

We are taught to set high goals and reach for the stars. Yet many of our aspirations are not achieved. It is at this point, when we feel our lowest or most discouraged, that the pursuits of others-or the images of their greatness provide us with inspiration. This show focuses on how we, as a society, elevate celebrities, politicians, sports figures, scientists, as well as the everyday person, to the level perceptions of courage, uniqueness, and our ability to overcome limitations.

This show also explores how we have assigned, or projected, idealized and hoped-for attributes to either real or fictitious figures. Placing these ideas onto an image that symbolizes our aspirations creates an idol or an icon. Through the centuries these idols and icons become part of a society’s definition of traits, qualities, and ambitions. It is difficult to imagine a world without their presence and what they provide for us; they are part of our current and our past mythology.

In the fast paced, ever changing world in which we live, “traditional values” are ambiguous and often undefinable. The pop culture of the ‘60s defined a value system that put an emphasis on popularity, transience, sexiness, glamour, youth and immediacy. These qualities are forever contained in our idols and, in some cases, these idols have achieved the stature of an icon. Artists,

throughout history, have been able to capture the inherent qualities that illustrate a power of presence. They reveal the nature of strength, perseverance, and ride found in the family; and, through self-portraits, artists reveal a part of themselves.

Sometimes artists pay reverence to ideas or people by publicly honoring them. Artists of all generations have paid respect to the ancient Greeks and Romans by using their stylistic devices in art, literature, and music. Today artists pay respect to other artists from decades past by taking their ideas or images and using them as their own. In this way artists elevate other artists to an heroic level, and at the same time validate the unique insights and commentaries made by the artist about the conditions of life in our society. Through the cycles of our lives. These visual manifestations of higher standards and abilities are used as points of reference to explain and define our lives. They provide introspection for us and are a reflection of our past. The qualities inherent in heroes, heroines, idols, and icons have been with us always; they are the source from which our mythology is made. Although the forms and representations of our values may alter with future generations, directing ourselves toward a higher image does not.

Essay by Mario Ontivers & Tina Rinaldi

Heroes Heroines Idols & Icons

EXHIBITION
INFORMATION

ARTISTS' CATALOGUE

Thomas Hart Benton Harry S. Truman (Done from a sitting after his presidency) Pencil drawing Collection of Jessie Benton	1971	Frank E. Dixon Hero Oil on canvas Courtesy of Works Gallery Batman [as interpreted in the 1989, multi-million dollar, box office smash] is a hero of the dark, a doer of great deeds, a tremendously creative crime fighter, but living for revenge. Stalking the killer of his parents by night with ingenious devices Batman has but one goal. Frank Dixon	1989
Thomas Hart Benton Untitled Burt Lancaster, from the filming of The Kentuckian) Pencil drawing Collection of Jessie Benton	1953	Frank E. Dixon New Dads Oil on canvas	1984
Thomas Hart Benton Untitled Pencil drawing for his last self-portrait) Pencil drawing Collection of Jessie Benton	1970	Frank E. Dixon Peek-A-Boo Oil on canvas Courtesy of Works Gallery	1983
Horace Bristol Grapes of Wrath - Joad Family Applying for Relief Silver print Courtesy of G Ray Hawkins Gallery	1938	The “Peek-A-Boo” image deals with the trickster cycle of the hero myth. Here we see a father image, heroic in proportion to the child, but momentarily controlled (blinded) by the games of the infant. The image is lent an ironic note by the fact that the child also has no eyes (vision). In this case the painting is a self portrait, the artist being both child and father. Frank Dixon	
Horace Bristol Rose of Sharon Silver print Courtesy of G. Ray Hawkins Gallery	1938	Brad Durham Hierophant Oil on paper Courtesy of Carl Bornstein	1987
Horace Bristol Tom Joad Silver print Courtesy of G. Ray Hawkins Gallery	1988	The Heirophant was the chief priest and expositor of the ancient Greek Eleusian mysteries. The mysteries were associated with the secret cult of Demeter, the goddess of fertility and agriculture, and her daughter Kore (fathered by Zeus and also known as Persephone), the goddess of the underworld.	
Yreina D. Cervantez Homaje a Frida Kahlo Watercolor on paper Courtesy of Artist	1978	Merill Gage Defiance (John Brown) Original plaster Collection of Thomas Anderson	c 1947
Francis de Erdely Ironing Woman Charcoal on paper Collection of Thomas Anderson	c 1945	Margaret Garcia Willie Oil on canvas Courtesy of the Artist	1964
Francis de Erdely Untitled (steel worker) Oil on canvas Collection of Thomas Anderson Courtesy of Kelly Gallery	c 1945	Ignacio Gomez Astronomers Acrylic on board Courtesy of the Artist	1990
Jeff Del Nero Homage to the Onion Pickers Litho-crayon on paper Courtesy of the Artist	1986		

Ignacio Gomez Zoot Suit (Pachuco) Acrylic on board Courtesy of the Artist	1978	Don Hendricks Martyred Mouse Oil on canvas Collection of Charles and Nan Foster	1984
...A realization that Disneyland is a strange kind of heaven on earth, a wonderful environment of perfection, with many religious allegories. I have strong Christian ethics, but it would seem trite to paint Christ on a cross in the 20th Century. So I used symbols of our culture for “Martyred Mouse.” The x-acto knife represents death, the cartoon figure is the crucified Christ, the eraser wipes out the sins, and Donald Duck is the people walking away. Don Hendricks		Jasper Johns Moratorium Photo offset lithograph 298/300 The Hatch Collection, Los Angeles	1964
Jasper Johns’ “Moratorium,” painted in the nontraditional colors of green, black and orange, has little to do with his commentary on the American Flag or patriotism, but rather acts as a device for visual trickery. The title, meaning “a period of permissive or obligatory delay,” implies the effect Johns wanted to create.		Stare at the dot in the center of the flag for at least 30 seconds. Then, quickly turn your eyes to a white paper or a white wall The tag should appear in its usual colors. This phenomenon is known as, afterimage. The faint colors that remain after looking at a white surface are always complimentary colors, thus green becomes red, black becomes white, and orange becomes blue.	
Annie Leibovitz Ella Fitzgerald, Los Angeles Cibachrome print Courtesy of G. Ray Hawkins Gallery	1988	Annie Leibovitz John and Yoko Ono, New York City Cibachrome Print Courtesy of G. Ray Hawkins Gallery	1980
Annie Leibovitz Keith Haring Cibachrome Print Courtesy of G. Ray Hawkins			
Annie Leibovitz Springsteen Silver Print Courtesy of G. Ray Hawkins Gallery			

David Levy Blue News #1 Cibachrome Prints Collection of the Artist		David Levy Blue News #3 Cibachrome Prints Collection of the Artist	
William Loveless Hawkman Burnt wood drawing and acrylic paint Courtesy of Richard Bennett Gallery		Helen Lundeborg Self-Portrait Oil on board Courtesy of Tobey C. Moss Gallery	
Helen Lundeborg Selma Oil on canvas Collection of James and Linda Ries		Jim Morphesis Thermopylae Torso #1 (Icarus) Oil, magma, enamel, charcoal, gold leaf on board Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Caliendo	1987
Thermopylae was the name of a mountain pass in ancient Greece. The name comes from a hot springs near the narrow pass. The word Thermopylae means Hot Gases. Greek history tells the story of the bravery that was shown at Thermopylae. The battle is remembered for the courage displayed by the Greek soldiers who were out numbered 149 to 1 against their enemies, the Persians. The area is now a wide, marshy plain But the hot springs remain. World Book Encyclopedia		George Peper Untitled (Thomas Hart Benton in Gay Head Studio painting his last self-portrait) Black and white photo, 2 1/4” format Collection of Jessie Benton	1973
Ernest M. Pratt Portrait of D. A. Siquieros Silver/bromide photograph Courtesy of Tobey C. Moss Gallery	c 1900	Robert Rauschenberg Signs Silkscreen on paper, 28/250 The Hatch Collection, Los Angeles	1970
Karen Innis Reid We Series: Temple Aluminum Courtesy of the Artist	1987		

Palmer Schoppe Musician Oil on canvas Collection of James and Linda Ries	1946	Nancy Shaver The Love of Art Trunk, Teacup, Framed Drawing From the Douglas S. Cramer Collection “The Love of Art” is an Homage that acknowledges the functional, formal, and aesthetic qualities of art. Here, Nancy Saver combines the trunk, teacup, and framed Degas reproduction—objects which are utilitarian, ornamental, and beautiful-to contrast their forms and textures, and thereby demonstrate their inspirational value to the artist.	1987
David Alfaro Siquieros Self Portrait (Head) Lithograph 1 -E/E30 Courtesy of Tobey C. Moss Gallery	1900	Constance Gwynn Stevens Shelley, Kashona and Beyaja Oil on canvas Courtesy of the Artist	1989
Marsha Turner Dorothy and Toto Oil on paper Cutout on wood Courtesy of L. Katz LTD	1999	Marsha Turner Marilyn, the Starlet Oil stick on paper Courtesy of L. Katz LTD	1989
Marton Varo Torso Carrara marble Courtesy of the Artist	1985	Andy Warhol Marilyn Silkscreen print 207/300 The Hatch Collection, Los Angeles	1963
Andy Warhol Self-portrait Silkscreen print, Artist proof The Hatch Collection, Los Angeles	1967		

Leigh Wiener The empty swing of Kathy Fiscus Friday, April 8, 1949 Silver print Courtesy of Leigh Wiener	
Leigh Wiener 6 Photos From the Kathy Fiscus Story, April 1949 Silver prints Courtesy of Leigh Wiener	
Leigh Wiener The Empty Swing of Kathy Fiscus One year later, April 8, 1950 Silver Print Courtesy of Leigh Wiener	
Leigh Wiener Hollywood Silver print Courtesy of Leigh Wiener	June 1963
Leigh Wiener JFK in Fight Silver print Courtesy of Leigh Wiener	April 1960
Leigh Wiener Judy in White Silver print Courtesy of Leigh Wiener	June 1963
Leigh Wiener The Legend Silver print Courtesy of Leigh Wiener	May 1956

I once thought that perhaps I, too,
could speak as great men (and women) do.
That I may touch a heart or soul
with a word or poem;
That I might someday walk
with "careful" men.

For I have felt the sting
The burning in the heart
The longing in the spoken word,
And shared tears with souls
that were not mine.

And I have walked the road
that has no end and no beginning;
Stumbling upon both sorrow
and joy--Life and Death.

The stars that have guided my way
were both heroes and villains,
And the ground beneath my feet,
both Mother and Son.

My wounds--as deep as anyone of true heart
might be expected to endure--have given me life.
And I have celebrated the opportunity
to experience the pain that heals.

But I have come to know
that all people are not meant for greatness,
And that the flame that burns in the few
is enough to be shared by the many.

And I know that if never I may walk
with a "careful" man,
It will be enough for me
to have crossed his path
and to know that he was there.

Edwin Walter Kiniry
"With Regards To Robert Odom Jr."