

Beggars Banquet at Not for Them



Noah Becker, *Two Figures in Landscape*, 2023

The Rolling Stones released *Beggars Banquet* 55 years ago this December, a transitional record beloved for a pair of defining rockers: *Sympathy for the Devil* and *Street Fighting Man*. But it's one of their finer ballads, *No Expectations*, that really defines where the band was during that critical moment in their evolution.

A lack of expectations may be what the curators of a new group art show called *Beggars Banquet* had in mind when they drew together a group of artists whose work is as diverse as the music on that fabled 1968 record. *Beggars Banquet* opens with a reception Nov. 20, 6 to 9 p.m., at Not For Them, 28 Locust Street, Brooklyn.

Among the artists included are first-generation graffiti art innovator Al Diaz; painter, publisher and musician Noah Becker; Ayane Kurai, who contributes worried, texturized oils Alfredo Martinez, who makes disturbing use of found objects; and Michael Holman, and his disruptive paintings.

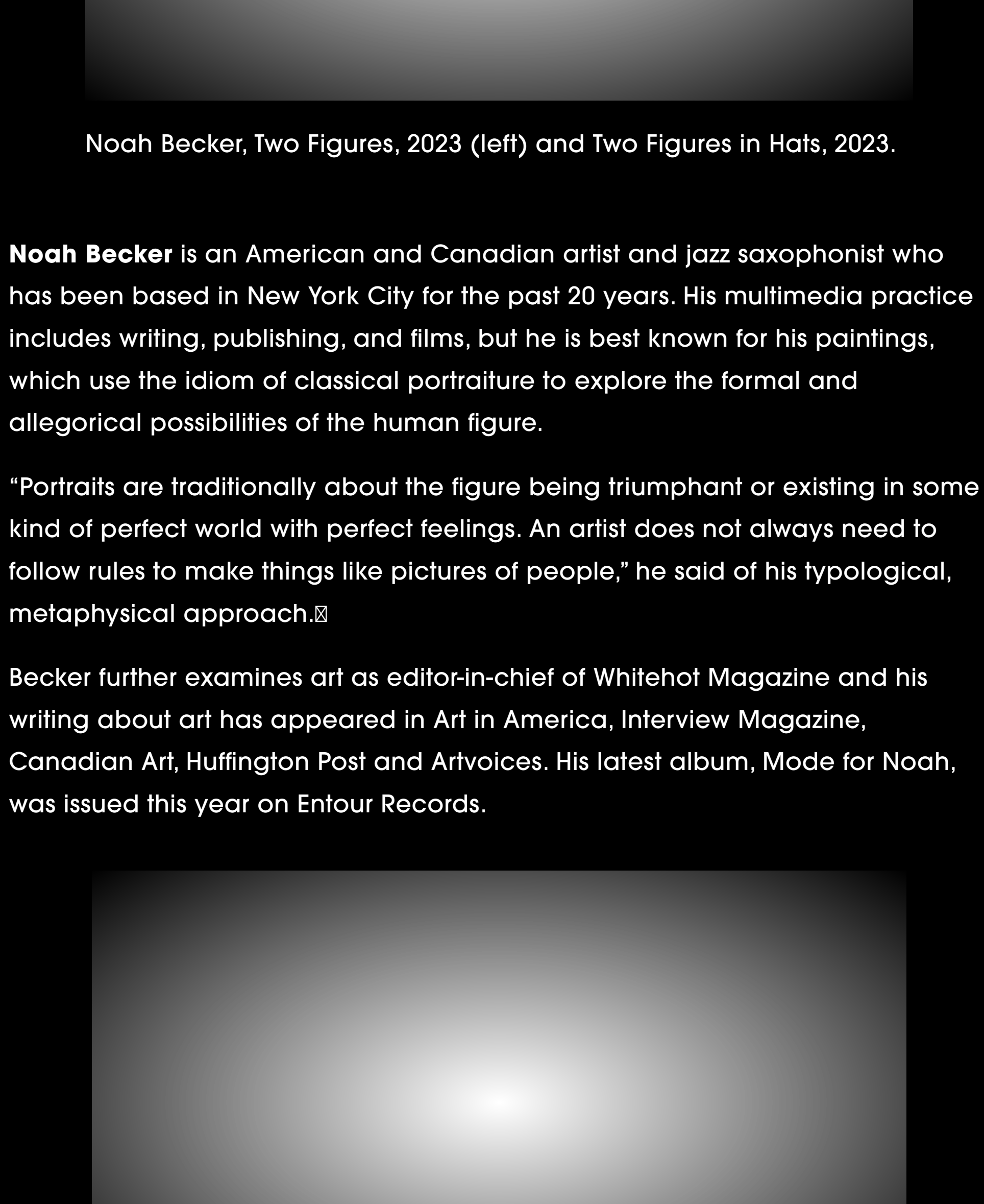
And then there's one of the most interesting artists in the group, one that defies not only expectations, but identification. Godley Brown is actually a collaborative enterprise between Carson, aka Marccarson, and Catherine Walsh, an artist and ballerina who studied at Perm State Ballet School in Russia.

In 2016, gallerist, painter and provocator Mark Carson was offered a gallery space near MoMA PS1. Not For Them is Carson's gallery project that merges traditional gallery space with a showroom and a creative studio. As its name suggests, Not For Them is hardly aimed at the masses. "We exist exclusively for the independent, and the avant-garde. Our purpose is to build a vibrant artistic community that flourishes through diversity and embraces individuality," he said.



Al Diaz is a first generation street artist who founded the graffiti writing duo SAMO© with Jean-Michel Basquiat in the 1970s, before Basquiat soared to the heights of the art world then flamed out just as quickly, the victim of a heroin overdose at 27.

In recent years, Diaz has emerged from Basquiat's shadow with an extensive series of works that feature fonts used for signage across New York City's massive subway network. These works have typically carried messages that are humorous, witty, sarcastic, poignant and timely just like those sprayed on Manhattan walls by SAMO© 45 years ago.



Noah Becker, *Two Figures*, 2023 (left) and *Two Figures in Hats*, 2023.

Noah Becker is an American and Canadian artist and jazz saxophonist who has been based in New York City for the past 20 years. His multimedia practice includes writing, publishing, and films, but he is best known for his paintings, which use the idiom of classical portraiture to explore the formal and allegorical possibilities of the human figure.

"Portraits are traditionally about the figure being triumphant or existing in some kind of perfect world with perfect feelings. An artist does not always need to follow rules to make things like pictures of people," he said of his typological, metaphysical approach.

Becker further examines art as editor-in-chief of *Whitehot Magazine* and his writing about art has appeared in *Art in America*, *Interview Magazine*, *Canadian Art*, *Huffington Post* and *ArtVoices*. His latest album, *Mode* for Noah, was issued this year on *Entour Records*.



Iris Jaffee, *Fanatic*, 2023 (left) and *Spring Time*, 2023.

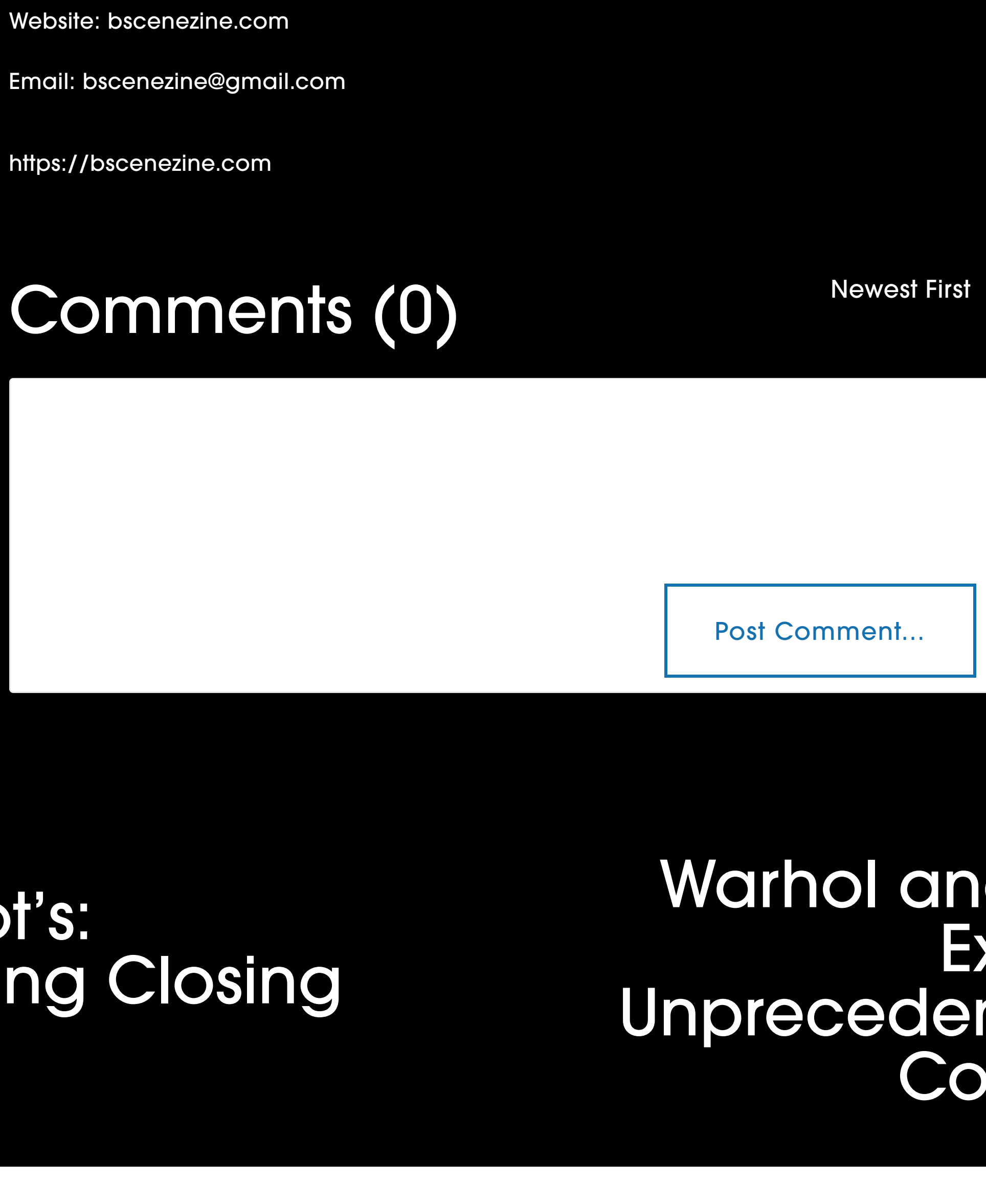
Iris Jaffe is a contemporary artist living and working just outside New York City in Westchester County. She holds a BA with honors from Brown University and has worked for the contemporary artist Tom Sachs and the contemporary art gallery Ronald Feldman Fine Arts. Her artistic practice consists of painting, digital imaging, digital photography, collage, sculpture, drawing, and installation. Major themes and concepts in her work include popular culture, art history, technological progress, nature, consumer culture and gender Roles.



Ayane Kurai, *Unreachable Message*, 2020 (left) and *Black Lives Matter Solitude*, 2020.

Ayane Kurai is a New York-based artist who works primarily with oil on canvas. Originally from Japan, where she attended Musashino Art University in Tokyo, Ayane had been living and working in New York City for over 30 years. As an abstract painter, her use of bold colors in viscous strokes reflects the humanity she finds, and is inspired by, in her everyday life.

Ayane exhibited her works in solo shows in Tokyo, Nagoya, Hyogo and New York. Her work was also featured prominently at the Museu de Arte Moderna da Bahia, Brazil and many group shows. Ayane is the recipient of The Joan Mitchell Foundation Grand Award (1999) and the Art Olympia in Tokyo, First-round Winner Award (2015).



Godley Brown, *Do Not Soak* 2023 (left) and *Assembled in the US with Irish Components*, 2023.

Alfredo Martinez, who died this year, was a New York Artist who cobbles together found objects into menacing looking weapons, cold and high-tech, as commentary on gun violence in modern America. A native New Yorker who was shot in Guatemala and arrested and tortured in a secret prison in China, Martinez knows a thing or two about violence and weapons. He sees his work relating back to films like *Mad Max* and *Star Wars* that impacted him at a young age.

His drawings act as building plans. Subconsciously, his work reflects the culture in which he was raised. It is both direct, unabashed, and profound. As the death toll rises from gun violence in America and a government poorly misguided and incompetent to do anything about it, Martinez's work is a poignant statement on a society obsessed, transfixed, and dominated by gun violence.

Michael Holman is a filmmaker, artist, writer, and musician and an influential observer of popular culture and entertainment. His paintings are graphic, bold, and disruptive. They are visually minimal yet impossible to experience disassociated from feelings of bewilderment.

Holman's work forces a conversation about history, ownership, and power. The artist explores, confronts, and seeks to demystify the power and complexity of symbols. One symbol in particular, the Confederate flag. The artist's paintings of Confederate flags, rendered in gold and silver leaf, acrylic, flock, and layered gesso, challenge the viewer.

J. Scott Orr

J. Scott Orr is a career writer, editor and a recovering political journalist. He is publisher of the East Village art magazine *B Scene Zine*.

Instagram: @bscenezine

Website: bscenezine.com

Email: bscenezine@gmail.com

<https://bscenezine.com>

Comments (0)

Newest First

Post Comment...