



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Public Library

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Hyperrealistic Portraits by Artist Vicki Walsh Offer a Startling Look at the Human Face

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego Public Library is presenting an unusual exhibition of portraits of San Diegans by artist Vicki Walsh. Titled “Skin Deep: Recent Paintings,” the exhibition will run from April 1 to May 13, 2007, at the Pacific Beach/Taylor Branch Library. The exhibition is being organized under the auspices of the Library’s Visual Arts Program. An after-hours reception for the artist will be held on Sunday, April 1 from 6 to 9 p.m. in the library gallery. The exhibition and reception are free and open to the public. Also, a half-hour interview with the Walsh will begin airing in early May as part of the Profiles artist interview series conducted by the library curator.

Throughout history, the human face has been an endless source of fascination and inspiration for artists and non-artists alike. Consequently, the challenge of creating something new and exciting in the popular, often abused, and (given the conceptual orientation of today’s art scene) somewhat out-of-favor genre of realistic portraiture, would be difficult for most artists. Thus it comes as a delightful surprise that San Diego painter Vicki Walsh, a recent MFA graduate from the San Francisco Art Institute and devotee of all things facial, has produced for her first solo exhibition a body of work that is insightful and memorable.

Walsh’s fifteen years experience as a forensic medical illustrator has served her well. Working in a hyperrealistic mode that emphasizes and magnifies imperfection, Walsh’s painstakingly rendered and glazed oil on birch panel images seemingly delve beneath the surface and are a potent antidote to our culture’s obsession with perfection, youth, and beauty. Nowhere is this more evident than in the artist’s large and devastating self-portrait reproduced on this postcard. Among the most striking and quirky aspects to Walsh’s exhibition is a series of sixteen portraits of men with bald or shaved heads. Drawn from all strata of society, the collective impact of this cross-section of humanity is extraordinary.

The Pacific Beach/Taylor Branch Library is located at 4275 Cass St. Library hours are Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Fridays, 12:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.; and Sundays, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, the public can contact the library at 858-581-9934 or visit the Library’s website at www.sandiegolibrary.org.

The San Diego Public Library's Visual Arts Program is a nationally-recognized series of exhibitions, lectures, a television program, and other art-related activities. The mission of the program is to demonstrate the Library's role as a cultural institution embracing a broad range of disciplines, while assisting San Diego's mid-career and older professional artists in achieving wider local, regional and national attention. Visual Arts Program exhibitions are made possible, in part, by contributions from individuals, volunteer efforts, and the Friends of the Central Library. For more information about the Walsh exhibition, or tax-deductible contributions to the Visual Arts Program, please contact Library Curator Mark-Elliott Lugo at 619-238-6627.

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