

Andrea Hornick

Culling the global landscape for artists who have been inspired by or appropriate images from the Western canon, Andrea Hornick is among innumerable female and postcolonial artists that can be identified for whom this approach is essential. At this juncture within a contemporary paradigm, these artists grapple with past/present relationships, traditions and motifs. Their deconstruction or appropriation flirts with the Western canon as serious critiques of that canon or to serve a contemporary cultural agenda. Hornick embarked on her feminist journey by reproducing portraits of women from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Originally, she interjected herself into that history via a performance, in which she posed as lecturer and the painter reincarnate of the original images.

Initially, the works were presented as mere projections of the original paintings with their designated animal spirits as collaged elements. Since then, Hornick has dropped the lecture format in favor of meticulously painted portraits of women, through the ages, accompanied by an audio guide of unique narrations. Using an iPad, the viewer can listen to 'Titles', recitations of poems Hornick has constructed, as they survey the work. With a nod toward humor and farce, she toys with the viewer on some level, not only because of the paradoxical inclusion of animal images but through text laden with anachronisms and word play.

Hornick engages in an elaborate process to interpret the lives of the women she paints. The stoic poses of these women are augmented through the animal forms inserted in the works. Hornick identifies the women's animal spirits through shamanic drum journeys. Using meditation and free association, she ultimately discovers the appropriate fauna for each portrait. For the painting of Mary Magdalene, an excerpt from a medieval altar, *Saint Mary Magdalene*, ca. 1450, Master of the Sterzing Altarpiece German, School of Ulm, it is the howler monkey. According to Hornick's poem/narrative the howler monkey "emboldens her (Mary Magdalene) to give to herself and express loudly while listening, instructed by his jungle cry..." The rest of the text is full of word play and ends with Christ and Magdalene as lovers and united. Hornick's narrative then shifts to a painting of *Isabella of Portugal*, ca. 1450, from the workshop of Rogier van der Weyden. The queen of Portugal's symbolic spirit is an elephant.

What is especially interesting in this series of paintings is the past/present dynamic that these reproductions evoke. Is an ahistorical reading of the works possible or is the intertextuality of the work in relationship to the original inevitable? Hornick reproduces the original and inserts animal forms, thus creating a new discourse based on her spiritual proclivities—in this case shamanic journeys.

However serious Hornick's endeavor of making paintings, (her reproductions are detailed and fastidious), she interjects humor primarily through recitations created for each series. She mines registries of historical images and clusters the chosen works together in series of three, two of which are related by era, and for the centerpiece, a more contemporary portrait is chosen. As with many master works, each element in the painting has a meaning from the headdress to garments, jewelry and pose.

Through text, Hornick weaves tales about the relationship between the three sitters and explains the meaning of the animal spirit chosen for each portrait. For instance in the series *Resilience*, 2014, three Jewish women are portrayed, Betty von Rothschild, Anna French Reade and Rachel Levy Seixas. The original portraits span 102 years, but by channeling the sitters, Hornick forges a relationship between them. We discover through her narration that Rothschild stages a telepathic salon. She becomes the shamanic guide to find the power animals that best represent or empower the other women in the triad. Rothschild's power animals are a pair of blesbucks, for Reade it is a giraffe and the spotted hyena for Seixas. According to Hornick, the women are unified through this metaphysical process, even though they differ in social status. In these narrations, fact and fiction are intertwined.

Andrea Hornick considers herself a feminist artist; therefore, in her journey of revisiting and repainting these historical works, she has chosen female portraits. She assumes that an absolute knowledge of the sitters is obfuscated based on the fact that the artist in most instances was male. She attempts to reconstruct their herstories, recounting active forces in their lives and personality traits that are animated by the inclusion of animals. As a performance and multimedia artist, Andrea Hornick's forays into painting show acumen for mastery of the medium. True to the multivalent nature of her artistic expression, she enlivens our perception of painting by adding layers through the spoken word.

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