

I SEE YOUR FACE BEFORE ME  
EXPERIMENTS IN POP ART PORTRAITURE



PAINTINGS BY PAUL BORELLI | STITCHINGS BY BARBARA LUGGE

## ***I See Your Face Before Me: Experiments in Pop Art Portraiture***

Paintings by Paul Borelli | Stitchings by Barbara Lugge

**Join us for a Reception on Saturday, October 2, 6 to 8 p.m.**

### **Austin Art Space Gallery & Studios**

7739 Northcross Drive, Suite Q (behind Northcross Mall)

Austin, Texas 78757

512-771-2868

[www.austinartspace.com](http://www.austinartspace.com)

The exhibit is open **September 27–October 10, 2010**

Thursday–Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and by appointment

### **Artist Statement: Paul Borelli**

The exhibition *I See Your Face Before Me* includes portraits from three different series (**Squaresville**, **Radio Voices**, and **Plastic People**) I have been working on over the past two years, all of which explore nontraditional ways of representing the human face. Using different distortion techniques, unconventional materials (such as iridescent paint), and added dimension (incorporating canvas edges into the image), I hope to challenge the viewer to examine the process and ambiguities of facial recognition.

**Squaresville**, a series of sixteen square (12 x 12) portraits depicting icons of the uncool, investigates the effect of color, reflectivity, and shape on the human portrait. The portraits force each face into a 12 x 12-inch square panel that wraps around the 1.5-inch side panels to give a three-dimensional effect. Additionally, reflective iridescent paint on the eyes and teeth of each subject and a monochromatic palette for skin and hair push the traditional human portrait into unfamiliar territory, with sometimes enlightening or disturbing effects.

**Radio Voices** is a series of portraits of DJs at KOOP Radio 91.7 FM in Austin represented as disembodied voices transmitted from the studio to the listener over a pattern of sound waves. I conceived this series after pondering the number of disembodied voices we encounter through various technologies (radio, automated telephone response systems, robocalls, etc.) and the disconnect between the personality and appearance we imagine the speaker embodies versus their actual visual appearance.

**Plastic People** is a series of famous people (mostly baseball players of the 1950s & 60s) whose portraits are rendered in a collection of seemingly random abstract shapes and strange colors that somehow coalesce into recognizable faces. These portraits demonstrate our desire to see the recognizably human in that which isn't.

### **About Paul Borelli**

Paul Borelli is a self-taught visual artist living in Austin, Texas. His work explores the intersection of realist representation with the limits and anomalies of human vision, both physical & psychological. He is also currently a DJ at and former Music Director of KOOP Radio in Austin, and is the sole proprietor of Wildebeest Records

([www.wildebeestrecords.com](http://www.wildebeestrecords.com)). He holds a B.A. from Auburn University and an M.A from

the University of Texas at Austin. For additional information about his work, please visit [www.borelliart.com](http://www.borelliart.com).

### **Artist Statement: Barbara Lugge**

For *I See Your Face before Me* I am presenting a group of hand-stitched portraits that are slightly larger-than-life, idealized renditions punctuated with symbolic elements. The first portrait was stitched in 2007, for an open-invitation self-portrait show at Austin Figurative Gallery. What began as a watercolor painting became an experiment in rendering with thread a painterly image. I developed my own style of stitch work—long radiating stitches form interlocking surfaces that build dimensionality and shape. Stitched close together, the smooth threads create reflective facets that make color shifts, giving the work a sense of animation. I combine this technique with traditional embroidery that I learned as a child from my great-grandmother, an accomplished tailor and embroiderer.

Included in this exhibit are a series on Michelangelo's *David* titled **Faces of David**, and a series of **Peace Portraits**, as well as my self-portrait and family members. Each portrait takes one to three months to complete.

The **Faces of David** series uses data from Stanford University's *Digital Michelangelo Project*, which allows me to effectively fly around a scanned 3D model of Michelangelo's *David*. One portrait renders a Goliath's-eye view, the argued true front of the statue, which is blocked from view where it stands in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence.

The **Peace Portraits** include Mohandas Gandhi; peace award recipients Wangari Maathai and Bob Marley; and a civil rights montage with Martin Luther King, Jr., the Statue of Liberty, the Lincoln Memorial, and Barack Obama.

### **About Barbara Lugge**

Barbara Lugge is a self-taught visual artist living in Austin, Texas. Her current work includes abstract 3-dimensional paper constructions and hand-stitched portraits and landscapes. Her paper and stitched works share a capacity to pull viewers in for a closer inspection, and surprise them with the materials used and the meticulous work involved. In the past three years, her work has been exhibited in juried shows at the Texas Museum of Fiber Arts, Austin Art Space, Austin Figurative Gallery, studio2gallery, AVAA's 32<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Exhibit, The People's Gallery at Austin City Hall, and the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft. For additional information about her work, please visit [www.barbaralugge.com](http://www.barbaralugge.com).

For additional information about the exhibit, please contact Paul Borelli at [pborelli1@austin.rr.com](mailto:pborelli1@austin.rr.com) or Barbara Lugge at [info@barbaralugge.com](mailto:info@barbaralugge.com).