YOTAM ZOHAR

BORN
Jerusalem, Israel. 1984

WORKS
New York City (Brooklyn)

EDUCATION
The Ohio State University, BFA in painting
Eastern Illinois University, MA in painting

MATERIALS
Oil on wood panels, digital optical tools (cameras and computers)

SUBJECT MATTER
Human figures in a real setting and trying to bridge an essential emotional and narrative gap between subject and viewer.

INSPIRATION
People with a striking or compelling pose or face. An aesthetic response to a scene or the beginning of a narrative.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE
These paintings are made from compositied photos taken on the New York City subway. The subjects do not know they are being photographed and Zohar does not engage them in conversation or ask permission. This separation between artist and subject enhances the voyeuristic quality of the work and opens up the possibility of varied narratives.

TO TAKE AWAY
Consider the way that a painting acts as a conduit between the viewer and the subject of the work. The viewer is one degree of separation from a direct candid observation of the people in the paintings. In this sense the paintings are about the act of looking, and in a larger sense they are about the human compulsion for empathy.

HOW COULD THIS RELATE?

CREATIVE WRITING
Each painting is a bit like a poem in that it reduces a life to a single moment, at once both infinitesimally brief and eternal. What stories can you create from these characters?

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY
Zohar composites multiple photos to create the source images for his paintings, yet they are actual people photographed surreptitiously. How is this different from showing the photos themselves? Would the paintings change if the subjects knew they were modeling for an artist? Does this increase or decrease their “public isolation”?

PHYSICS
How does figurative painting capture the energy of the figures it depicts? Can this work be seen as a comment on energy within the framework of time?

For more information:
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