

TopSpin
Artists of Western New York and Beyond

Robert Harris: *Painting in Progress*

January 24-April 24, 2016

Opening reception, with artist talk at 3:00 p.m., Sunday, January 24, 2:00-4:00 p.m.



robertharris



Dancers and Paintings, 2014, oil on canvas



Mother and Child, 2014/2015, oil on canvas



Tattoo Dan, 2010, oil on canvas

Robert Harris: *Painting in Progress*

Robert Harris is perhaps the most well-known unknown artist in the Western New York region. Through his online presence, the artist declares to be “everywhere and nowhere—a life in progress.” A complex artist with both a humble nature and a glint in his eye suggests internal aspirations of resilient artistic rebellion. These dueling qualities beg the question...“*Is this the truth...the whole truth...so help you?*”

Harris’s works are painted with intentional flatness, purposefully devoid of slick-refinement and bound with sturdy black contour lines. His paintings, on occasion, pay homage to historical figures, religious deities and fictional characters. The body of work featured in *Painting in Progress* documents and celebrates the relationship Harris has, or had, with individuals portrayed.

His seemingly improvisational layering of dense, bold colors, jostles with ghostly background figurations. These compositions, heavy with atmosphere, rich color and warm light embody an aspect of documentative art-making that is both visually and spiritually refreshing.

Through his social-media presence, Harris (a.k.a. Baron Robert von Ticklebomb)—with a visual syntax all his own—updates his followers with posts such as: “painting in progress thirty-six percent finished,” “painting in progress eighty-seven percent,” or “painting in progress based on sketches from an old and tattered moleskin.” These pontifications allude to his off-base and infectious individuality. And for good measure, viewers can find a raunchy pink tongue jetting out—in defiance of the establishment. A modern-day Toulouse Lautrec, Harris paints with optimism in the face of personal and emotional setbacks—he lives a life victorious.

Michael J. Beam, Curator of Exhibitions and Collections



Jairus Daughter, 2014, oil on canvas; Saint Sebastian, 2014, oil on canvas; Jesus, 2014, oil on canvas



Saint Katherine, 2014, oil on canvas



Say What, 2014, oil on canvas



Black, White and Grey, 2013, mixed media

ARTIST STATEMENT The portrait, self-portrait and the figure have always been intriguing subject matter for me. Capturing the expression of these subjects has been a reason to paint. I primarily use oil as a medium. The use of oil paint has mystical quality that gives an ethereal glow. My inspiration for many paintings is based on my personal interactions, conversations or at social gatherings (i.e., art openings and coffee shops).

Robert Harris

instagram.com/rjartist724
twitter.com/mulattoartist
mulattoartist.deviantart.com
rjartist724.tumblr.com

He is everywhere and nowhere.

Born in Niagara Falls, NY in 1979, Robert Harris is an artist working in oil paint mediums and pen and ink drawing. His primary subject is the human figure—and numerous facets of the human condition. Harris resides in the city of Buffalo, NY where he maintains an active studio.

“Love Art. Think Art. Make Art. That’s me in a nutshell.”



Image courtesy of Julian Montague.

Education

State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

Selected Exhibitions

Solo exhibitions are indicated with an asterisk (*)

2014

Mirrored: Artists' Self-Portraits from the Gerald Mead Collection, H. Haberman Gacioch Center for the Visual & Performing Arts, Daemen College, Amherst, NY
Resurgence, Presto!
Buffalo, NY*

Members Exhibition, Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, Buffalo, NY

Cafe Taza, Buffalo, NY

Member Exhibition, Buffalo Arts Studio, Buffalo, NY

Members Exhibition, CEPA Gallery—Big Orbit Project Space, Buffalo, NY

New Phase, It's a Mod Mod World, Specialty Shop, Buffalo, NY*

2013

Fight Club I Art, Politics, and the Law, UB Art Gallery, Center for the Arts, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

Visions of Greater Buffalo, CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, NY

From Cradle to Grave, Visual Studies Gallery, Center for the Arts, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

Buffalo Infringement Festival, CEPA Gallery—Big Orbit Project Space, Buffalo, NY

Big Orbit Members Exhibition, CEPA Gallery—Big Orbit Project Space, Buffalo, NY

2012

Phase II, Rust Belt Books, Buffalo NY*

2011

Christmas Group Showing, Space 224 Gallery, Buffalo, NY
El Buen Amigo, Buffalo, NY

It's Not Me It's You, UB Art Gallery, Center for the Arts, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

Member's Exhibition, CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, NY

Member's Exhibition, CEPA — Big Orbit Project Space Buffalo, NY

First Show, Filigrees Gallery & Boutique, Buffalo, NY*

Exhibition Checklist

2/2, 2013, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Alice and Friends, 2010, oil on canvas, 22x28 in.

Alice in Wonderland in Japanese, 2012, oil on canvas, 24x30 in.

Anxiety, 2015, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.

Black/White/Grey, 2013, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Candyland, 2015, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Chiune Sempo Sugihara, 2014, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Dancing and Paintings, 2014, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Exterminate All Rational Thought No.1, 2015, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Exterminate All Rational Thought No.2, 2015, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Exterminate All Rational Thought No.3, 2015, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Exterminate All Rational Thought No.4, 2015, oil on canvas, 20x30 in.

Exterminate All Rational Thought No.5, 2015, oil on canvas, 36x49 in.

Fortune Reading, 2015, oil on canvas, 24x30 in.

Jairus' Daughter, 2014, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Jesus, 2014, oil on canvas, 16x20 in.

Love is a Dog from Hell, 2014, oil on canvas, 24x24 in.

Mime and the Artist, 2015, oil on canvas, 20x30 in.

Mother and Child, 2014, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Obsession, 2015, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Say What, 2014, oil on canvas, 24x30 in.

St. Katherine, n.d., oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

St. Sebastian, 2014, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Sweet Hell Within, 2015, oil on canvas, 24x48 in.

Tattoo Dan, 2010, oil on canvas, 20x30 in.

Thumbnails, 2014/2015, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Trivia, 2014, oil on canvas, 24x30 in.

Violence and Hot Dogs, 2015, oil on canvas, 20x30 in.

Woman and Flowers, 2014/2015, oil on canvas, 18x24 in.

Young Woman Reading, 2015, oil on canvas, 20x30 in.

TopSpin

Artists of the Buffalo/Niagara Region

The museum's Tops Gallery—dedicated to the exhibition of work by local and regional artists—presents the **TopSpin** series. **TopSpin** features a broad range of visual expressions, varied in media as well as message, and focuses mainly on new and emerging artists.

TopSpin is made possible through the generous Support of Tops Friendly Markets, LLC.

TOPS



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10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.