



Over the Influence presents

Andy Dixon Masterpieces!

Exhibition dates: 04 March - 18 April 2021



Andy Dixon *Allegory of Painting Painting*, 2020. Acrylic and oil pastel on canvas. 147.3 x 190.5 cm. 58 x 75 in.
Courtesy of the Artist and Over the Influence. Photo credit Jeff Mclane.

Over the Influence is pleased to present *Masterpieces!* a solo exhibition by Los Angeles-based artist Andy Dixon. The exhibition will be on view at Over the Influence, Los Angeles 04 March - 18 April 2021.

The painting has been the preeminent status symbol for as long as there has been a patron to commission one, and an audience willing to come and study it. The pride and pleasure in possessing one's own image, draped and caught at the height of one's piety, prettiness, power, or promise—whether or not these stages of life were simultaneous, or even ever true, for someone—leaves us with a portrait of a subject who has no expectation but to be admired, or at least perpetually discovered. And if your painting's subject is not so literally self-possessed, they can still have their table-full of opulent spoils. The Flemish still life of the seventeenth century gave us both the vanitas and the pronk still life traditions: glistening animal carcasses on their last blush; spindly fish bones holding morsels of soft flesh; the lobster; the visiting monkey or parrot or violin; rose petals, quietly crushed. The skull, the lemon.

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Styles of painting have made full evolutions since then, turning back and forth on the question of whether or not to favor the subject: Impressionism was a soft-focus lens, flattering and dreamlike; Surrealism maybe loaned the subject a sense of imagination, but not necessarily of vitality. Academic painting has been out of fashion for long enough that it can be timeless. The academy painting is reliable: It never fails to communicate its message of great wealth, proximity to classicism (and, by proxy, older and therefore better wealth), and the reflexive self-flattery of its owner, who had the refined sense and trained eye to have it made in the first place.

Andy Dixon, modern-day classical painter, has metabolized the past half-millennium of Western painting into a singular technique. In his Signature High Painting Style, the subject matter comes second to his manner of painting; everything is gilded with the same historical brush, neon-shadowed to highlight the uncanny feeling of today. Dixon's Signature High Painting Style can cover our (or any) generation's objects of desire or reverence, palette, or aesthetic message while safely and consistently signifying its own aspirational level of expense and rarity as a work of fine art. From the holy Bathsheba and Saint Sebastian paintings to his own Flemish Floral and Game still life canvases to the fantastical antiquities of Reclining Venus, the bacchanal, Cupid, and Leda and the Swan, each one is remade and dipped in mauve or seafoam or a number of other new colors.

Dixon's subject matter has steadily floated on the surface for the last decade of his painting, reflecting his use of the High Painting Style to produce works of exquisite decoration rather than as tools of noble education. The self-taught artist, who surrounded himself in the sounds and (anti-)politics of hardcore and punk music in the recent-history phaseout era of FOSO (Fear of Selling Out), poses the argument that "art is also, pragmatically speaking, the manufacturing of goods to be sold like luxury items on one of the most unregulated markets on the planet ... I analyze this theme specifically through the appropriation of historical art imagery that depicts luxury, showing the viewer that 1) the subject of the original painting is luxurious, 2) the object of the original painting, which is the subject of my painting, is luxurious, and, 3) the final work, in other words, my painting, is also luxurious." The exclusively digital dissemination for viewing, and, more and more often, buying and selling art on our little screens can deliver this luxury to each of us with increasing efficiency. So, the space between the unique canvas and the canvas's image on a projection or wallpaper or high-fashion runway continues to narrow and lose distinction, creating more value for, and from, the work itself, the one made in Signature High Painting Style.



The High style also extends to Dixon's objects, including the series of soft sculptures—copied from iconic Logomania-era articles of high fashion from recent decades—that he shows with his paintings here. Dixon's tailored garments include an oversized copy of a Versace silk shirt whose pattern is ripped from classical painting. A blown-up limited-edition Louis Vuitton Jeff Koons "Masters" collaboration featuring a painting by Boucher sits atop an oversized plinth with the iconic master painter's name emblazoned in enlarged golden ceramic accents. Fragments of Dutch floral arrangements are transformed into textiles for high-heeled Louboutin boots, recreated by Dixon in a towering, aggrandized scale. These luxury designers saw classical painting imagery as a symbol of wealth and status and appropriated it accordingly. In Dixon's oeuvre, these works take his paintings one level further – a painted reproduction of a reproduction of a painting made for luxury "mass" consumption.

Dixon's stance on the art market is perhaps best encapsulated by his bold *Allegory of Painting Painting*, 2020. Re-creating French artist François Boucher's 1765 Rococo painting, a gentle young woman, twisting to recline in a flattering tangle of fabrics, leans in just far enough for her paintbrush to touch her round canvas. She is both painting a portrait of and looking after a gaggle of cherubs who peek at her from around her canvas. The scene is full yet light; the thick clouds give both expanse and balance to the scene. The woman's bundle of paintbrushes nestled at her reach behind her closely mirror the detail of the tidy bunch of soft, thin white arrows the young angels have at their own disposal. Boucher was rewarded for his work by being named first painter to King Louis XV and head of the Royal Academy. Today, you can buy a coffee mug and a fleece blanket topped with *Allegory of Painting*. Dixon's seemingly Insta-filtered 2020 version is painted in turbulent, discordant tones, heightening the sense of danger and suspense in the sky. The same torch now burns bright in the angel's little fist, and their downturned faces have a menacing glow once the color contrast has been turned up to cast fuchsia, lavender, and grass-green shadows on their round little faces. Neither the capitalization of Boucher's work nor Dixon's translation of it could temper the historical sentiment of the original—we get it right away. The true subject of Andy Dixon's paintings is always the tradition of painting itself.

Location
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