

TAI SHAN SCHIERENBERG

HEADSPACE

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10 March - 6 May 2023
Private View 9 March, 6-8PM

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Flowers Gallery is delighted to present a solo exhibition of large-scale portraits by Tai Shan Schierenberg, bringing together works from the 2000s to the present day. This exhibition explores Schierenberg's enduring fascination with reflecting human presence at monumental scale; and will be the first exhibition to focus on his portrait works since the 1990s.

Schierenberg first came to attention for his figurative paintings in 1989, when he was awarded first prize in the National Portrait Gallery's John Player Portrait Award, and the head has remained a central motif throughout his oeuvre. In his numerous self-portraits and paintings of others, Schierenberg mobilizes the head as a form of critical enquiry. These immersive images are often enlarged to the point of near-abstraction, reflecting an existential excavation into how well we know ourselves and others.

Schierenberg describes his practice as operating "*between different modes of reproducing reality*", navigating a perceptual dividing line between surface and representation. Hinting at form with an economy of line, Schierenberg captures the striking likeness of his sitters while creating dynamic sculptural surfaces that reflect a tension between the image and the vitality of the paint. He defines the constructed nature of his paintings as activating the experience of looking, allowing the mind to "*recreate the image every time it is viewed.*" At close proximity, gestural marks direct the eye across the surface of the painting, revealing discrete relationships between colour and form, and a rhythmic language of staccato strokes, painterly "*glottal stops*", and lyrical sweeping passages. Densely loaded brushstrokes harness light as well as colour, creating a sense of flux in the highlights and shadows refracting from their forms.

In the doubled-images of *Self-portrait as Narcissus* (2007), and *Self-portrait as Janus* (2008), Schierenberg explores the idea of internal boundaries or thresholds, creating fluid joints between one form and another. An interest in seams and edges is also reflected in Schierenberg's painterly mark-making, in which marks meet or overlap, with occasional mis-registrations offering glimpses of hidden colours underneath. Other paintings such as *Self-portrait as Icarus*, (2008) explore a precarious sense of gravity and weight; while *The General* (2018) uses the portrait as a vehicle to explore the psychological implications of contemporary ideas of masculinity.

For more information please contact Ellie Jeans: ellie-jeans@flowersgallery.com / press@flowersgallery.com



Self-portrait as Janus, oil on canvas, 183 x 214 cm



ABOUT TAI SHAN SCHIERENBERG

Born in England in 1962, Tai Shan Schierenberg lives and works in London. He graduated from the Slade School of Art in 1987. In 1989 he won first prize in the National Portrait Gallery's John Player Portrait Award, and was subsequently commissioned to paint Sir John Mortimer for the gallery and further works are held in the museum collection. Notable commissions include Professor Stephen Hawking, Seamus Heaney, Sir John Madejski and a double portrait of Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh. He was Artist in Residence at West Bromwich Albion football club from 2017-2018 as part of the Channel 4 documentary strand *Artist in Residence*. Schierenberg also regularly appears as a judge on the Sky Arts series' *Landscape Artist of the Year* and *Portrait Artist of the Year*.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 11am - 6pm or by appointment.

All images (c) Tai Shan Schierenberg, courtesy of Flowers Gallery.



Images clockwise from top left:

Self-portrait as Icarus, 2008, oil on canvas, 213.5 x 183 cm
Cut-Out Lynn, 2007, oil on aluminum, 117 x 93 cm
The General, 2018, oil on canvas, 160 x 130 cm