

Francesca Sundsten

Portraiture

March 13 – May 1, 2010
San Francisco

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Hours: Tues. – Fri. 10 AM – 6 pm; Sat. 10 am – 5 pm



Monkey Hair, 2010, oil on canvas, 40 x 40 inches

Jenkins Johnson Gallery is pleased to present a series of new oil paintings by **Francesca Sundsten** in an exhibition entitled "Portraiture." The exhibition runs from March 18 to May 1, 2010. An opening reception for the artist will be held on **Thursday, March 18, 2010 from 5:30 to 7:30pm**. This is Francesca Sundsten's first solo exhibition in San Francisco since 1997 when she showed with Olga Dollar, this will be her second solo exhibition with Jenkins Johnson Gallery.

Portraiture is an artistic interpretation of a person or animal and often intends to capture the essence of the subject through its artistic application. The history of portraiture spans hundreds of years and has been an ever prominent subject in art. Historically portraiture was often exclusive to depictions of members of government, the affluent, and royalty for documentation purposes. Stylistically the paintings were very traditional and often sought to be realistic representations of the subject. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries portraiture took on a different course and evolved into a more abstract interpretation of the subject. The advent of photography took over the documentation of people and painters developed new interpretations of portraiture. Artists began to use bold, vibrant colors and gestured brush strokes to reveal spirit, soul, truth, and meaning behind the surface, into their work. Today portraiture takes on many forms; Francesca Sundsten has applied techniques, both traditional and modern into her canvas.

In this new body of work Francesca Sundsten applies traditional techniques while exploring elements of composition, palette, and minor abstractions of space and paint. Sundsten allows her process and the painting to dictate the characters in her works rather than forcing the subject to become something preconceived. The people and animals she depicts are not inspired by any specific person or creature but brought out by the course of the artistic process. As the artist states, "I'm working with ways of combining both the graphic and the atmospheric, realism and abstraction, the observed and the imagined, to form a cohesive whole. This work is lighter in both palette and mood than previous, and I'm hoping that a looser animation of elements within the traditional portrait form will result in a dynamic series."

Francesca Sundsten's work is as beautiful and captivating as it is unsettling. Her exploration of the human subject rapidly transcends into something slightly unusual. As seen in *Monkey Hair* the subject's hair has gone haywire as she embraces a monkey in a field creating a somewhat familiar yet disquieting scene. Mythology and Science Fiction are still evident themes in this recent series, but rather than making those themes the main focus she's allowing her process take her in a new direction. She continues to enrapture the viewer with a mix of modern and medieval, creating bizarre twists on reality like something out of a dream.

Francesca Sundsten holds a Master's in Fine Arts from Stanford University. She has mounted solo exhibitions with Davidson Galleries, Linda Warren Gallery, Diane Nelson Fine Art, Olga Dollar Gallery, and Parker/Zinc Gallery. Her work is held in the permanent collections of the Tacoma Art Museum, Microsoft, and the University of Washington Medical Center. Critical attention to her work has been received by the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, *Artist of the West Coast*, *ZYZZYVA*, *Coast Magazine*, *New Art Examiner*, and *Artweek*.