

# STRIKE ME A POSE

Matija Bobičić, Philip Gerald, Magda Kirk, Kevin Sabo, Sophie Vallance

Frontal, three-quarter, general, close-up, close-up, very close-up...The portrait throughout the history of art has adopted different forms, despite the fact that in most cases, by means of fairly established and closed formal and compositional rules. Strike me a pose is an exhibition that takes as its starting point the evolution and transformation of portrait by incorporating the work of artists such as Kevin Sabo, Sophie Vallance Cantor, Philip Gerald, Matija Bobičić and Magda Kirk. These artists explore contemporary ways of trackling the genre through novel formal and thematic approaches, ranging from working with latest subject matter and aesthetics to the inclusion of new individuals and subjectivities. Through the works presented, we analyze the ways in which current artists are related to the portrait – both consciously and unintentionally–away from the premises that originally generated this genre.

The work of **Sophie Vallance** (Scotland, 1993) is mainly conveyed through the portrait, which is conceived by the artist as a mechanism to examine the proximity and everyday life. In each of her paintings, presented as a combination of reality and fantasy, we can get to know the artist a little more, her inner circle and her own subjectivity, where cats, food and self-portrait are the protagonists. Her own voice is situated at the nexus of feminist practices, cathartic artistic creation, confessional processes, folklore and narration.

**Kevin Sabo** (Virginia Beach, 1992) focuses exclusively on painting, which is presented as large sketches since the final result is never predetermined. Through his works, there is a clear reference to portrait and the redefinition of it by incorporating queer identities with an aesthetic influenced by pop and Bimbo culture. His figures, dressed in garish clothes and zigzag prints, platforms and bright colors are linked to visual prototypes of the nineties such as Britney Spears, Lil Kim, the Spice Girls or TLC. The result is fun and cutting paintings just like all the women the artist admires.

**Philip Gerald** (Ireland, 1992) exalts absurdity, naivety and poor quality digital images. It is the History of Art and within this, the great geniuses, the breeding ground of his work. The result is a satirical critique of the aura that surrounds the great works of art, the characters that have been retained within our collective cultural memory and the geniuses within this great History of Art. The result are figures that could well have been the protagonists of outstanding paintings but now, the artist represents them as characters made with paint or with other image editing programs of poor quality. As the artist says, he paints because the act itself is already absurd.

The portraits of **Matija Bobičič** (Slovenia, 1987) focus on personifications of amorphous and prototypical beings of the post-pandemic society. Portraits of assembled beings influenced by eighties cartoons in which they are combined with dinosaurs, giant shoes and clown faces with a disturbing smile. His figuration raises, through the portrait, constitutive axes of neoliberal society, considering these beings as personifications of the glorification of consumerism and the most exacerbated capitalism.

In the case of **Magda Kirk** (Poland, 1990), her approach to portraiture is through the depiction of faceless bodies. Her body types are significantly identifiable because they follow a primordial trait –besides the elimination of the face–: the rupture with the current canon of body representation. In this sense, her bodies are the result of an analysis of body representation and how it is filtered by current conventions. What interests her is to elaborate anonymous portraits, to represent people and real problems of identity or self-expression without falling into figurative fidelity.