

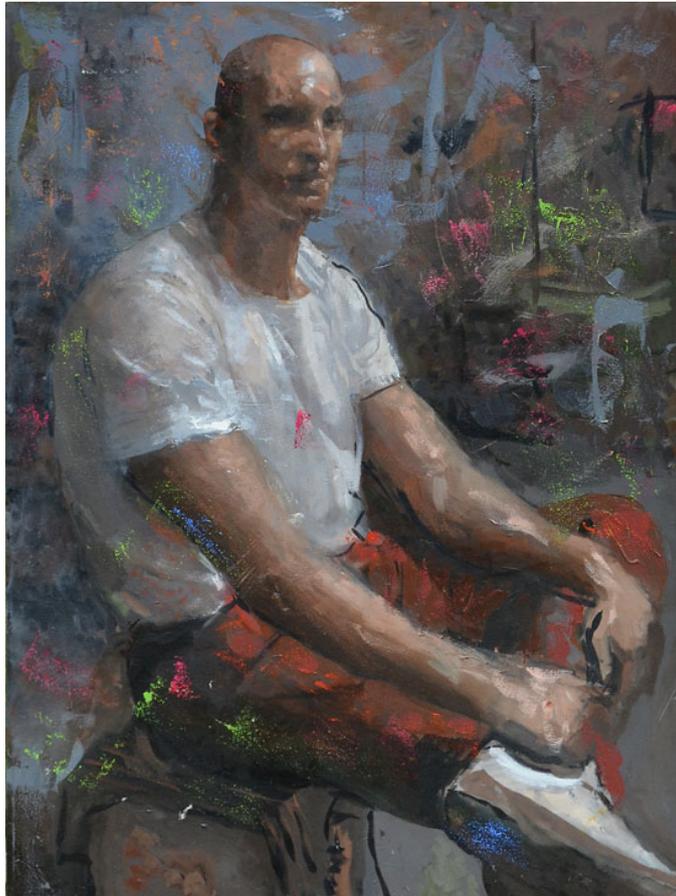
Nicholas Weber: Mixing Mystery with an Intimate State of Being

December 27, 2012

by Pat Rogers

When Nicholas Weber paints portraits, art history combines with acting theory to create artworks that intrigue, soothe and coax wonderment. There's mystery in the unfettered gaze, which is implied more often than presented openly. Mood is prominent—darkness envelops and conspires with confident brush strokes to transport the subject from ordinary life into the metaphysical. This is true whether the subjects sit willingly for the sake of art or are gleaned from pornographic scenes broadcast through Internet videos.

What the two distinct bodies of work share is Weber's philosophy of portraying people. He strives to imbue his paintings with two directives: Create compositions with meaningful intersections of objects within space and capture the essence of what it's like to be in the moment when no one is watching.



"Matthew" by Nick Weber, 2002-2012. Oil on canvas, 40 x 30 inches.

The artworks in "Eighteen Years of Painting People" on view at QF Gallery contain another layer: They represent Weber's personal search for the keys to lock the quandaries of personal relationships complicated by conflicting desires. Through portraiture, Weber explores the implications of strong personalities, connection and disconnection, the conflicting states of being tough and tender, and the artist's personal boundaries in relationships.

The ways people relate to each other within intimate relationships is of special interest to the artist.

"I'm struck by the space between people, the level of closeness and how they negotiate the closeness through the years," said Weber. "I love the silence-how they can be around each other and be by themselves."



“Kira” by Nick Weber, 2010-2012. Oil on canvas, 24 x 18 inches.

All of the models in “Eighteen Years of Painting People” are people Weber has formed a connection with. Many are friends. Some are former romantic partners. Others are beloved models.

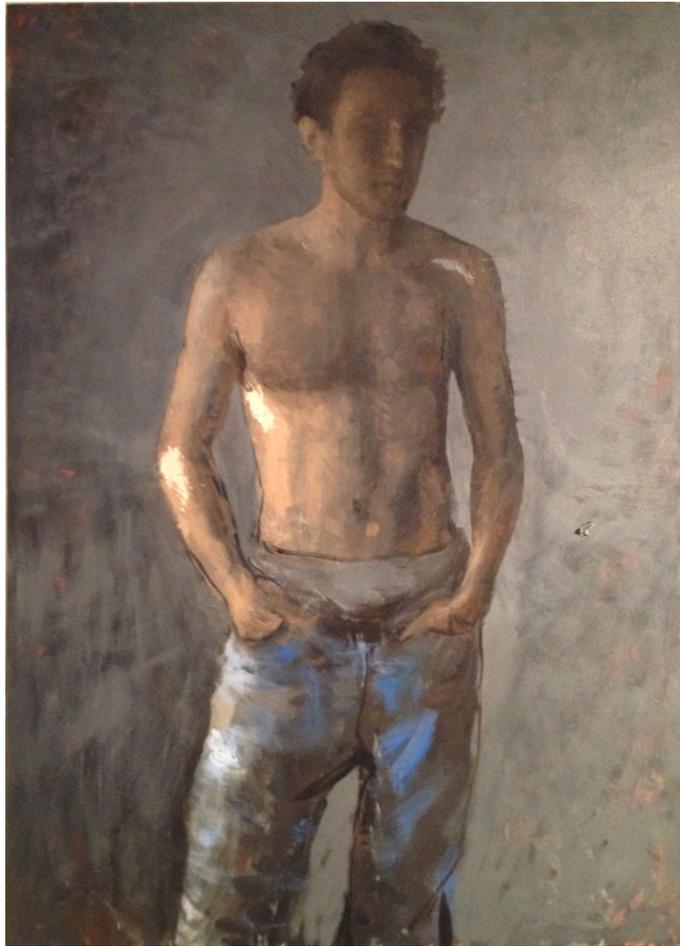
“The works in this show reveal much of Weber’s process and a genuine and rigorous exploration of the medium itself,” states QF Gallery director Chantel Foretich. “He is drawn to the mysterious things about people, especially when a model is with him in his studio. The work, his painting, is his version of their exchange.”



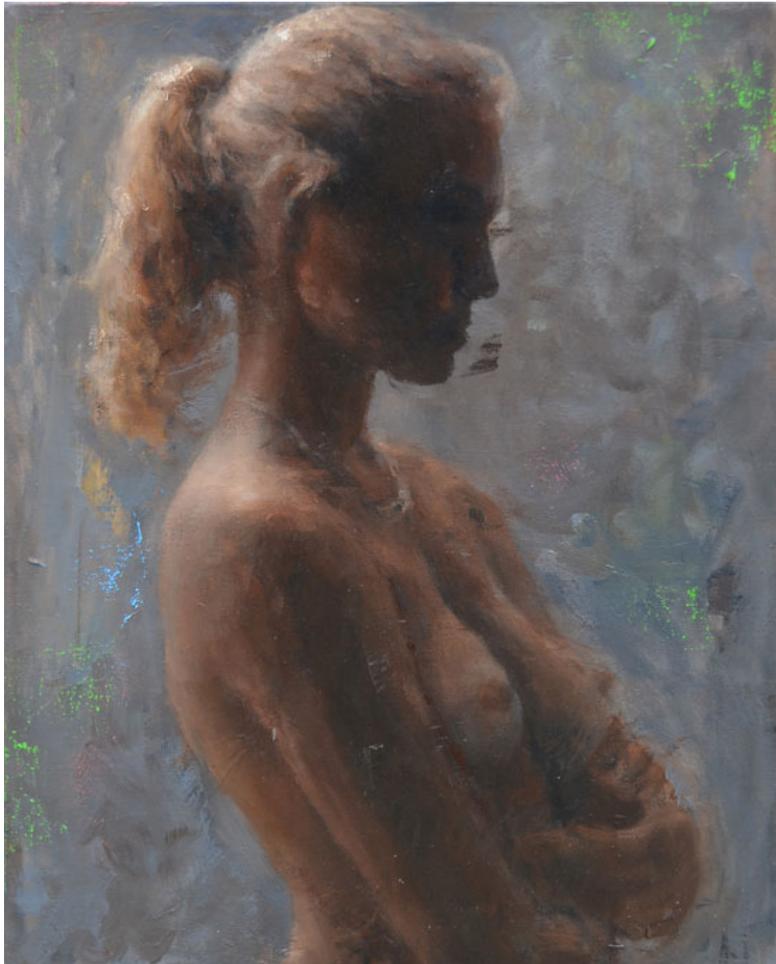
“Amy” by Nick Weber, 2004-2010. Oil on canvas, 16 x 20 inches.

Typically, the paintings take years to make as Weber explores paint, the painting, and waits for the moment where personal guards are dropped and the model achieves a public solitude—the state of being private in public. The concept was coined by Russian actor and director Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938). Weber learned of the theory while taking workshops in method acting based on the Meisner technique, developed by Sanford Meisner (1905-1997). The concept was a perfect match for what Weber seeks to achieve in his paintings, which begins with his models.

“I want the person to forget I’m there,” said Weber. “There’s a beauty that happens when you’re just by yourself and no one else is around to see what happens. So much figurative work is about not being real—the person is striking a pose, having attitude or presenting the person others want to see. It doesn’t have to be. Figurative work can be about something real.”



"Jacob" by Nick Weber, 2004-2012. Oil on canvas, 51 x 36 inches.



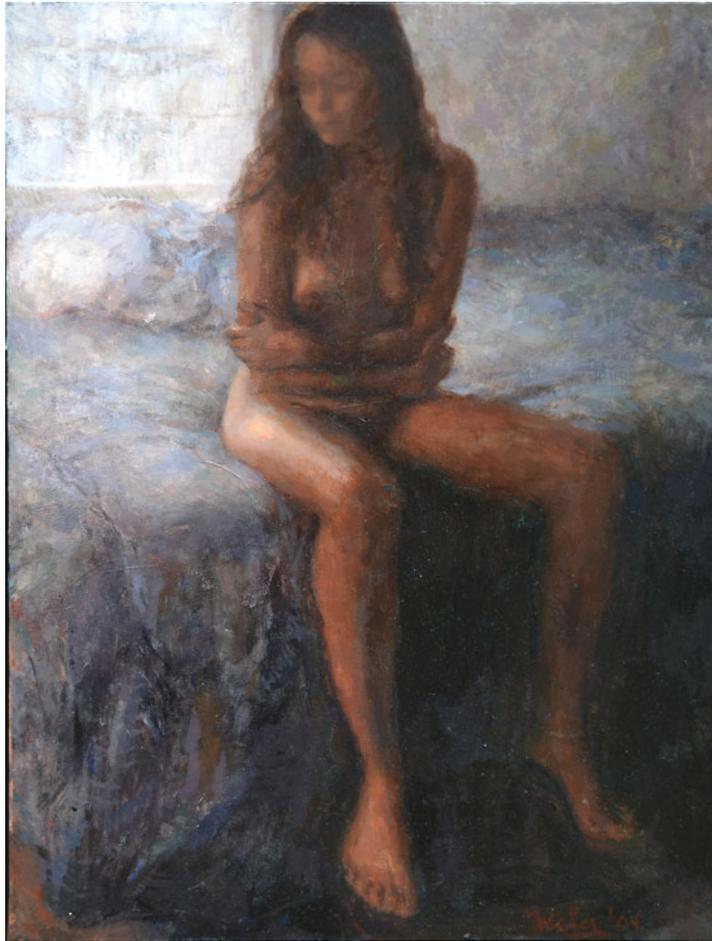
"Syd in profile" by Nick Weber, 2004-2012. Oil on canvas, 20 x 16 inches.

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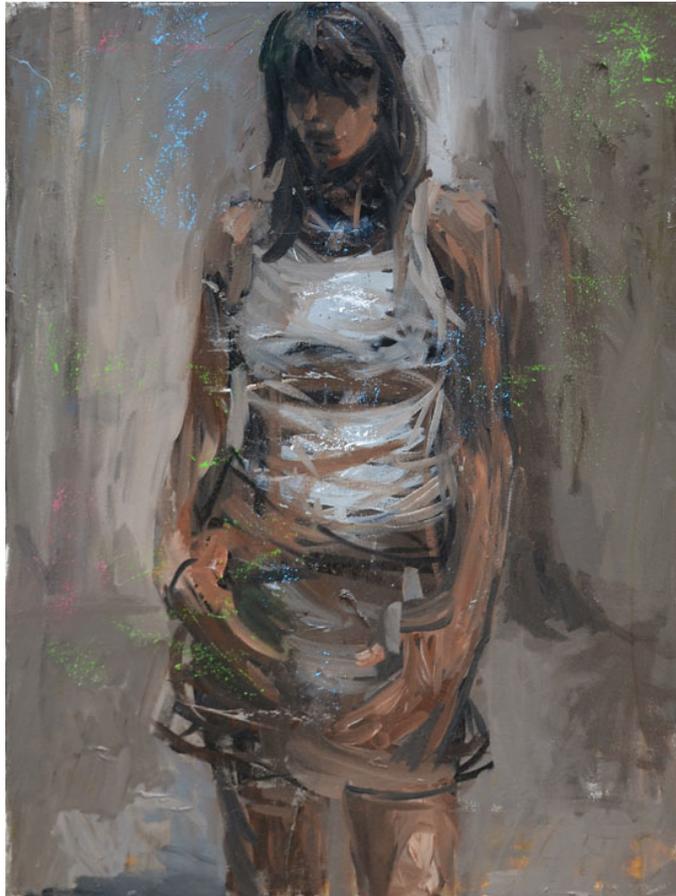
For Weber, making the painting is a kind of public solitude. He relishes being consumed by the painting process and letting time fly as it may. Making the painting can mean exploring paint, experimenting with composition and making new discoveries about the state of being human. Each painting is an experience, he said.

Each painting reveals a unique journey that Weber doesn't want to miss.

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“Alex on bed” by Nick Weber, 1995-2004. Oil on canvas, 24 x 18 inches.



“Amy standing” by Nick Weber, 2004. Oil on canvas, 24 x 18 inches.

BASIC FACTS: “Nick Weber: Eighteen Years of Painting People” remains on view through Dec 30, 2012 at QF Gallery, 98 Newtown Lane, East Hampton, NY. The gallery is open weekends from noon to 5 p.m. and by appointment. www.qfgallery.com. A Closing Reception will be held on Saturday from 3 to 5 p.m.

Weber has a solo exhibition at RES ISPA in California, based upon still images from pornography videos found on the Internet. **“Broadband: Nicholas Weber”** remains on view through Jan 11, 2013 at RES IPASA, 455 17th Street, Suite 301, Oakland, CA 94612. resipsagallery.com

Nicholas Weber’s art can also be found at www.nicholasweber.com.