

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Creative Boom

Exquisite portrait paintings by British artist Sarah Ball that focus on the subject of identity

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Image: All paintings courtesy and copyright of the artist

For her latest exhibition, *Themselves*, British artist Sarah Ball looks to anonymous and eclectic historic photographs and more ubiquitous modern sources such as social media to find inspiration for her portrait paintings.

With an inevitable absence of additional available information on her muses, she goes through a process of presenting the subject's identity, based on assumption and empathy. Each depicted character is surrounded by muted backgrounds, which engender a profound sense of solitude but often emphasise the defining characteristic of their visual identities.

These intrinsic details are captured with intensity; luminescent skin is anchored by deep pooling eyes drawing the viewer in. But Ball's works also offer up a challenge, often by confronting societal assumption and prejudice. Previous exhibition subjects have included historic photographic immigration archives alongside 'mug shot' archives of the accused.

In her latest body of work, *Themselves*, Ball's broad lens focuses on the little quirks of 'self' which "support, subvert, enhance, manipulate, exaggerate or elaborate upon traditional binary norms", in areas including gender and sexuality. 'Themselves' relates to the "conscious and subconscious factors which affect our assumptions and interactions, when forming the socially constructed characteristics which define us all in the 21st Century."



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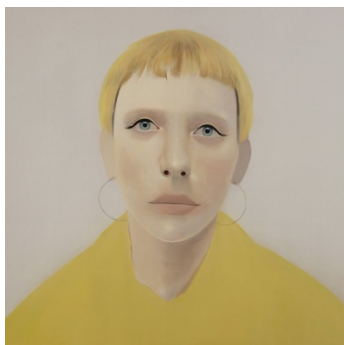


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