

BEDFORD GALLERY PRESENTS
ABOUT FACE
April 15 – June 25, 2023
Lesher Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek

WALNUT CREEK, CA (1 March 2023) — **Bedford Gallery** takes a deep dive into the practice of portraiture with the exhibition, *About Face*. This juried and invitational show examines the age-old tradition of portraits, using a contemporary lens to speculate how future generations might perceive current societal values such as beauty, power, and cultural significance. Dating back nearly 12,000 years to the Neolithic era where portraits took the shape of plastered human skulls, the act of capturing human likeness has evolved into paintings, sculpture, photographs, film, and video that represent an individual and offer insight into how (and when) the subject lived. This exhibition seeks to highlight contemporary portraits and explore how the genre continually changes and shifts as artists respond to the present moment. Over 80 juried artists present their unique perspectives along with invitational artists Claire Astrow, Dennis Brown, Jo Hamilton, Marbie, Joel Daniel Philips, and Andy Warhol. *About Face* will be on view **April 15 through June 25, 2023**, from 12:00pm-5:00pm, Wednesday through Sunday at **Bedford Gallery** inside **Lesher Center for the Arts**, 1601 Civic Dr, Walnut Creek. For more information or to purchase tickets (\$5, free for children under 13 and Bedford Gallery members), visit www.bedfordgallery.org. Tickets can be purchased online or at the door. *Bedford Gallery will be open for special hours on Saturday, April 15, 2023 for a member and press preview from 11:00am-12:00pm and a public opening reception from 12:00pm-2:00pm, after which the gallery will be closed.*

Juried by Zoë Latzer, Associate Curator and Director of Public Programs, ICA San Jose, and David Reyes, Head of Exhibition Installation and Design, Huntsville Museum of Art, *About Face* includes nearly 100 local, national, and international artists who challenge traditional portraiture with current concepts and perspectives. For many of the artists in this exhibition, rendering humans is an opportunity to record, identify, and educate viewers about contemporary

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shifts in societal values and perceptions. Among those individuals is renowned artist **Dennis Brown**, who uses a traditional portrait format to focus on one individual, Duke. By representing a Black person, the artist rallies against racist systems and places both significance and awareness on BIPOC bodies that have been historically discriminated against and underrepresented in portraiture.

Other artists in the exhibition utilize unconventional media to capture their subjects, which can be seen in the work of famed artist **Andy Warhol**. His 4-minute film portraits called *Screen Tests* embody the essence of a person. Dubbed by Warhol as “living portraits,” the *Screen Tests* stamp those caught on camera in history, proving their existence, perhaps, more concretely than paint on a canvas. Many of the artists in *About Face* also break compositional norms established long ago, like San Francisco artist **Marbie**. In her painting *Every Time*, Marbie depicts the full human form using brightly colored shapes rather than focusing on the person from the head to chest. While the intent of each artist in *About Face* may differ, they find common ground in reexamining the age-old tradition of portraits with present day context.

This exhibition is sponsored by Diablo Regional Arts Association and Leshner Foundation.

About Bedford Gallery

Bedford Gallery (BG) exhibits the work of modern and contemporary artists. The gallery is dedicated to providing the public with opportunities to learn about visual arts through public programs that are varied, accessible, challenging, and educational. Its mission is to provide exhibitions and other programs that both reflect and engage the diverse audiences of the entire Contra Costa County region. With 3,500 square feet of exhibition space, Bedford Gallery is the largest municipally operated visual arts facility between the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento.

About the Leshner Center for the Arts

Leshner Center for the Arts is the premier arts venue in Central Contra Costa County. Located in the heart of downtown Walnut Creek, the center offers three separate theatres and Bedford Gallery, a fine art gallery, presenting the best of theater, ballet, comedy, and visual art.

For Calendar Editors:

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WHAT: **Bedford Gallery** takes a deep dive into the practice of portraiture with the exhibition, *About Face*. This juried and invitational show examines the age-old tradition of portraits, using a contemporary lens to speculate how future generations might perceive current societal values such as beauty, power, and cultural significance. What began as plastered human skulls, dating back nearly 12,000 years to the Neolithic era, has evolved into paintings, sculpture, and photographs that capture the likeness of an individual and offer insight into how (and when) the subject lived. This exhibition seeks to highlight contemporary artwork and explore how the genre continually changes and evolves as artists respond to the present moment. Among the 90+ artists represented in this exhibit are Claire Astrow, Dennis Brown, Jo Hamilton, Marbie, Joel Daniel Philips, and Andy Warhol.

WHERE: **Bedford Gallery at Leshar Center for the Arts**
1601 Civic Dr, Walnut Creek

WHEN: **April 15: 11:00am – 2:00pm** only (*see details below*)
April 16 - June 25, 2023: 12:00pm-5:00pm, Wednesdays through Sundays

Opening Reception: Saturday, April 15, 2023

Member and press preview: 11:00am–12:00pm

Public reception: 12:00pm–2:00pm

INFO: Bedford Gallery members enjoy free gallery admission (plus one guest) to all exhibitions and opening receptions for a year. For more information or to become a member, the public may call (925) 295-1417 or visit www.bedfordgallery.org/memberships/levels.

TICKETS: Nonmember tickets are \$5, and free for children 12 and under. Tickets can be purchased online or at the door.

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PRESS: Contact Sydney Albin Carla Befera & Co.
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PHOTOS: Media may download high-res photos at:
<https://cbpr.co/press/aboutface/>