

Likeness of Being: Enduring Portraiture in the Selfie Age

April 18 – May 18th, 2019

Press Preview & V. I. P. Reception:

Thursday, April 18th, 6:00 - 8:00pm

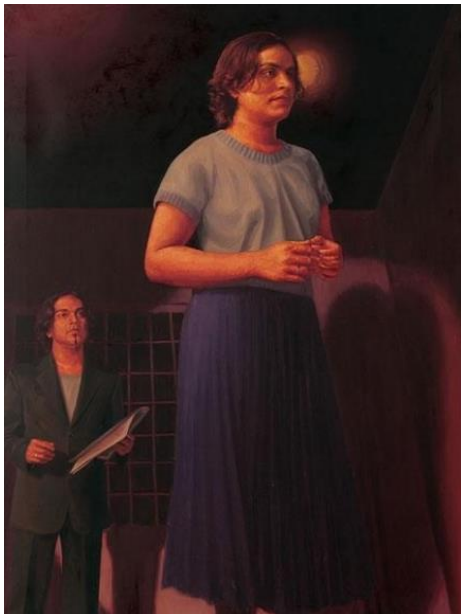
Aicon Contemporary's newest exhibition, ***Likeness of Being***, explores the continued endurance and uncanny intimacy of Portraiture in contemporary art despite its having been co-opted on a global scale following the rise of social media, and the ubiquity of the Selfie.



Debanjan Roy, *India Shining I (Gandhi and the Laptop)*, 2007,
27 x 46 x 30 in.

Contemporary art has had a love-hate relationship with Realism ever since the first pinhole camera found widespread use, ever since the first silver-gelatin photographs appeared in photographer's shops and in people's homes. Despite several predictions of its demise, the ever increasing accessibility of photography - 35mm, Polaroid, point-and-shoot, digital photography; and despite a studio arts instruction deemphasizing realistic depiction, Realism has survived, and thrived. As has, Portraiture, at once both a key component and a pillar, of Realism.

Realism in particular, and narrative painting in general, has willy-nilly become the divisor between western and non-western artistic traditions in the last quarter of the 20th Century and for the first quarter of the 21st. Starting at art instruction, but continuing into art practice, artists from emerging art ecosystems, China and India among them, have hung onto Realistic traditions – portraiture centrally – in a way not often seen in the West. Using the essential device of a portrait of a man, woman, or child, to tell a larger story about society, economics, technology, remains a vibrant tradition in south Asia.



Abir Karmakar, *From My Photo Album*, 2006, 48 x 36 in.

Several south Asian artists explore portraiture in an order of differential. For them the subject is not the human being in front of a camera, or an artist's model posing. Instead, it is a bust of a great leader which appears in countless sculptural incarnations, or on currency bills. An image of an image.

Likeness of Being features the work of Komail Aijazudin, Bikash Bhattacharjee, Sasha Brito, Mukul Dey, Irfan Hassan, Abir Karmakar, Riyas Komu, Shibu Natesan, Jagannath Panda, Sudhir Patwardhan, Baiju Parthan, Promotes Das Pulak, Debanjan Roy, Paritosh Sen, Abdullah M. I. Syed, and Salman Toor.

Please contact Aicon Gallery (sam@aicongallery.com) for more information.