

Marc Dennis' Hyper-Realistic Paintings Of Viewers Gazing At Famous Art

By Sara Barnes



LEFT: Marc Dennis, *Betty, Lawyer, Pony*, 2013, oil on linen, 34 x 44 inches
RIGHT: Marc Dennis, *The Arousal of Admiration*, 2013, oil on linen, 40 x 50 inches

Marc Dennis' hyperrealistic paintings are centered around the gaze and ideal for viewers who enjoy spending a lot of time with a single work of art. Layered with symbol upon symbol, it's apparent that there are two subjects featured in any one of his complex compositions - the person who does the looking and the object that's being looked at. As we view how the two interact, we form a narrative about their relationship. What does it mean, for instance, that a NFL cheerleader stares at the classic *Les Femmes d'Alger* by Picasso? How do they relate to each other? And, how does this relate to us? In an interview with Hi Fructose, Dennis talks about trying to find our own meanings within art. He explains:

I saturate my paintings with truths and suggestions about human behavior, ways of looking, and the psychological, spiritual and physical relationships we have with art. Walter Benjamin, the famous social critic once said, “To experience the aura of a phenomenon means to invest it with the capability of returning the gaze.” I believe that we, as viewers and art lovers, are eager and more pleased when it happens, to find ourselves, or some semblance of ourselves in a work of art. In other words, I do my part in “returning the gaze” that Benjamin speaks of. And in this hyper self-conscious, glamour-driven, sexually-inflated and media-obsessed art culture of today, my works are satirical yet sincere, artificial yet real, and most definitely loaded with personal symbolism yet public pomp — a timely combination and expression. (Via Faith is Torment)



Marc Dennis, *Contemplation of the Mind of the Living*, 2013, oil on linen, 60 x 72 inches



Marc Dennis, *A Great Mastery of Privacy*, 2013, oil on linen, 44 x 58 inches