrait painter, or if I am, it is not in the traditional sense. I think it is more that I am drawn to faces, or to be more exact, specific features of the face (eyes specifically), and how those elements can be used to communicate something beyond, or perhaps in addition to, the human form. I should also note that I find myself gravitating towards a more holistic method of art making, where I am less reliant on pure representation and am instead trying to embrace marks that are of a more spontaneous variety. Having that push and pull between rigour and rigidity, there is a lot of room for fun investigation in there, and it is increasingly where I find my attention going.

I suspect that once I get through with this upcoming show in October, the next body of work will be more expansive, and illustrative of all those diverse threads that excite me.



How did you feel when you realized your first one-man show would coincide with the entire country shutting down?’

Well, it may sound strange but I honestly didn’t think about the pandemic much within the context of the show. I was so excited just to have my work in a gallery, and so focused on completing everything, that I really didn’t have the mental bandwidth for anything else. I suppose some of that was influenced by the timing of the show in general – it took place in the Fall of 2020, so by then the quarantine lifestyle – staying inside, not seeing friends, masking up in public, all that – seemed normal.

Now, this isn’t to say I wasn’t bummed that pretty much no one was able to see the work in person – of course I was – but I guess that sentiment was buttressed by an overwhelming sense of gratitude – and frankly, glee (I mean, to see your work hanging in an austere gallery setting, nice lighting and all that – it’s fantastically validating) – to be able to achieve something I’ve wanted my whole life, while also being able to engage in any kind of normalcy, I couldn’t help but be pleased.

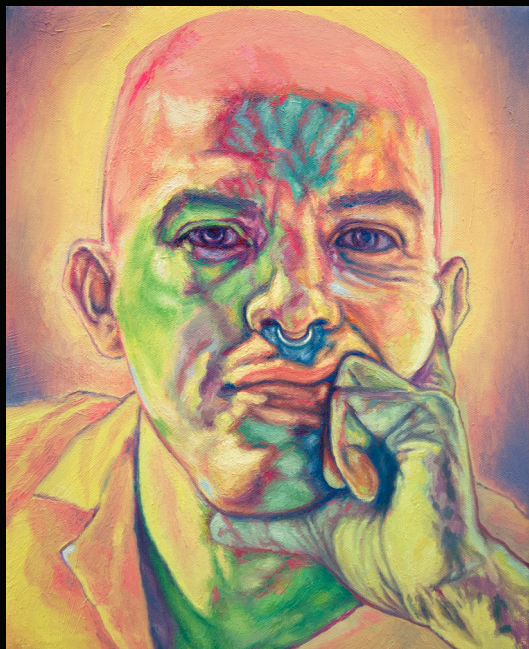
Does this second show feel like it’s a first?

Not exactly, but I guess it really doesn’t feel like a second show either; that first show didn’t really seem to end so much as it was just placed on an eternal pause, like someone holding their breath, or waiting for a sneeze that never comes. This go round is definitely informed by my experiences from last year, so perhaps it’s somewhere in between – maybe a show and half? Show 1, the sequel? It’s an interesting question; I’m curious to see how my thinking on this develops once people get a chance to actually engage with the work in person.



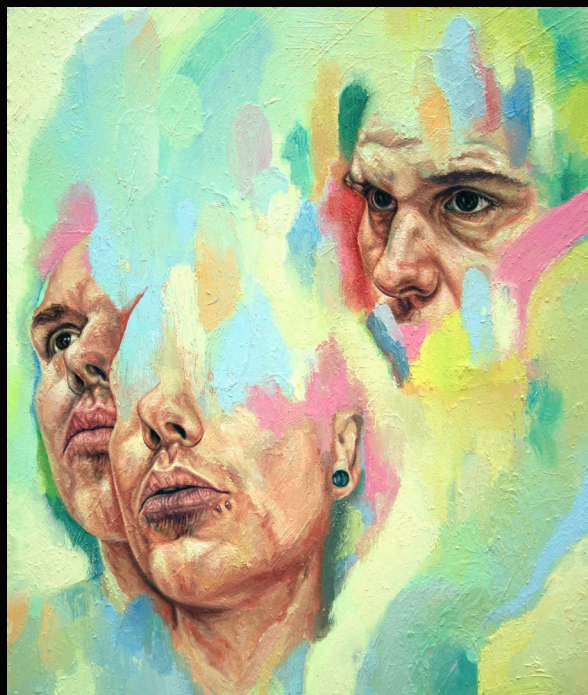
What did you take away from doing a virtual opening and is there anything you’ll apply in this opening?

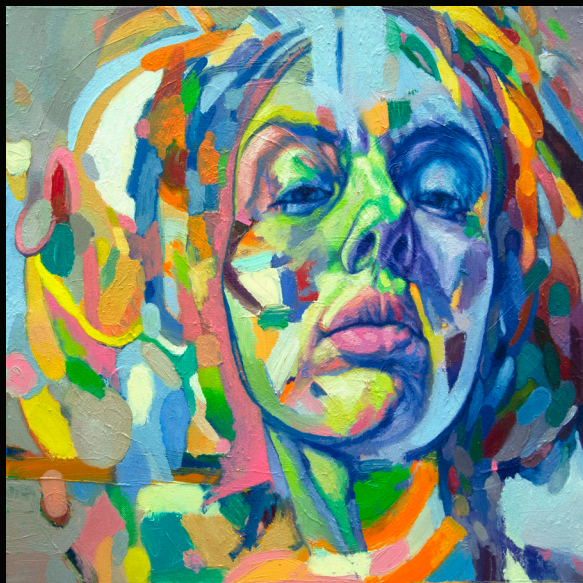
The thing that stands out for me most from that last show is just the sense of joy I felt, the sense of fun and accomplishment. I don’t know if this is a tacit admission of being able to compartmentalize external awful events to an unhealthy degree or if it’s just how I’m wired, but when we streaming (the camera, I should note, graciously held by the gallerist, John) everything that was happening outside fell away; I only wanted to tell people about the work, to communicate something of the pride I felt, and hopefully to show them something they would enjoy. So maybe that’s the major take away - to indulge in that moment, to recognize how cool it is to actually be in such a position - it’s one of privilege, borne out of hard work, but also of opportunity and odd tangential luck; there’s such a wonderful mystery to it all.



The Cultivar
Ferris Martinez
11" x 14"
Oil on canvas
Price: \$600

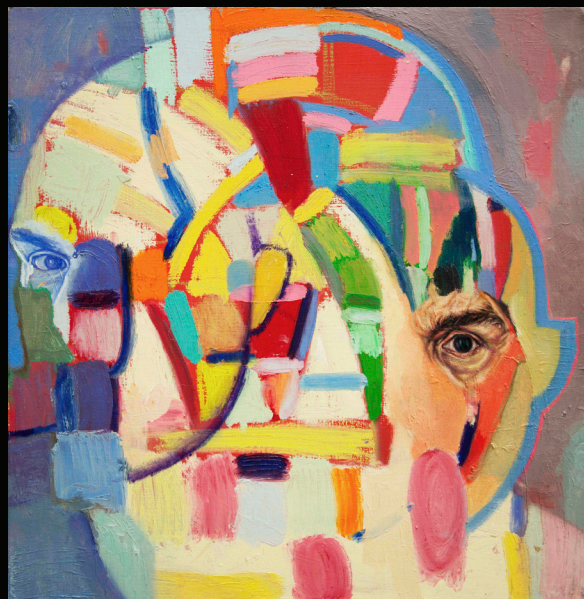
Aphantasia / Production
Ferris Martinez
20" x 24"
Oil on canvas
Price: \$900.00





The Oneiric / Stay
 Ferris Martinez
 20" x 24"
 Oil on canvas
 Price: \$850.00

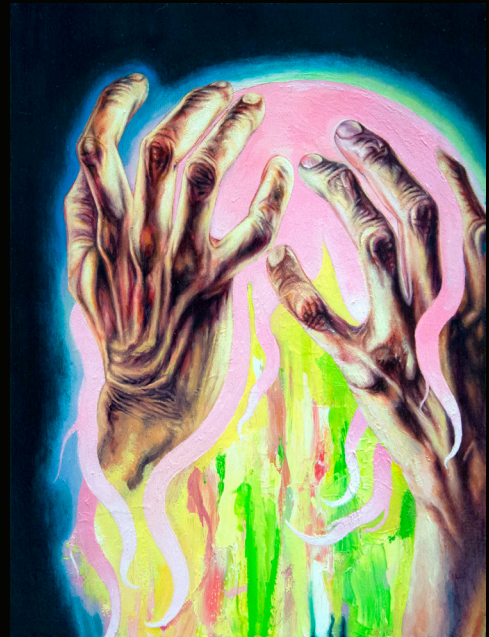
Anyhting / Everything
 Ferris Martinez
 24" x 24"
 Oil on canvas
 Price: \$1000.00





Hamarita
Ferris Martinez
16"x 20"
Oil on canvas
Price: \$800

Wolves
Ferris Martinez
Oil on canvas
16" x 20"
Price: \$800





The New Normal
 Ferris Martinez
 11"x 14"
 Oil on canvas
 Price: \$600

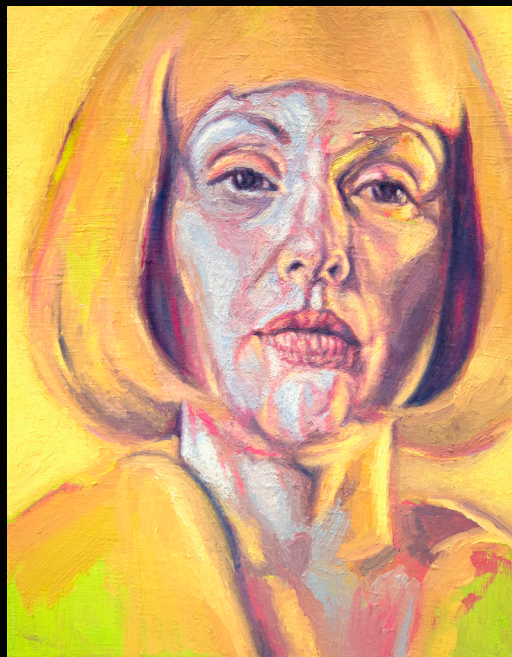
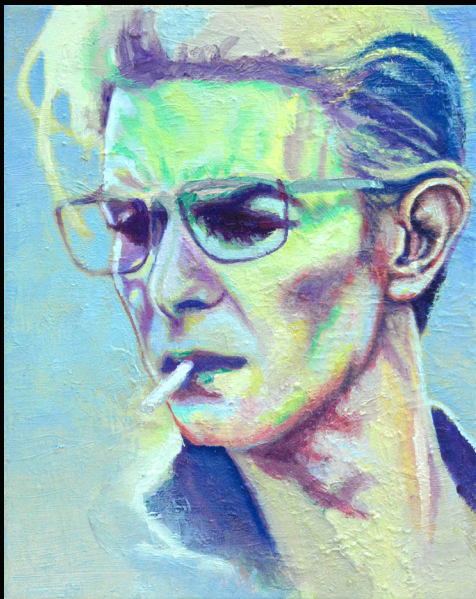


You Wouldn't Get It
 Ferris Martinez
 11" x 14"
 Oil on canvas
 Price: \$600



How do you Feel?
Ferris Martinez
10" x 8"
Oil on canvas
Price: \$500

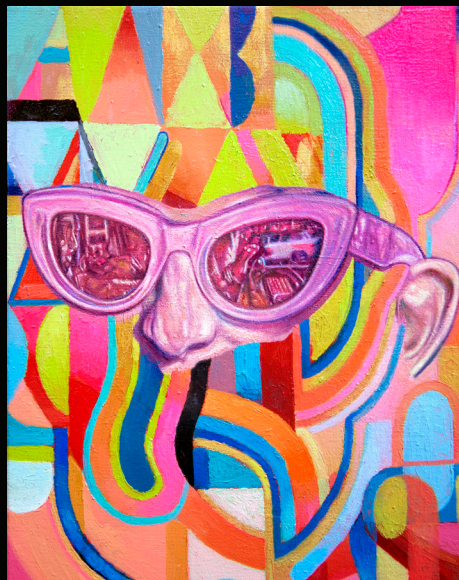
Don't be Fatuous, Jerry
Ferris Martinez
11" x 14"
Oil on canvas
Price: \$600



Baby, I've Been Breaking Glass in
Your Room Again, Listen
Ferris Martinez
12" x 16"
Oil on canvas
Price: \$650



Phoria
Ferris Martinez
8"x 10"
Oil on canvas
Price: 500



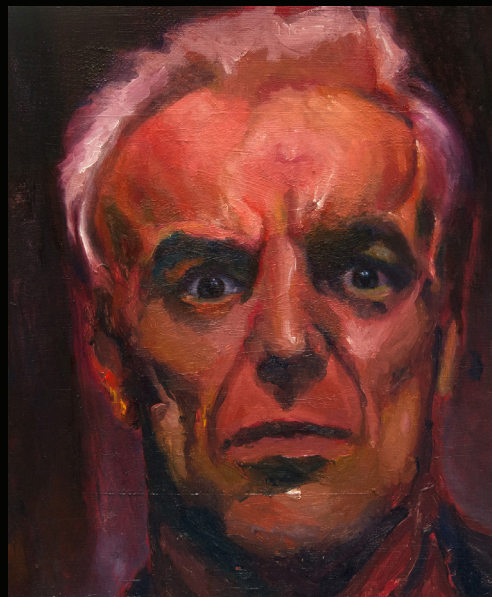
Farewell, Farewell
Ferris Martinez
11"x 14"
Oil on canvas
Price: 600



Brundlefly
 Ferris Martinez
 8"x 10"
 Oil on canvas
 Price: \$500

Leland, What Have You Done?
 Ferris Martinez
 16"x 20"
 Oil on canvas
 Price: \$800

From the Synthesis Series





Covet
Ferris Martinez
26"x 48"
Oil on canvas
Price: \$1500



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