

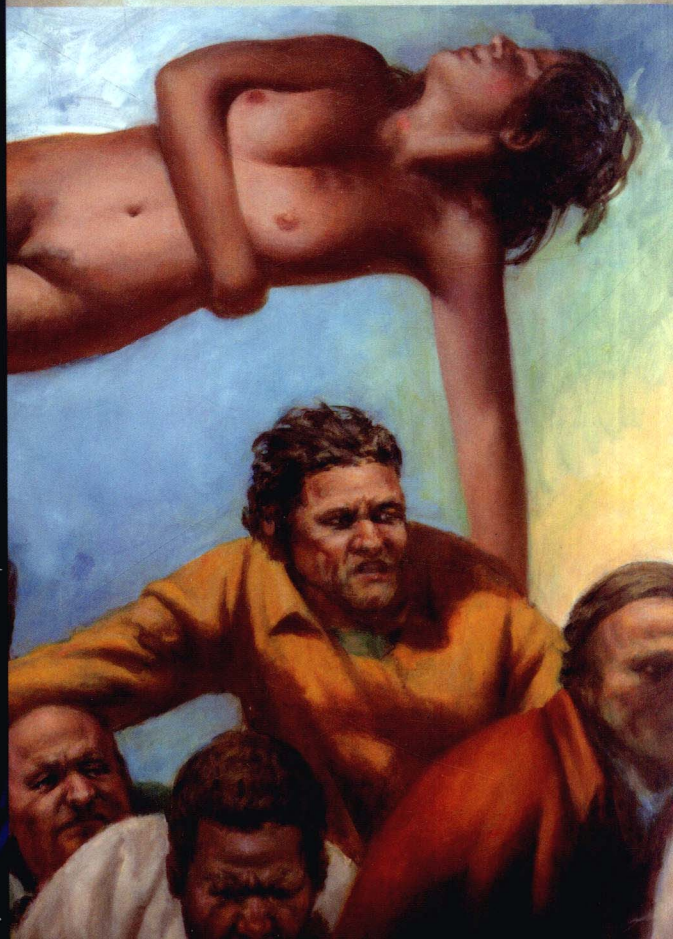
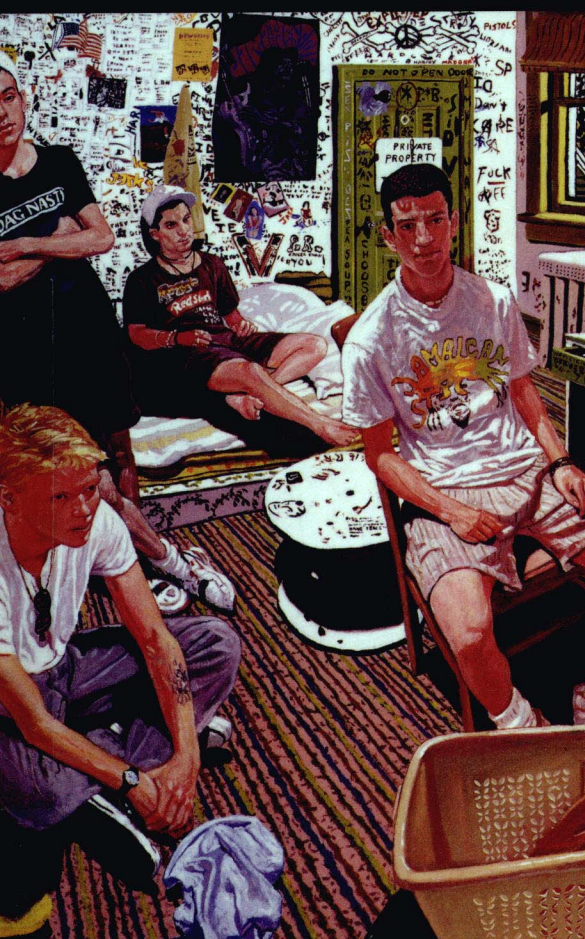
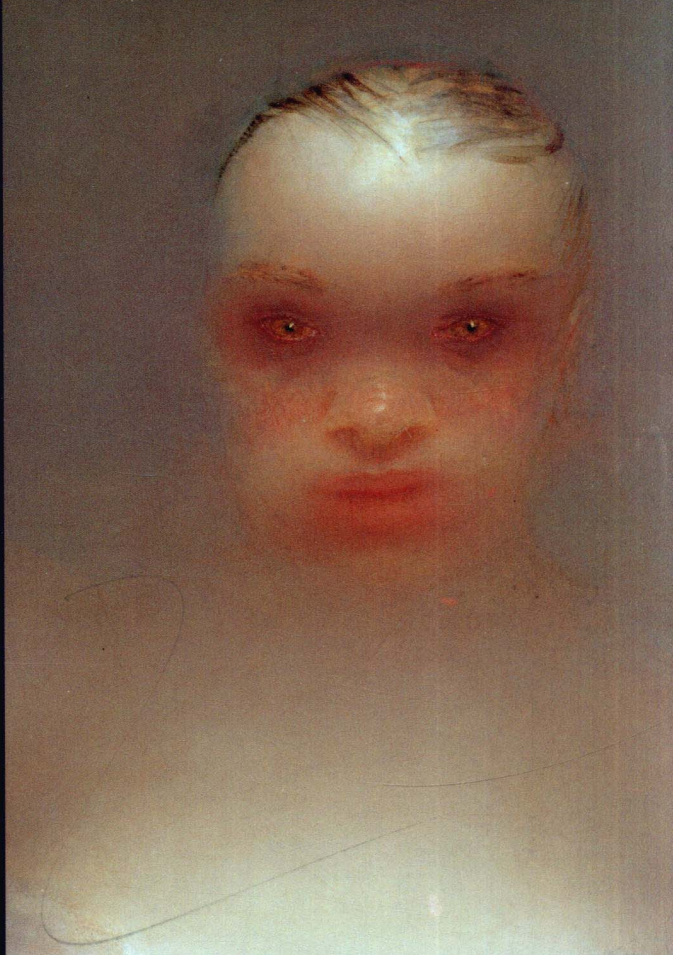
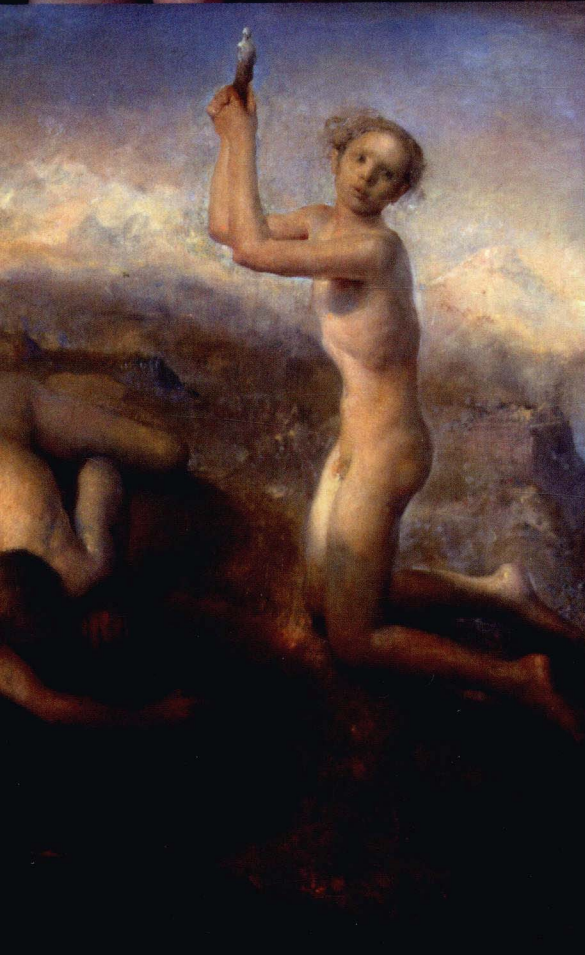


刘起民 编著 Edited by Qimin Liu

# 当代美国 人物画家选

## SELECTED CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN FIGURATIVE PAINTERS

天津人民美术出版社 (全国优秀出版社)  
TIANJIN PEOPLE'S FINE ARTS PUBLISHING HOUSE  
(STATE OUTSTANDING PUBLISHING HOUSE)





# 当代美国 人物画家选

SELECTED  
CONTEMPORARY  
AMERICAN  
FIGURATIVE  
PAINTERS

刘起民 编著 Edited by Qimin Liu

 天津人民美術出版社

(全国优秀出版社)

TIANJIN PEOPLE'S FINE ARTS PUBLISHING HOUSE  
(STATE OUTSTANDING PUBLISHING HOUSE)

图书在版编目(C I P)数据

当代美国人物画家选/刘起民编著. —天津: 天津人民  
美术出版社, 2009.9  
ISBN 978-7-5305-4180-1

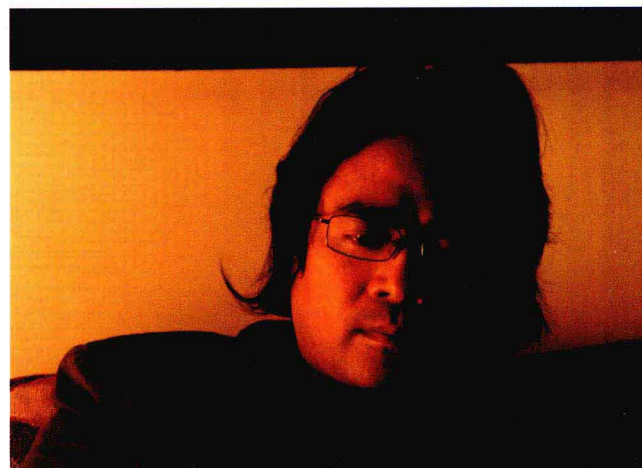
I.当... II.刘... III.油画: 肖像画—艺术评论—美国—现  
代 IV.J213.057.12

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2009)第155226号

当代美国人物画家选

出 版 人： 刘子瑞  
策划编辑： 张 胜  
责任编辑： 魏志刚  
技术编辑： 郑福生  
装帧设计： 张 胜  
魏志刚  
出版发行： 天津 人民美术出版社  
地 址： 天津市和平区马场道150号  
邮 编： 300050  
网 址： www.tjrm.cn  
电 话： (022) 23283867  
经 销： 全国新华书店经销  
印 制： 北京嘉彩印刷有限公司  
版 次： 2009年10月第1版 第1次印刷  
开 本： 787×1092毫米 1/8  
印 张： 18.5  
印 数： 1—3500  
定 价： 165.00元

版权所有 侵权必究



刘起民近照 摄影 陶立勤  
Portrait of Editor Photo by Steve Tao

## 编者小传

刘起民，1964年生于黑龙江省双鸭山市。1985年毕业于哈尔滨师范大学美术系专科，获结业证书；1991年毕业于中国戏曲学院舞美系本科，获学士学位；同年12月赴美学习深造，1997年获衣荷华州立大学艺术设计学院绘画/素描/版画专业文学硕士，1999年获宾夕法尼亚美术学院绘画专业艺术硕士。旅美早期曾着重于版画创作，尤其是石版，铜版，及独幅版画的创作。在宾夕法尼亚美术学院雕塑系工作期间对石雕、铸铜、电焊等技术也产生浓厚兴趣。1996年后开始重点从事素描、油画、丙烯的绘画形式与材料的探索；同时开始对美国人物绘画的历史与现状进行了系统的研究。先后主要师从美国教育家、波普画家布鲁斯·史密斯（Bruce Smith），后现代丙烯、蛋彩绘画巨匠杰欧斯·克什邦伯（Jules Kirschenbaum），美国当代现实主义绘画大师辛迪尼·顾德曼（Sidney Goodman），观念具象新星文森特·戴瑟德瑞欧（Vincent Deserdrio），古风主义与印象色彩结合的肖像巨匠耐尔森·善克斯（Nelson Shanks），挪威当代人物绘画巨匠奥德·诺爵姆（Odd Nerdrum）；并先后受益于数十位当代卓越的前卫艺术家、理论家、艺评家的讲座。例如：维涂·鄂康奇（Vito Acconci）、夏伯洛·吉欧（Joel Shapiro）、凯凯·史密斯（Kiki Smith）、唐纳德·科思伯特（Donald Kuspit）、罗伯特·休思（Robert Hughes）、彼得·普莱金（Peter Plagens）、苏哲·盖布丽克（Suzi Gablik）等等。

刘起民兼融东西方文化教育的精华，并综合东西方艺术的理论基础与实践，一向在艺术创作原则与题材上坚持艺术家应该致力于具有积极意义的方向。特别近十年来，一直投注于连续进程中的美国无家人系列组画创作，特别是他把艺术创作过程和结果作为一体的艺术宗旨指导他的主题性创作行为。自1997年以来先后参加了50多次个展和联展，其中包括多次艺术博物馆的联展。其思考性的独幅画系列组合深化了他多年来一直关心的艺术理念的探索，尤其其他含蓄的对人性积极层面的着意与挖掘，50多次被美国新闻、报纸杂志、广播电视等媒体报道。先后荣获多次全美及区域绘画竞赛展的奖励和荣誉。并荣获1999年度费城青年挑战艺术家，1999年度佛尔蒙特艺术中心福瑞门亚洲艺术家创作基金，2000年度宾州独立基金会艺术家和创作基金。1997年—1999年曾工作于费城宾夕法尼亚美术学院雕塑工作室，2000年春季兼职宾州费城大学艺术学院基础教研室。自2000年9月起至今任美国康涅狄格州东方州立大学教授，2006年荣获该校终身教授。

## About the Editor

Born in Heilongjiang Province, China in 1964, Qimin Liu earned a Teaching Certificate from Haerbin Normal University (1985), a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Institute of Chinese Traditional Opera (1991). In December 1991 he relocated to the United States, where he received a Master of Arts from Iowa State University (1997), and a Master of Fine Arts from Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (1999). Liu is best known for his figurative work and has studied with several prominent American contemporary artists, including Sidney Goodman, Vincent Desiderio, Jules Kirschenbaum, and Bruce Smith. Most recently, he has worked with Nelson Shanks and Norwegian master painter Odd Nerdrum.

Liu is a tenured associate professor at Eastern Connecticut State University, where he has taught painting and drawing since 2000. He has also served as an adjunct professor at Philadelphia University.

Since 1997, Liu has been working on a project depicting the homeless people in America's inner cities. His subjects are transient individuals who most often struggle with mental and physical disabilities and substance abuse. Over the years, Liu's effort to capture the diversity and vitality of poor neighborhoods through his figurative paintings has contributed greatly to a meaningful discourse on contemporary art issues.

Liu's work has been displayed in more than fifty exhibits across the United States, and has garnered praise from the New York Times, the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Hartford Courant, among others. His exhibits have included "Connecticut Contemporary" at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, Connecticut and "10 Contemporary Artists 5x2" at the Allentown Art Museum in Pennsylvania. He has won more than two dozen awards, honors and grants, including the Asian Artist Fellowship from the Freeman Foundation, Vermont Studio Center, Vermont, and the Artist Fellowship from the Independent Foundation in Philadelphia. In their nomination of Liu for an Independent Foundation fellowship, the Creative Artist Network said, "Liu's document of the plight of our poor, through the power of the images, gives a compelling dignity that cannot be ignored."



## 重唤朴素、真挚、深邃的绘画品格

自现代主义及后现代主义艺术创作理论兴盛的一百多年来，绘画观念、形式、材料产生了巨大的变化，尤其是自上世纪80年代起全球不同层面的政治，外交对话与经济、文化、科技的交流促进了世界各国，特别是发展中国家艺术创作多元化形态发展；中国多年来的经济体制的改革和政治、文化领域的开放为艺术家提供活跃的创作空间与环境。一方面，美术界呈现出了百花齐放，百鸟争鸣局面，另一方面，利欲熏心的商品经济与新奇驱纵的新闻效应等现象，造成部分哗众取宠的画家或艺术家利用中外媒体的“炒作”，一跃标榜为人文思想的启蒙者与哲人，其中唯利是图、标新立异的艺术行为层出不穷，几乎是你魔高一尺，我道高一丈。特别是近三十年来艺术家对政治体制、文化习俗、伦理道德的反思，恰与仰慕美国和欧洲所谓主流审美风尚的情绪合二为一，滋生了部分捧奉粗俗的轻浮艺术现象。因此，不乏市场得宠的玩世不恭的“政治招贴”、“装饰漫画”、品味粗俗的“行为艺术”、“流行时尚”等等风潮在欧美有心有意的金钱与道义的支佐下成为名利双收的新贵。其实不难想象已在黄泉下的沃昊（Andy Warhol）都会诧异一代代中国艺术家对毛泽东形象的情结；杜桑（Marcel Duchamp）也会厌倦了工业产品（现成品）不断地经过包装、改装后成为高价暴利的高档艺术；传统学院风格受宠的降调促使了不乏急于求成的艺术道路的朝圣者以展示自己的精美裸体或以别出心裁的惊奇出招公开展示压抑的个人隐私，很快越位为中外瞩目的前卫艺术家和具有自由主义精神的思想者，更不乏假大空的综合材料组合和放大，牵强附会的中西文化生态嫁接等通过理论能手或策展企业家巧设题目后鱼目混珠地传释成为现阶段启蒙大众精神的艺术行为，或说教成寓意深远的多元文化融会的象征和图解。少数投机画家、艺术家们成功的市场运作，更加深了处于唯利是图的商品经济大环境下的大部分画家在创作上的困惑与挣扎。近来一些有良知的艺评家对艺术评论界的失望，对此本人也深有同感。

美国绘画界也经历过了不同程度类似情况，二战的胜利带给了美国人民精神上的狂喜和民族的自豪感，工业、科技的飞速发展奠定了美国国际上新霸主地位的政经基础，寻找和确立民主性的，自由意志的文化艺术形态成为美国冷战政治和文化定位需要。另一个重要方面，流亡和逃避战乱的旅美欧洲艺术家和理论家使美国发展中的现代艺术充进新的活力。由冷战推动的经济发展与劳工组织运动的兴起增加美国新兴中产阶级的人口数量，新兴中产阶级对艺术品需求与参与意识某种意义上促成艺术创作的通俗性、装饰性、商品性特征。高度的工业文明，信息产业革命，科学技术的飞速发展，丰富了创作艺术形式与手法，特别是相继崛起的人权运动，反种族主义，性解放潮流，环保意识，生态忧患，女权运动等等社会议题促进了艺术行为多方位与艺术创作观念的不断翻新。总之，二战后美国的绘画及其他各种艺术形式形成了空前的多样化状态。但是，也滋长了极端个人主义的行为泛滥，艺术家精神生活的空虚和放纵更助长了泛滥全美所谓经验性的、观念性的、反技巧的，甚至低品味的艺术风尚；某种程度上这种片面的重过程而轻结果，或者偏观念而略工艺，或者讲材料而乏内涵深度等等极端与边缘的创作理念、艺术形式、艺术行为，包括偏激的艺术理论发明家成为艺术书刊、媒体追踪与关注的焦点。视觉艺术几乎变为说教性的电教装置，或多人参与的工业机器制造。大部分绘画成为意识形态广告宣传式的图解；毒品、大麻、醉酒作用后的随意的涂抹与意外之喜常常吹捧为绘画界新空气；视觉艺术家成为精神产品的制作商或合同中介人，或“戏剧导演”、“电影制片商”。许多有影响力的画廊与展览馆（艺术商品的企事业）策划的展览大多以偏重主题说教的综合材料而取代了带有技巧性的传统绘画形式，甚至赏心悦目

的审美，技巧性的绘画形式被扭曲的“大而丑”的涂鸦、平涂取而代之，画廊展出作品只有极少部分是具有传统工艺性的绘画形式与内容。有传统底蕴的绘画似乎在逻辑上被认为是次等艺术，偏重绘画传统的工艺性被视为是低俗匠气画作。而所谓大部分低质量的所谓新形式、新观念、新材料、新科技等被认可为高雅的文人气的思想型的艺术家作品；举政治条幅的，或者行为自虐等出乎意料的艺术形式成为边缘的“前卫性艺术”。绘画概念、艺术定义成为画家创作探讨的内容；而传统绘画形式与审美原则成为一些艺术家、艺评家“新艺术”革命的靶子，上述的艺术现象或多或少地造成传统绘画形式危机，特别是人物绘画危机。因此酷爱传统绘画形式，讲究技巧的现实主义，包括具象形式的画家进入了一个“绘画死亡论”黑暗时期。尽管如此，美国还是不断地出现了一代代致力于继承前提下创新的，而又不断提高技能、技巧的人物画家。本画集选中的七位当代美国人物画家和一位欧洲当代画家就是这个群体里的优异代表，这八位画家的作品跨度近五十年，并先后在尊重绘画传统继承中形成鲜明的个人风格，他们也从不同层面反映时代的多元文化精神，也在不同程度参与着艺术创作理论与艺术观念的探讨；同时以真挚情感关注人类社会共同关心的社会问题，在内容上历史性的继续拓展着人物绘画的主题。遗憾的是大量通俗的低品味作品，以所谓的主流艺术商标倾销中国画界，在中外新闻媒体、艺评家共同推崇炒作下伴随着商品经济的意识形态成为引导启发前卫艺术家创作的源泉。令人悲哀的是这种现象如同廉价而又多食无益的麦当劳汉堡、肯德基一样或多或少地成为不明真相的青年人推崇为舶来的流行“健康食品”，或食之为傲的“精神食品”。由于媒体导向的倾向性，艺术评论的随波逐流，艺术价值观念的金钱至上，及一定程度的欧美后冷战策略在中国改革开放初期意识形态上潜移默化渗透等多种因素，主客观地为贪图名利的“玩艺术”的浮躁学术情绪提供了土壤与环境，滋长了大批短期效益，哗众取宠的艺术品商人。相反，大批的辛勤耕耘、不断提高艺术技能与技巧的踏实而又真诚的画家却相对宣传得极其有限。而且中国画界也不时地流行着“欧美没有好画家”，或“美国人不会画画”的时髦误评。事实上，尽管美国经历近百年此起彼伏的艺术创新浪潮，但是，欧洲古典具象写实主义的审美传统与明暗立体造型因素在欧洲移民为主体文化积淀里有着深厚的基础。在美国至今大多数艺术爱好者是看不懂现代艺术，或边缘的后现代艺术，更对形式主义的观念性作品不知如何欣赏。艺术爱好者往往是通过阅读艺术家的艺术陈述或艺评家讲解后才能似懂非懂地理解现代艺术和后现代艺术；尤其是各种五花八门的所谓“新艺术”，艺术爱好者的艺术参与行为往往是艺术家及艺评家引导下的被动活动。由于绘画界对“新艺术”样式与“泛艺术观念”的再审视，美国大众对传统绘画风格，样式欣赏与偏爱逐步地回升。在旅居美国的18个年头中，我到过许多城镇及边远地区，其中各地的许多民间绘画组织及个人盛行着从事传统绘画材料的学习、研究与创作，虽然不像严谨的中国学院素描训练，但色彩风格、造型品味都非常到位。特别是上个世纪90年代，众多艺术家、艺评家对矫揉造作的形式花样的翻新，及新、奇、怪等创作理论造成的泛艺术品现象开始自省与质疑，各种传统绘画形式、材料的创作开始复苏，人物绘画方面更出现大批风格各异的令人兴奋的局面。自2004年夏起，我曾应中国数家专业美术学院和综合艺术大学的邀请进行了多次关于“美国当代现实主义画家”讲评，内容包括近五十年来有影响有成就的三十几位主要人物画家，其中也包括了精选的5位活跃于美国画坛的欧洲画家。这个讲座是我在美国十多年来学习、工作以来进行欧美近代现实主义绘画，主要是美国百年写实绘画部分研究考察的当代部分。本来想在这个研究的基础上编汇一本较全面关于美国近代人物绘画选，但是，又觉得工程太



大，耗精耗力而影响自己的创作时间，所以就想暂时先着重介绍近十几年来数位对我的艺术创作态度与创作形式有影响的现实主义人物画家。他们有的是我研究生期间的导师，或是受益画家和敬仰朋友，其中包括辛迪尼·顾德曼（Sidney Goodman）、文森特·戴瑟德瑞欧（Vincent Deserdrio）、奥德·诺爵姆（Odd Nerdrum）、史蒂文·厄塞欧（Steven Assael）、耐尔森·善克斯（Nelson Shanks）、麦欧·莱普伊格（Mel Leipzig）、苏珊娜·卡菲（Susanna Coffey）、安尼·海瑞丝（Anne Harris），其中七位是不同年纪但又都是至今活跃当今艺坛有影响的美国画家；只有奥德·诺爵姆一人是我特邀的欧洲画家，但他近十几年来在美国的艺术活动却相当的广泛与频繁。他们共同的特点是基于传统的绘画材料与形式，艺术语言朴素，创作态度诚恳、真挚。而且每个人对中世纪以来的传统绘画技巧在继承或借鉴的基础上又各有千秋地拓展与创新，同时也都不同程度地吸收了现代绘画创作观念和形式中的优点，不同程度地运用象征、隐喻、写实、抒情、诙谐等手法针对自己及周围政治文化、艺术生活等时代敏感的问题有感而发。由于其中每个画家对传统与现代的探索侧重各异，所以本画集选录八位画家又具有明显的个性特征，年近古稀的辛迪尼·顾德曼是一位当代承前启后的卓越的绘画、素描大师，在抽象绘画盛行的上世纪60年代，他以突破性简练色块、表现性笔触表现美国社会生活从城市到城郊开发特殊阶段，而且观念性把两幅构图相似、内容一致的创作联幅并展，拓展画面空间与内涵，他不但在吸收欧洲人物大师的基础上继承美国绘画直率画法，而且也摆脱了学院的僵死刻板物象的繁琐描摹。他寓意深刻，涉猎广泛的社会主题继承，发展着汤玛斯·厄肯斯（Thomas Eakins）、罗伯特·亨利（Robert Henri）、约翰·史隆（John Sloan）等美国费城人物绘画的传统。他的粗犷、凝重、朴拙、寓意诙谐的画风影响了一代代画家。文森特·戴瑟德瑞欧是一位崛起的中年艺术家，早年追逐威廉姆·迪·库宁（Willem De Kooning）表现抽象主义风格，后来热衷于观念写实，是一位有思想性的，并在理论上造诣深厚的实力画家，近年来他的巨幅创作以高超的绘画材料的把握和对艺术评论的参与引起了艺术理论界与绘画界关注，家庭意外事故加深了他作品感情力度，超越时空的艺术思索和严谨治学态度赢得了艺术界尊敬，成为目前美国画坛上后现代观念主义创作有影响的一颗新星。史蒂文·厄塞欧是美国画界公认的一位有思想的，技巧纯熟的写实主义人物画家，他对美国普通人非主流文化的感情使他画布上的人物坚实朴素，凝重真挚。他熟练轻松的笔法、丰富的光色，以及天才的素描能力是美国画界极少有的。耐尔森·善克斯是另外一位独具特色的绘画巨匠，他明亮的印象色感，简洁明确的色块与古典主义的严谨造型，有力又含蓄的笔法使他的皇室、富豪的肖像画受到世界各国艺术家、艺术爱好者的尊敬。奥德·诺爵姆在神秘气氛烘托中的敏感的哲理性的主题，再加上他独特绘画风貌与技巧引导了当代大批艺术家对古典技巧与内容的重新认识。他对古典绘画的深厚认知，和对艺术哲学的博识使他的绘画充满理性。他最近提倡的艺术作品应追求超越时空的永恒格调影响着世界各地的大批年轻画家。另一位古稀的画家，艺术史教育家麦欧·莱普伊格早年就在耶鲁大学师从色彩理论家约瑟夫·爱伯斯（Josef Albers），后钻研人物绘画。近年来一直运用有限的三原色描绘记录他朋友与家人的生活场面，其作品透视奇特、构图繁琐而不腻、自然天成。苏珊娜·卡菲，安尼·海瑞丝，是两位不同年龄段的女画家，她们都各自以独特而敏感的视角描绘与关心着女权、女性等方面的主题，而且绘画的手法与技巧以鲜明风格充满着吸引力。

总之，这本书的主要目的是通过介绍一些本人较了解的又

具有朴素真挚的绘画品格的画家与作品，为中国人物绘画爱好者提供一本高质量的参考书，也希望这本书能给一批酷爱绘画艺术的耕耘者一些鼓励。值得指出的是，这本画集不是美国人物绘画的全面介绍，更没有收录除奥德·诺爵姆以外的更多欧洲画家，只是我本人所尊敬推崇的坦诚、扎实的人物画家中的一部分。最初，此书的初衷旨在收录一些我所熟悉与交往的美国画家，但是，在编纂期间，我曾到奥德·诺爵姆的欧洲画室进修两个多月，对他的为人与艺术创作都有了多方了解，所以向他表示希望他也能参与此书，他欣然同意。造成此书原名的不妥，但因其本人对书名及自己国籍并不在意。并嬉语解嘲：“我生于瑞典，成长在挪威，是冰岛公民；但我的画廊在美国，我的创作为美国所爱，我应该是当代美国画家。”因为征得奥德的同意，所以书名未加改动。

值得申明的是，本书并无意在反对多元化画家与艺术家对各种“主义”的追求与思考的意向。相反，我对国内大批优秀画家、艺术家的成就与探索深有敬意。只是为在盲目的多元化的艺术探索中产生的伪劣品相反地被夸大宣传，并被艺商的超高定价的暴利而感到悲哀。也许只是对被唯利是图动机驱使下的投机的艺术家与并非无辜的艺术创作态度的失望。我也不想误导此书收录的画家是唯一的优异的画风，只是想介绍一些媒体着笔不多的具有绘画传统又成就突出的人物画家。通过我了解的这些画家的创作成果借以呼唤一种朴素真挚的绘画品格。

最后，在此书同读者见面之时我想向为此书编辑、出版过程中做出贡献的有关人士表示感谢。首先，本书中的作品主要是根据画家本人和画家代理画廊提供的图片中选编的，在选编的过程中得到了画家、画家工作室及代理画家的画廊大量支持与协助。其中包括：史蒂文·厄塞欧工作室（Steven Assael Studio）、奥德·诺爵姆工作室（Odd Nerdrum Studio）、纽约发奥姆画廊（Forum Gallery）、苏珊娜·卡菲工作室（Susanna Coffey Studio）、纽约提本·迪·耐画廊（Tibon de Nagy Gallery）、文森特·戴瑟德瑞欧工作室（Vincent Deserdrio Studio）、纽约玛博欧画廊（Marlborough Gallery, New York）、辛迪尼·顾德曼工作室（Sidney Goodman Studio）、纽约ACA画廊（ACA Galleries, New York）、安尼·海瑞丝工作室（Anne Harris Studio）、纽约DC摩尔和波士顿尼尔森（DC Moore Gallery, New York & Neilson Gallery, Boston）、麦欧·莱普伊格工作室（Mel Leipzig Studio）、纽约亨诺克画廊（Hench Gallery, New York）、耐尔森·善克斯工作室（Nelson Shanks Studio）。

另外，我也感谢对此书的出版编纂过程中给予大量支持和协作的天津人民美术出版社，包括社长刘子瑞先生，前社长刘建平先生对此书编撰的重视，好友张胜先生对这本画集的前期策划等贡献，执行编辑魏志刚先生，他在排版、装帧、校对等方面的工作给予的支持。另外，我也感谢我的好友美术史论家杰茜卡·努南（Jessica Noonan），作家、诗人米希尔·库珀（Michele Cooper），对此书英文校对方面作的许多贡献。没有上述朋友及同道对此书时间与精力的奉献，特别是我夫人李雪博士多方面的支持和努力，大概这本书稿还会存放在我的办公桌上。

最后仅以此书献给我的快乐成长的儿子刘羽晖！

刘起民  
2009年8月于美国康州



# Introduction

## PERSONAL BACKGROUND

I grew up and received my college education in China, where I remained until late 1991. I was very curious about what was happening in the contemporary art world, but I had very little access to it. With a limited education in contemporary art, I struggled and suffered. Knowing I was missing the exposure to contemporary artists and artworks I wanted to study and enjoy, I struggled a great deal trying to find my way to the artists' world.

In 1991, I came to the United States to continue my artistic education. This was a wonderful opportunity for me, and fortunately, since my arrival, I have had the great privilege of studying with a group of highly successful and important contemporary figurative painters such as Bruce Smith, Jules Kirschenbaum (1930-2000), Sidney Goodman, Vincent Desiderio, Nelson Shanks, and Odd Nerdrum (European). At the same time, I benefited from the many lectures and studio critiques offered by established artists and critics, such as, Marina Abramovic, Kiki Smith, Vito Acconci, Donald Kuspit, Suzi Gablik, Peter Plagens, and Robert Hughes. I was also inspired by many successful figurative painters, among whom are Steven Assael, Susanna Coffey, and Mel Leipzig. Some of their works are highlighted in this book.

## HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE WITH FIGURATIVE ART IN THE U.S.

During the more than 18 years of studying and teaching in the U.S., I have gained a broad spectrum of first-hand experience with the major artistic movements and productive creativity throughout the country. After several years of living in a multicultural society laden with pop images, I realized my passion to become a better figurative painter and to promote American figurative painting in China.

In addition to developing as a painter, I have had generous and timely opportunities to lecture at several universities and artist groups in China. During the process, I discovered that many of the students were confused about American contemporary figurative painters because they were

saturated with small fragments of information gleaned from Chinese artists who had visited America for very short periods of time. These artists never gathered the whole picture or even a serious idea about American figurative painting as it is currently practiced.

This kind of ignorance could be also be due to misleading articles and programs offered by popular mass media, where the commentators are often more interested in presenting "something new" than presenting something in depth. As a result, I often heard that "America has no great figurative painters". This criticism inspired me to curate this book and demonstrate the immensely rich contribution of contemporary American figurative artists. I argue that not only does America have great abstract painters, but it also has many great figurative painters as well.

## MAKING SELECTIONS FOR THIS BOOK

I selected a group of cross-generational artists, some of whom have been very successful since the late 1960s while others are younger but equally productive and influential. The group includes Sidney Goodman, Vincent Desiderio, Mel Leipzig, Steven Assael, Nelson Shanks, Susanna Coffey, Anne Harris, and Norwegian-born Icelandic painter Odd Nerdrum, a special inclusion. Nerdrum is not an American citizen, but is nevertheless a very active painter in America. He was the final addition and a special inclusion to this collection.

Why was Nerdrum included with this group of American artists? In the summer of 2005, I was a resident artist at the Odd Nerdrum Studio in Norway. I mentioned to him that I was curating a book introducing American figurative painters to the artists of China, and that I hoped the book would function as a guide for the current generation of Chinese students and painters who, like me before, did not have an access contemporary American figurative painting. I asked if he wanted to participate in this book and told him I might reconsider the word "American" in the book title if he were to be included in the book. He was very pleased by the invitation, and, surprisingly, was OK with the original title. He said, "I am OK with the title. I am not Norwegian. I live in Iceland, my art dealer is American, and my work has been loved by Americans. I am an



American painter." His explanation may have been half in humor, but I understood what he was saying and decided to keep the original title. Nerdrum is undoubtedly one of the most respected figurative painters in the American artistic community and beyond, and his inclusion made the selected group more complete.

As a painter, I consider myself the curator for this book rather than an author and critic. In the selected contents, I show the range of similarity and differences in concept and techniques among the artists represented. Together, their work provides a survey of American realism produced with great mastery. While each individual approach is influenced by modern and postmodern conditions, all of the artists developed unique and refreshing styles that are challenging but rewarding to examine, compare and contrast. The subject matter mastered by each artist reflects ordinary American concerns as well as the individual's physical and spiritual life. Every piece of work included in the selection tends to have great deal of harmony in form and content. I hope the selection will be like an open window allowing Chinese artists to see and understand the aesthetic scenery of American realism.

## A GUIDE FOR CHINESE ARTISTS

I hope this book will not only meaningfully impact and contribute to American figurative painting landscape, but also have significant impact on China's artist communities. This book is especially relevant for the large population of artists living and working in China, and will complement all of the other styles that have influenced China's artistic movements. Although global communication is now easier through the internet and creativity is now much more open in Chinese society, I believe the majority of people will enjoy a chance to see the work of an important group of masterful American figurative painters and return to the images many times.

The other significant purpose of introducing this selection to China is to encourage artists who still struggle as contemporary painters. Over the last twenty years, China has experienced tremendous political and economic changes. As a result, much ideology and many movements, such as Photorealism, Dada, Pop, and Cynicism, have been

adopted by Chinese artists, who can now explore different ideas and materials under the postmodern influence. With artists enjoying a freer creative environment, the products of artistic creativity have naturally diversified. On the other hand, many artists who are labeled with "-isms" or are called "avant-garde" have profited a great deal from their work being collected by money-driven art museums, galleries, and auction houses. These organizations are more interested in financial gain than the actual artwork they are showing. But profiteering does not necessarily benefit the Chinese art world. In the current atmosphere, the free creative environment is sometimes twisted by capitalist money. Some artists become a contractor or owner of small factories, news-driven media promote arts and artists merely for shock affect, and some curators dodge their obligation to let philosophical ideas lead the direction of concepts and experimentation. A great deal of private and organizational capital is being spent, thereby undermining one of the most important traditional Chinese aesthetic values of "art for art's sake" and replacing it with "art for money's sake" and "art for politics' sake." Many private collections and government institutions lure avant-garde artists to create political art products. The appetite for Chinese political art has a great impact on the new-generation of artists as they search for Western approval. Because of the social and ethical chaos during political and economic change, many artists contribute some of the "bad taste" artwork promoted by profit-making institutions and art dealers who attract attention both inland and overseas in order to gain political and economic power. The prevalence of such art is misleading to people who seriously want to understand China's diverse culture at this time.

In today's art world, only a fraction of all artists have got the attention of curators and media. At times, today's world seems to be the darkest period in the history of art for traditional painting, particularly figurative and landscape painting. Unfortunately, American contemporary figurative painters and paintings are even less promoted in China. Many American master quality figurative artists with contemporary concepts remain underexposed in China. Not until the last two decades has China begun to have access to the knowledge and information about American pop art, conceptual art, abstraction, and some popular American figurative artists. Because of this, artists and art lovers



in China are now getting a better idea about American contemporary figurative painters. Still much is to be done; hence, my decision to curate this book.

### THE REBIRTH OF FIGURATIVE PAINTING

Despite the focus by popular media on new experience and new artistic forms in American art, a large number of painters still work on paintings involving realism or the figurative approach. Through the participation in a variety of styles and artistic ideologies and the proliferation of art criticism, figurative painting has transformed itself and been reborn into a new and exciting era. Now figurative painters are not only focusing on techniques from history, but also experimenting with a variety of new contemporary concepts, styles and materials. The mastery of techniques is also blending with new ideas, creating new images that may not have developed in the traditional paintings in the past. Figurative painting is now equally as powerful, exciting and fresh as many other forms of art. Yet with all the new concepts and forms competing for media attention, figurative painters and realism are still gravely ignored. It is my hope that this book will begin to remedy that situation. Some figurative painters rely upon narrative techniques to participate in debates that disprove some of the negative myths that refer prematurely and shortsightedly to "the death of painting" and how "in painting it has all been done before". Today, all over America, many artists with a great interest in figurative work are on the forefront of developing and achieving great success based on figurative painting traditions. I hope this book will exemplify the success of the many American figurative painters.

Ironically, some twenty years ago, the majority of Chinese artists had only a limited understanding of contemporary Western art. Today's problem is of a different kind. Many ideologies and artistic concepts have been introduced to China, some of them faultily used by artists and dealers. Although many Chinese artists have experienced a variety of new forms and concepts coming to them through soft political atmosphere, many other artists are flooded with an attitude of "playfulness". The consequences of this lightheartedness are bad copy and bad-taste painting and ideology. Many opportunistic artists adopt strategies for short-term profits. The result of this is that the creative

field seems very active in spreading all kinds of artistic practices, while the downside is a crisis in the numbers of artists and critics. Western money is poured into the artists who explore the negative aspects of chaos reflected by a confusing complex of political, cultural, and ethnic heritage. The artists then produce bad paintings that are subsequently sold to western private collections and museums that want to document new developments - including political cartoon characters and political propaganda posters, so-called "cynical realism". This is done carelessly, and neglects the serious life matters and history. It is nothing more than an irresponsible act, no matter how the work is glorified with a scholarly-sounding name like "cynical realism" - a parody at best.

I am not here to criticize anyone who may call himself or herself a conceptual or performing artist. I am just pointing out that without honesty and sincerity or an understanding of traditions and skill, the work produced will not have any deep emotional impact. Skillful figurative paintings can speak to profound issues, ideologically participating in cultural discourse and artistic criticism. I believe that it is important that painting is not just important when it is involved with culture and social relationships. Technique and skill are equally important, if not even more so. However, as most people realize, the greatest painters will have not one or the other; they will have it all. Philosophical points without historical reference and/or high technical standards are just like illustrations of bad taste.

### PAINTING WITH MIND AND HEART

It has been discussed a bit earlier that some Chinese contemporary artists try to out score each other for media attention and financial profits. Such phenomenon brings me a concern of the negative influence by some artists' subject matters. For instance, the themes of personal sexuality and/or political art are often used by performing art or other various forms for the sake of shock values, and they are considered revolutionary or heroic act in Chinese contemporary artist practice. However, to my mind, these are not intellectual or responsible art forms, rather a disgusting outcry of sexual depression or snooty. Likewise, we should not get excited over a skillful copy of cheap industrially produced toilets, detergent boxes, and ceramic



puppies and think them as significant revolutionary creative results, even with a span of mass media or an auction house marketing it as high art for profits. In my view, these arts in many cases are harmful to young artists. Some of the Pop art ideas we are adopting are not "soul foods" for Chinese contemporary culture; rather, too much of these ideas may be like eating too much unhealthy American fast food. The results cannot be positive for our minds or bodies. There are many high criteria for painters and artists, and it is sad when many artists focus on personal sexuality and exposes them to the public arena. I hope the artist approaches in this book will help some young painters to slow down and learn how to create with a deeper heart.

In my last few trips to China, I conducted a series of lectures about American contemporary realism in China's universities and art institutions. This has been a wonderful experience for me. Many artists and students who attended my lectures expressed to me that my lectures changed their perception of American painting landscape. During these visits, I saw the urgent need of younger artists to satisfy their hunger to learn with a book that would provide them with a valuable reference. Inspiration goes both ways. I am so glad to have this opportunity to share the work of artists whom I have known on a professional and personal level.

## CONCLUSION

Reflecting on the needs of young painters in this new century, contemporary realism or contemporary figurative painting and it does not matter how variously defined the work has been has engaged many great artists of our time. Hopefully, the works in this book can convince you that figurative painting is not dead, but it is enjoying a new era of recognition. Figurative painting has successfully used figures as a vehicle to convey that it still has relevance in reflecting diverse cultures and critical and philosophical thinking, while at the same time enjoying the sublime satisfaction of the material's texture and surface. Most importantly, it will be a window to understanding each artist's artistic standing in mind and soul through the images that are created.

I began taking my first notes for this book in the year 2000, and now it is time to celebrate that this effort is

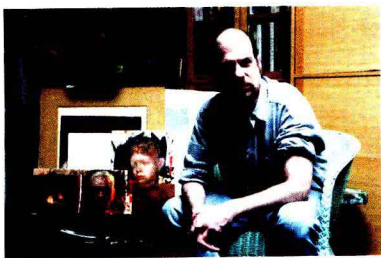
finally coming to fruition. On this high note I have many people to thank. First, my sincere thanks to the Tianjin People's Fine Arts Book Publishing House for all its effort to publish this material as a fine-art volume. I also want to acknowledge and specially thank the artists and their galleries and the people who were involved this project, for without their support, this project could not have been completed. Among them are: Steven Assael, Odd Nerdrum, and their dealer, the Forum Gallery; Susanna Coffey and dealer Tibor de Nagy Gallery; Vincent Desiderio and dealer, Marlborough Gallery, New York; Sidney Goodman and dealer, ACA Galleries, New York; Anne Harris and dealer DC Moore Gallery, New York, and Neilson Gallery, Boston; Mel Leipzig and dealer, Henoeh Gallery, New York; Nelson Shanks and Nelson Shanks Studio. Finally I would like to thank my friend, the poet and book editor Michele F. Cooper, for helping to edit this introduction, and I would also like to thank my friend, art historian Jessica Noonan, for her effort on English proofing and editing, and my dear wife Dr. Xue Li for her support and effort. At last but certainly not the least, this book is dedicated to my son Ethan Yuhui Liu, for he has been my inspiration.

Qimin Liu

East Lyme, Connecticut, 2009



画 家 目 录



史蒂文·厄塞欧	Steven Assael	1
---------	---------------	---



苏珊娜·卡菲	Susanna Coffey	19
--------	----------------	----



文森特·戴瑟德瑞欧	Vincent Desiderio	35
-----------	-------------------	----



辛迪尼·顾德曼	Sidney Goodman	52
---------	----------------	----



安妮·海瑞丝	Anne Harris	68
--------	-------------	----



麦欧·莱普伊格	Mel Leipzig	83
---------	-------------	----



奥德·诺爵姆	Odd Nerdrum	98
--------	-------------	----

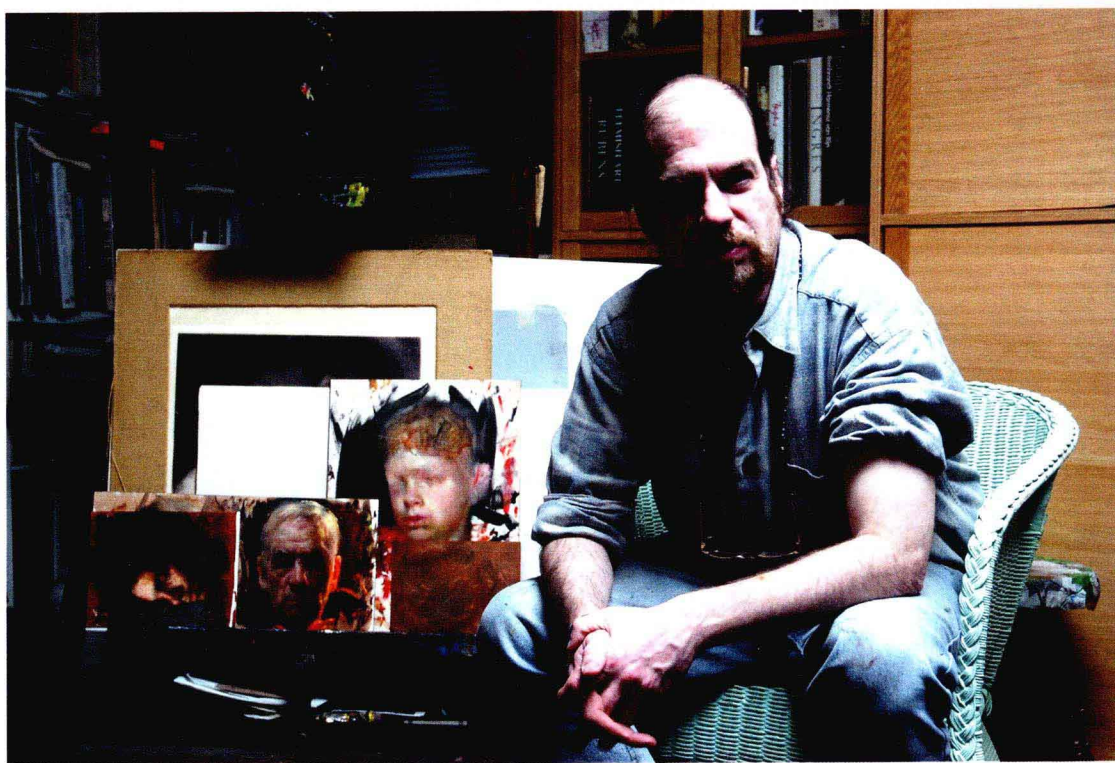


耐尔森·善克斯	Nelson Shanks	116
---------	---------------	-----



## 史蒂文·厄塞欧

## Steven Assael



史蒂文·厄塞欧，当代美国多产的天才写实主义画家。1957年出生于纽约曼哈顿，曾求学于Pratt艺术研究院，现执教于纽约视觉艺术学院和人物艺术研究生院。

史蒂文·厄塞欧在古典绘画方面的天赋是当今世界罕见的，他熟练的笔触，谐和柔美的暖冷光色交织下渐渐呈现出来的人物和环境都充满了浪漫主义的气息。他绘画的焦点主要是通过单独人物或群体人物组合探索艺术创作多方面的涵义，他成熟的写实成就和对古典绘画的继承与发展对于20世纪后半叶和21世纪初叶多元化的艺术世界来说有着相当重要的意义。被艺评界称为后现代艺术家。近年来他在美国各地举办了多个展、联展，主要包括：纽约Staempfli画廊，华盛顿特区Fendrick画廊，纽约国家艺术俱乐部，耶鲁大学，旧金山美术馆，北卡大学，田纳西大学的Cress展览馆，亚特兰大的Lowe画廊，纽约的Forum画廊等等。1999年，华盛顿州西雅图市的Frye Art美术馆举办他的规模巨大的个人回顾展。其作品还在阿肯色艺术中心，纽约艺术学院，纽约州阿诺特(Arnot)美术馆展出过。他的油画，素描在世界各地被广泛收藏，主要包括纽约大都会博物馆，耶鲁大学，芝加哥艺术学院，田纳西的查塔努加(Chattanooga)的亨特(Hunter)美术馆和密苏里的Kemper当代艺术设计美术馆。

Steven Assael is recognized as one of the most talented and powerful figurative artists of America. He was born in Manhattan, New York in 1957. He attended Pratt Institute and presently teaches at The School of Visual Arts and Graduate School of Figurative Arts in New York.

Mr. Assael balances naturalism with a romanticism that permeates the figures and surroundings of his paintings and drawings. The focus of his work is the human figure, either individually or in a group, rendered in glowing relief by gentle beams of warm and cool light. He has been considered one of the few influential American artists in the world. His subject matter often relates to American subculture, which he believes is a powerful force within American cultures. His classical talents are as rare as they are essential to the diverse art world of the late twentieth and this early twenty first century. His paintings have been called Post-Post Modern. He works strictly from live models.

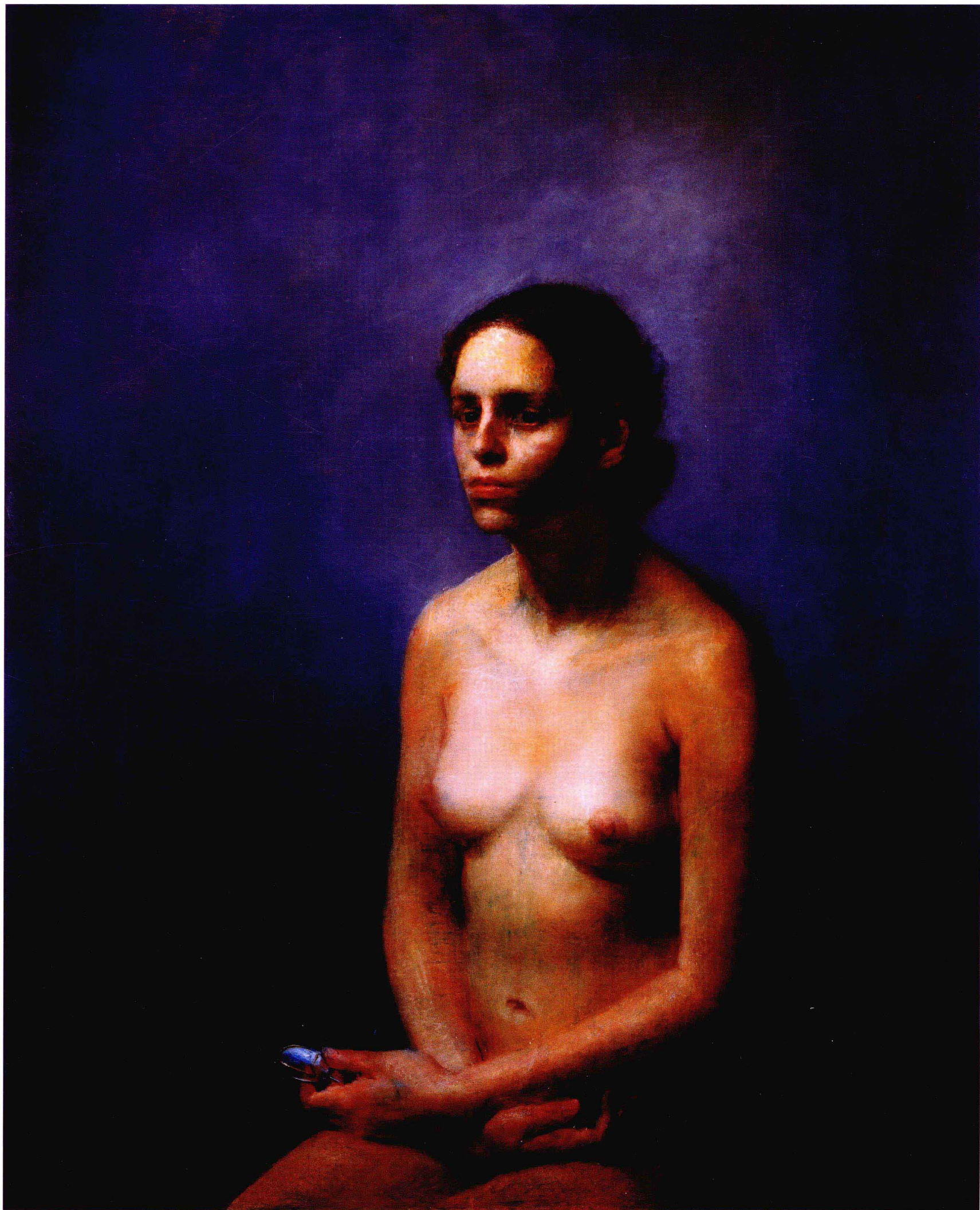
Assael's work is included in public and private collections around the world. Some examples are, the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art (Kansas, MO), the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, NY), Yale University (New Haven, CT), and the Chicago Institute of Fine Arts (Chicago, IL). Solo and group exhibitions have included the Staempfli Gallery (New York, NY), Forum Gallery (New York, NY), Fendrick Gallery (Washington, D.C.), National Arts Club (New York, NY), Yale University (New Haven, CT), San Francisco Museum of Fine Art (San Francisco, CA), Arkansas Art Center (Little Rock, AR), Kennesaw State University (Kennesaw, GA), Stephen F Austin State College (Nacogdoches, TX), University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, NC), Phillbrook Museum of Art (Tulsa, OK), and the National Museum in Gdansk, Poland. In 1999 his work was exhibited in a ten-year retrospective at the Frye Art Museum in Seattle, Washington.





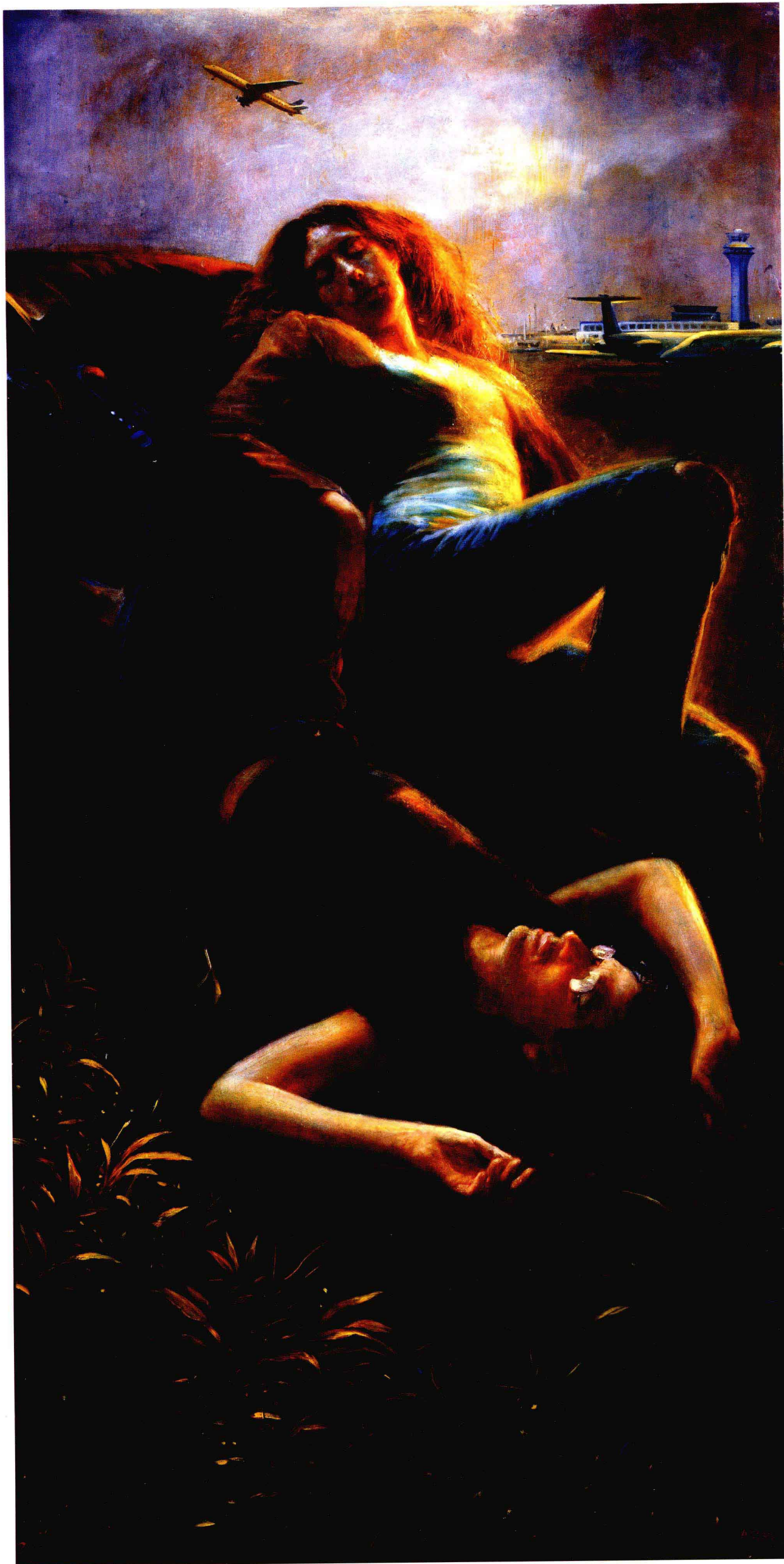
乘客 2008年 画布油彩 183厘米×231厘米  
*Passengers* 2008 Oil on canvas 72in×91in





拿眼镜的人物 2008年 木板油彩 122厘米×96.5厘米  
*Figure Holding Eye Glasses* 2008 Oil on board 48in×38in

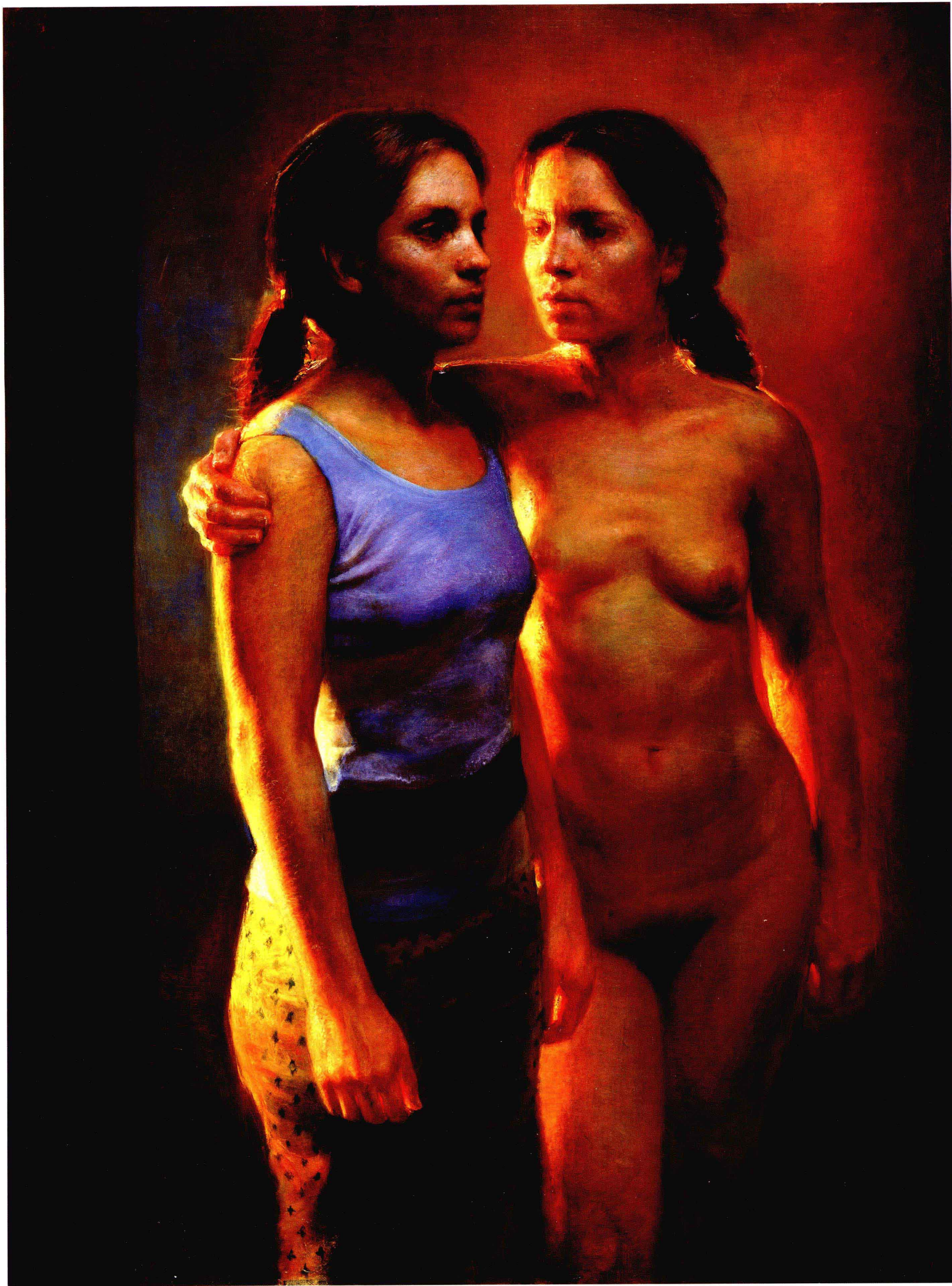




飞机的叙事  
2008年  
画布油彩  
122厘米×61厘米

*Airplane Portrait*  
2008  
Oil on canvas  
48in × 24in





佛朗西斯卡 2002年 木板油彩 76.2厘米×50.8厘米  
*Francesca* 2002 Oil on board 30in×20in





父母亲 2002年 画布油彩 183厘米×152.4厘米  
*Mom and Dad* 2002 Oil on canvas 72in×60in