

ROBERT HUOT

*The Figure
through the Ages*



THE FIGURE THROUGH THE AGES

Imagery from previous exhibitions
2009-2021

THE RED CLASSIC SERIES

2008-2009

Available for viewing at RobertHuot.com

RED CLASSIC / RED FIGURE

Galerie Arnaud Lefebvre, Paris

September 19 – November 2, 2019

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN

Homage to Hans Baldung Grien in the Age of Covid-19

Robert Huot with Carol Kinne, Edward Hettig and Katy Martin

Galerie Arnaud Lefebvre, Paris

March 4 - April 30, 2021

GALLERIES

Galerie Arnaud Lefebvre

10 rue des Beaux-Arts 75006

Paris, France

Alexander/Heath Contemporary

109 Campbell Avenue Southwest

Roanoke, Virginia USA

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PRINTING

Katy Martin

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Edward Hettig

BOX SET

Portfolio of exhibition images available in 8" by 10"

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ROBERT HUOT

The Figure through the Ages

July 7 - 28, 2023
Opening July 7th

Essays:
Robert Huot
Jason Stoneking
Pascal Hausherr



ALEXANDER/ HEATH
C|O|N|T|E|N|P|O|R|A|R|Y

Roanoke, Virginia USA



"Adam"

THE RED CLASSIC SERIES

2008-2009 / Available for viewing at RobertHuot.com

The “*Red Classic Series*” was inspired by the re-reading of Kenneth Clark’s “*The Nude, a Study in Ideal Form*”. When I read it 50 years ago, I did not realize what a wonderful scholar and writer Clark is.

As a visual artist I have always been fascinated by the use of the human figure in the arts. My wife and collaborator, artist Carol Kinne, has always contended that thought we are both abstract artists, underneath it all, I am a figure painter and she a landscape painter.

Over the years Carol and I have done many collaborative pieces. In the early 1980’s in hard economic times, Carol did a series of paintings on stones, and scraps of wood. She also made a set of 15 masks drawn and painted on paper plates. These masks were the primary subject matter for a short film we made called “*Masks*”. This beautiful little film was a “continuous performance” edited in camera. More recently we’ve done “*4 Carol’s Plus*” a three-part installation and “*Masks II*”. These works involved the human figure.

Clark states that during the Hellenistic period the Greeks made a number of sculptures of older people, or “senior citizens”. These works were usually made to represent pathos or to evoke ridicule. Generally we seem to feel, as the Greeks did, that beauty is the exclusive domain of youth and older is pathetic, certainly with regard to appearance. What would come of challenging this commonly accepted attitude?

Carol and I are both “senior citizens”. This means we are over 65 years of age and this is true. I was born in 1935 and Carol in 1942. We have both experienced a variety of physical mishaps – cancer for Carol and a stroke for me. These events

have not dampened our “lust for life”. In fact, we are about as active as ever. So, in this spirit we challenge the stereotypes society inflicts on us. One might say, there is a political element to “*The Red Classic Series*” and a touch of defiance.

When Christianity was officially endorsed by the Emperor Constantine in the 4th century, a new era was born. Greek art and literature were suddenly pagan or decadent. With the Judeo-Christian preoccupation with the “word” and suspicion of the object “idolatry”, thousands of books were burned and many pieces of sculpture buried or destroyed. Fortunately, this purge was not totally successful. Eventually, the Renaissance – recovered and rediscovered – humanism! Literally and figuratively the fruits of Greece and Rome were reborn as were the human mind and spirit.

If I had to define myself in religious or philosophic terms, I would say I’m a pagan and humanistic. The earth, nature and the universe are my “gods”.

Mr. Clark is our visual time travel guide, instructing us on the treatment of human form as god and mere mortal over 2.5 millennial. In his great work, “*The Nude*” he shows hundreds of photographic reproductions of paintings, drawings and sculpture that exemplify our attitudes toward the representations of ourselves (at least that of primarily western men of 2500 years.)

Here we are now, nearing the end of the first decade in the 21st century and not much has changed. The youth cult is as strong as ever. Glamour and youth are synonymous. Older people are hearing aid wearers and are pill takers. (Sometimes these pills promise to give a few minutes of youth, but hopefully not more than four hours.)

What would happen if two old pill takers presumed to assume the poses of Greek gods or, in other words, mimic the ideals of human form represented by youth? In drawing, painting, and sculpture, the artist can place the human body in, more or



"Eve"

less, any position he or she wishes. In attempting to replicate some of these poses we found that the forces of nature, such as gravity or our less supple bodies, would not allow exact duplication. In some cases, we felt that not even the most fluid youthful could comply. This is particularly true in attempting the triple twists so loved by Leonardo and Michelangelo. So our results are approximations.

We have usually selected the image with the spirit or attitude of the original, not necessarily the most accurate pose. (Yes, our photos are reproductions of reproductions of reproductions.)

We are working primarily with natural light, which varies from day to day. Weather, time of year, and time of day are all factors. The light is hot and/or subdued and occasionally produces fortuitous accident. Our “set” is a small room (6’ x 9’ x 10’ high) and is painted red. Our “props” are red leading to the title, “*The Red Classic Series*”.

So again, our results occasionally come close in mimicking the source. There is humor, pathos, absurdity and hopefully a bit of beauty but not much youth. As artists, seniors, and survivors we have the obligation to grow and thrive. We must throw off the stereotypes and ensnarement society wishes to impose on us. Yes, aging brings us closer to our ultimate end, but we will celebrate whenever possible throughout the entire journey.

Robert Huot

Columbus, NY

June 21, 2009

It is rumored that members of the Massachusetts state legislature are proposing a law designating nude photos of men and women over 60 years as pornographic. This, they say will protect us old folks from sexual predators, Carol said, We'll have to stay out of Massachusetts, the home of American Puritanism.



"The Expulsion"

PRAXITELES' PHRYNE

The Ideal
Beauty
The cult of youth
Then and now
The wish
The preoccupation
With youth
Youthful perfection.

The image
The image of
The beautiful
Boy Girl
Always
In our mind's eye.

Appearance
Age
Aging
Aged
The older woman
Aged man
What can he
Or she bring?
What remains?
Beauty
Pathos
Is there still a celebration
To be made?

Youth



"Flirtation"

ROBERT HUOT

Red Classic / Red Figure

GALERIE ARNAUD LEFEBVRE, Paris

September 19 – November 2, 2019

Robert Huot's Red Classic/Red Figure exhibit features a collaborative series of nude self-portrait photographs undertaken by Huot and his late wife, Carol Kinne. Huot and Kinne took their initial inspiration from a reading of Kenneth Clark's *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*. While surveying the history of nude depictions across several media and spanning more than two millennia, they revisited the regular recurrence of themes and poses, dating back to the early Greeks and Romans, that had been revived in the Renaissance and continually ever since. What they saw was the system of images embedded in the very foundation of our ideas about beauty, the images from which we draw all our assumptions about the ideal human form. But as the artists were in their seventies and sixties, respectively, what they did not see were bodies that resembled their own. The few classical works depicting elderly citizens tended to portray them in a pathetic light, but when the subject turned to the ideals of beauty, only youthful bodies remained in evidence.

In an age when almost any depiction of nudity already carries a certain amount of political baggage, Huot is more concerned here with the politics of ageism. To what extent is it possible to countermand this pervasive erasure of the aged human body? And who is authorized to contribute to the definition of our corporeal ideals? As two lifelong painters, Huot and Kinne felt they held their own share of the right to this imagery, and that it was up to them to hijack it back, and challenge the ancient Greek notion that beauty was the exclusive property of the young. How could it be? When even our most basic ideas about it are thousands of years old? Here, these two artists were ostensibly looking at the entire history of beauty, but finding no reflection of the beauty they still saw in each other, or of the desire they still aroused in each other in the all-too-real world. In response, they created this series which brings the immortality of imagery into confrontation with the mortality of the body, and in so doing reminds us that Greece itself, and its ideals, are no longer young. While many of these compositions will be familiar to the viewer, the photographs nevertheless stand on their own power, and pose their own new set of vital questions.



"Snake Woman"





"Reclining Nude"

The appearance of fragile, delicate, mortal flesh, expressing its form as an identity against the backdrop of the void, is a testimony of the timeless natural story. The one that dates back to pre-Christian imagery, the one that dates back to before any imagery, the one born in the fundament of the universe, unspooling its pagan pageantry into the earth, the sky, the seasons, and the whole wealth of mystery to be found in all the cycles of life. These photographs reach back into that fertile and undefined time. Into the history of the eternal spark. Into the myths of our origin. And thus, they question the earliest depictions of humanity, and of life fighting its way free of the boundless dark.

The centerpiece of the show is a large portrait of the two artists together that recalls the expulsion of the first couple from the garden of Eden. Huot covers his face, and Kinne covers her breast and pelvis, both of them averting their eyes in anguish as they exit the scene into a foreboding blackness. But from what have this humanist Adam and Eve been expelled? From youth? From participation in beauty? From life itself? And of what, if anything, should they be ashamed?

If beauty is to be found in beholding the triumph of life, then it depends on our expanding understanding of what feeling alive is supposed to look like. After their two long lifetimes of seeing and making things to be seen, these artists refused to be banished, pushed aside, forced into retirement. They refused to simply cover themselves, medicate themselves, and quietly slip away to the tune of our blissful ignorance. They refused to obey the ultimate prescription. And their mutinous vitality is a glorious act of defiance, made all the more poignant by Kinne's recent passing. This last creative gesture that they shared is a liberating reminder that nobody owns beauty. In an art world whose head is so quickly turned by the hot new thing, and in a universe that blinks us out of existence with such terrifying certainty that we are constantly tempted to look away, Robert Huot and Carol Kinne are still looking, and inviting us to look with them, both back into the long history of our beauty ideals and ahead into the future that awaits all our mortal bodies.

Jason Stoneking



"Fighting the Philistines"



"Ingres"



"Boxer"



“Maillol”



"Hoop"

ROBERT HUOT

Death and the Maiden

Homage to Hans Baldung Grien in the Age of Covid-19

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2009-2021

GALERIE ARNAUD LEFEBVRE, Paris

March 4 - April 30, 2021

A DANCE OF DEATH

Here are, under the English title given by Robert Huot, two dates side by side that seem enigmatic to me, to say the least: 2009-2021.

For the record, I call to mind the last exhibition in 2019 at the Arnaud Lefebvre Gallery Red Classic/Red Figure (2009-2019), which featured 9 photographs - including the emblematic Expulsion - made in 2009 with his wife Carol Kinne, who died in 2016.

As I line up these dates, I suddenly grasp the temporal dreadness and find myself plunged into the heart of a precisely profane drama.

Isn't Robert Huot inconsolable about his years of widowhood? In the empty room, I imagine that he is turning over and over the photographs of Carol made in 2009; she appears so young and



"Defiant"

desirable, but how to reach her? So is this how he would have decided the self-portrait to enter the dance?

It took the artist several years to come to conceive this grotesque oratorio, mainly in red and black, digitally inlaying his flesh into the flesh of the vivid images of his young daughter of a woman.

Here we go. Death is here, but the soul is weary. And it is not death that threatens with its scythe, but it is death that is invoked in these gestures of supplication and offering that I lend to the old man, the model, the artist.

I do not see in these photographs any form of symbolism, any allegory, and it is precisely through this straightforward confrontation that the whole of humanity unfolds its desires and sufferings.

Here again at work, the whole power of art, and I fantasize in what Robert Huot might finally say: “In this, I join yourself in having inscribed myself in your image.”

Does he say so? I like to believe that he delivers among us, and luminously, these photographs as an admission of an indefectible melancholy and unspeakable tenderness.

Love, death, what do we know about it? Let's leave it at that...

Pascal Hausherr

March 2021



"Tambourine"



"Prelude"



"Conversation"



ALEXANDER/ HEATH
C|O|N|T|E|M|P|O|R|A|R|Y

For additional information:
Alexander-Heath.com
GalerieArnaudLefebvre.com
RobertHuot.com