

Photorealism Paintings of “The Girl Next Door” Opens at RJD Gallery

July 22, 2017

by Pat Rogers

It's not often an exhibition can transport viewers around the world and back again to land comfortably in their own home while retaining the curiosity roused by travel about strangers who may be close by.

Presented with a mix of whimsy and dramatic flair, the paintings in RJD Gallery's group exhibition “The Girl Next Door” give flight to the imagination through works that are figurative or architectural but are always narrative and have the capacity to imply more than can be seen in a single viewing.

“The Girl Next Door” plays hide-and-go-seek with childhood nostalgia, expectations on who a person might be, sexual fantasy, places that may offer refuge and deeply felt experiences that might range from pink cotton candy days to charcoal skies ebbing into black nights.

The exhibition opens on Saturday, July 22, 2017, with a Reception from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at RJD Gallery in Bridgehampton, NY. Playing on the idea that people are more complex than a surface look might suggest, the Opening Reception doubles as a benefit for the [Hetrick-Martin Institute](#), a New York-based organization dedicated to serving LGBTQ youth (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning). A raffle and a percentage of art sales at the opening benefit the organization. Click [here](#) to learn more on the non-profit. The show continues view through August 14, 2017.

“The Girl Next Door” features paintings by [Katie O'Hagan](#), [Rachel Moseley](#) and [Jantina Peperkamp](#) as the heart of the show: figurative realism made from a female point of view with subjects that are primarily female. Works by the trio are installed in a single gallery providing a cross section of who the “girl next door” might be.



"End of Apathy" by Katie O'Hagan. Oil on linen, 46 x 40 inches. Courtesy of RJD Gallery.

Installed in an adjacent gallery (one that's next door, so to speak) are paintings devoid of figures but filled with implied life through arresting architectural subjects by [Daniel Pollera](#) and [Marco Martelli](#). Pollera is showing new paintings revealing beachside white-clad homes at night or nightfall. Martelli tilts the world through buildings with arresting architectural details, with skies that seem to go on for miles.



"Summer in New York" by Marco Martelli. Oil on linen canvas, 34 x 45 inches. Courtesy of RJD Gallery.

A third painter, [Rick Garland](#), brings viewers into deserted scenes of abandoned buildings claimed by graffiti artists and those living on the fringes in paintings installed in a third gallery. The exhibition is rounded out by figurative narrative art installed throughout the gallery, including works by [Gabriel Morena](#) from his "Fragility" series along with paintings by [Margaret Bowland](#), [Margo Selski](#), [Donato Giancola](#) and [Pamela Wilson](#).

As a whole, "The Girl Next Door" is a fun and compelling show to behold. The division of the installation between "the girls" and "their neighborhoods" adds an experiential component to the show.

A range of quintessential girl-next-door archetypes can be viewed from afar in the gallery "next door" that is presenting scenes from cities and rural views. When standing "among the girls," it's easy to imagine that scenes portrayed by Pollera and Martelli in the adjacent gallery are what's "seen" daily by the females in the paintings.

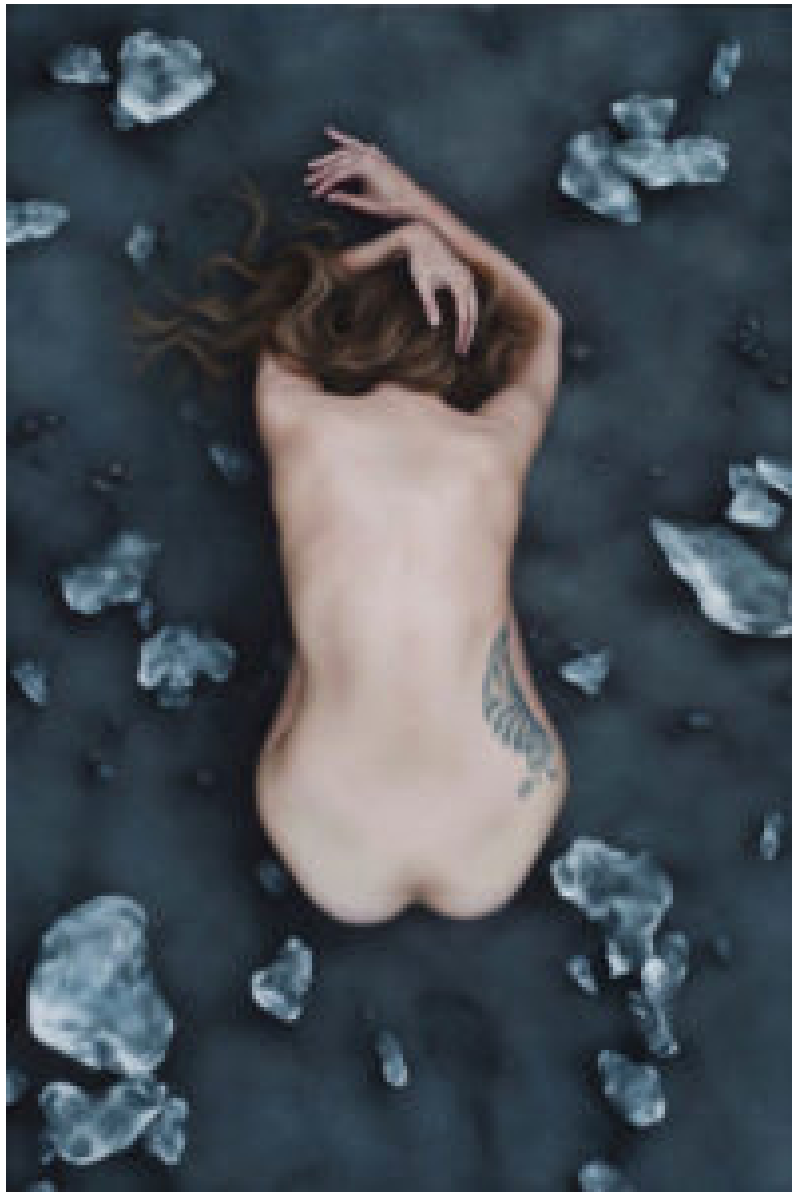


“Hoedje Van Papier - Paper Hat” by Jantina Peperkamp. Acrylic on wood, 11 x 11 inches. Courtesy of RJD Gallery

Whimsy aside, paintings by O’Hagan, Moseley and Pollera represent a leap forward in each of the artist’s practice. All three are established and accomplished painters but the works on view pull from deeper emotional wells in ways that were foreshadowed in earlier works.

Katie O’Hagan’s paintings command the most attention in the exhibition. Seven large canvases are installed in a collective presentation, offering individual narratives that beg to be examined. Each seems to portray a different person in unusual settings. Tied together through an intensity of mood, the most dramatic are a set of paintings depicting a man in one and a woman in the other separated by a deep chasm. The pair seems to look directly at each other and forms a totality that’s difficult to look away from.

Infusing her paintings with mood and retaining narrative mystery are both important to O’Hagan in this new body of work, she said. The works have an autobiographical aspect as their start but grow outward to embrace the human experience. This is accomplished, in part, through the organic way her paintings form. As a person who appreciates directness, this quality can be found in her figurative narrative works.



"Refuge" by Katie O'Hagan. Oil on linen, 60 x 48 inches.
Courtesy of RJD Gallery.

"I'm not interested in shock value," said O'Hagan. "I'm straightforward. Everyone has the same visual language that are in my paintings and I like that. It's uncomplicated but original. I get to paint what's in my head and no one else has the same thoughts as me. Anyone can put a pretty girl in a room and make a good painting. I'm the only one who has my thoughts and can bring them into the world through a painting."

Born in Scotland, O'Hagan is currently based in Beacon, N.Y. Her paintings are collected nationally and internationally.

Daniel Pollera's exhibited paintings also manifest a new freedom of expression in his five new paintings on view. Dark skies are the most noticeable change from his oeuvre; typically, Pollera's

paintings marry front porches and friendly homes with blue meditative skies. In the paintings, the meditative quality he is known for is still present but there a new implied drama, creating rich, subtle narratives for his houses set by water.



“How Did I Get Here - Lazy Point” by Daniel Pollera. Oil and linen on board, 24 x 36 inches. Courtesy of RJD Gallery.

As in O’Hagan’s paintings, creating a mood was an important aspect of these new works, Pollera said in an interview. The visible changes in the paintings are the result of an internal shift that gave way to a new freedom to express emotion while still retaining his signature realism in his work, he said.

“I wanted to create a deeper mood and the feeling and sensation of foreboding,” he said. “There is safety there and the homes are a place to seek refuge and comfort. There is more of a subtle sky and a deeper mood to these works.”

The subdued electricity in the paintings doesn’t spring from an intellectual decision to consciously push his work into a new arena, said Pollera. Instead, the paintings represent a letting go and allowing emotional depth and mood to seep in and make its way naturally into his work.

Pollera’s work is held in the collection of Parrish Art Museum and Guild Hall as well as numerous private and corporate collections. This is his first exhibition with [RJD Gallery](#).



“Eye of the Storm” by Daniel Pollera. Oil on linen, 24 x 36 inches. Courtesy of RJD Gallery.

[Rachel Moseley](#)'s collection of unusual characters is a new series for the artist. Based on people she has met after relocating to Las Vegas from California, the works reflect the rapport the artist already has with the subjects of her paintings, Moseley explained. Each painting arises from a relaxed photo shoot in which the person gets to play, stretch out and offer a bit of what makes each a unique individual. The paintings are inspired by a series of spontaneous snaps taken by Moseley paired with the energy from the encounter.

By chance, one of her subjects was wearing glasses. After seeing the result, Moseley decided to have all the people in this series wear glasses. The effect has twofold benefits, she said. The glasses place some distance between subject and viewer while also allowing the viewer to have a more intimate examination of who the person might be.



“Wet Dream” by Rachel Moseley. Oil on wood panel, 20 x 16 inches. Courtesy of RJD Gallery.

While her subjects are depicted as casual and relaxed, creating an unusual vibe for figurative realism, there is a seriousness in the work that manifests in the process through the building of the composition and application of paint, she said.

“I like to take things less seriously in my paintings,” said Moseley. “There’s something quirky about the people in the paintings. The sunglasses create a distance from the person yet make them more accessible. They’re not staring the viewer directly in the eye and you don’t know what they’re thinking. It makes it more anonymous and gives people more access to what’s happening in the paintings.”

In the six paintings on view, the installation creates the sensation of a photo wall showing relatives in someone's home. In this case, the family is made up of distinct and fun individuals who are not afraid to be themselves and are more beautiful because of it. In a family, people are linked through birth or through choice. In a similar fashion, Moseley's portraits are linked to the artist herself, either as family members, friends or people she interacts with during her daily life.



"Queen of the Desert" by Rachel Moseley. Oil on linen panel, 10 x 8 inches.
Courtesy of RJD Gallery.

Through this exploration, the Las Vegas paintings reveal the unexpected connectedness among

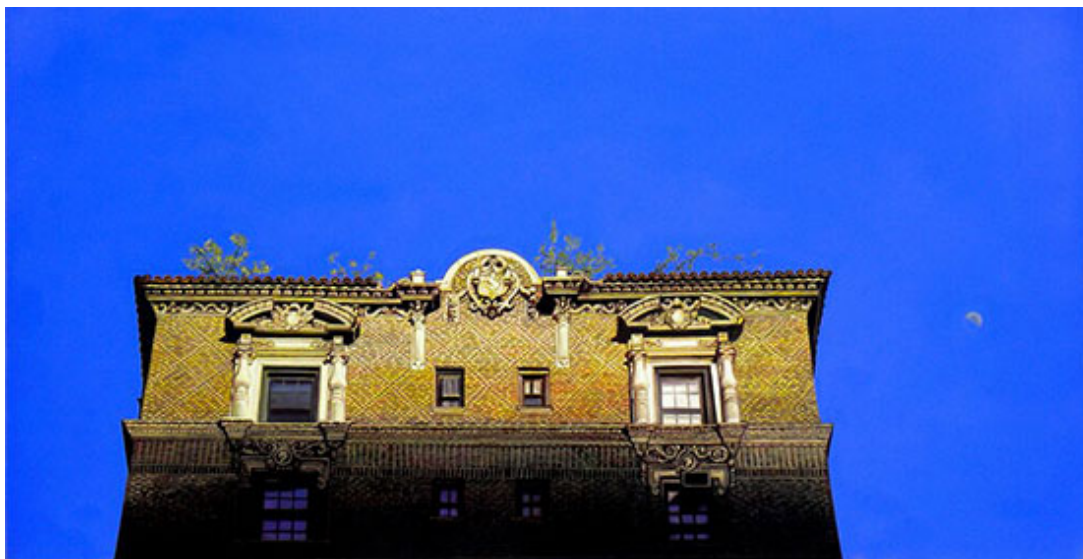
people and, perhaps, the joy that can be found in getting to know those around us ... especially when encounters are face-to-face instead of virtual.

Rachel Moseley's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally and is held in numerous private collections.

Moseley and O'Hagan both explore identity, youth and contemporary culture in their art. This exploration also speaks to the mission of HMI. Gallerist Richard J. Demato continues his philanthropic efforts by raising both funds and awareness for the Hetrick-Martin Institute during the opening reception. A wine auction and a percentage of art sales during the event joins with a gallery donation to the organizations' efforts to create a safe environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth between the ages of 13 and 24 and their families, according to their website.

"HMI has always believed that the arts are an incredibly valuable tool helping people to build bridges which allow them to achieve greater understanding of the shared journeys we make and the common challenges we face," wrote HMI CEO Thomas Krever in an email to Hamptons Art Hub. "HMI is deeply grateful to RJD Gallery, its owner, Richard Demato, and the artists Rachel Moseley and Katie O'Hagan, for building a bridge of understanding and support with us and the LGBTQ youth we serve."

"The Girl Next Door" has much to offer viewers. My advice? Before entering the gallery, leave expectations at the door. The people and places in these paintings will match, and maybe surpass, what might be anticipated in narrative figuration and paintings that portray places as a principal player.



"Penthouse in Upper East Side" by Marco Martelli. Oil on linen canvas, 24 x 47 inches. Courtesy of RJD Gallery.

BASIC FACTS: “The Girl Next Door” is on view July 22 to August 14, 2017 at [RJD Gallery](#) in Bridgehampton, NY. An Opening Reception takes place on Saturday, July 22 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. A percentage of art sales and a raffle at the reception benefit the Hetrick-Martin Institute. RJD Gallery is located at 2385 Main Street, Bridgehampton, NY 11932. www.rjdgallery.com.

The exhibition can be viewed online at Artsy by clicking [here](#).

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