

HUMANISM | OLIVIA MAE PENDERGAST

4 April – 31 May 2020 | Barcelona - Spain



CATALOGUE

Man sitting with Aura | 2019 | 183cm H x 122cm W | Oil on canvas

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The artist, **Olivia Mae Pendergast (USA/Kenya)**

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Olivia Mae Pendergast is a painter; she claims it, even if she happens to be presenting photographs. It was in 2008 that this American-born artist discovered Africa, Malawi in particular. There she tirelessly painted the people she saw around her. Other trips would follow, Haiti, Bangladesh, but in 2016, her decision was made, she left to settle in Africa, Kenya specifically, where she is still established.

Even while she has recently painted landscapes reminiscent of stained glass or batiks, Olivia Pendergast's favorite theme is the portrait, the figurative in the most literal sense. Her large paintings are not anecdotal. Painting the world around her in Kenya does not in any way imply the search for effects that could be described as sensational or touristy. Even her young Maasai shepherd wears a cap like you and me!

No, she captures "ordinary" people in their "ordinary" activities in their everyday life and makes them enter our visual field with ease, almost without doing it intentionally. She saw a taxi driver, a man seated on a chair, a pregnant woman, a mother with a child; she painted them, as she saw them, without pursuing seduction, neither from the model or the observer.

The characters are painted from the front or in profile, without any particular pose, captured "as they are". The body always occupies much more space in proportion to the head; the effects of volume reside much more in the traces left by the brushes than in a deliberate search for structure; almost everything seems to be a draft, a quick sketch taken "on the fly". However, if you take the trouble to observe the canvas, nothing is left to chance.

First, the backgrounds are very worked, but at the same time very discreet, all in lightness, embellished with decorative patterns (arabesques and interlacing) generally completely out of context. They assume their role, but nevertheless they carry their own strength and evocative power.

The faces seem quite expressionless, they do not tell a story. The artist breaks down light and color into a sort of very balanced checkerboard dominated by shades of red which nevertheless show black people; the effect is very striking! The artist says it herself, she paints all those people around her exactly as she sees and perceives them.

So this apparent simplicity conceals great creativity and the search for undetectable effects, but the results are obvious, these paintings are beautiful and they move us. Their share of mystery also tickles our imagination; who is this woman?; who is this boy and even this tuk-tuk driver posing proudly in front of his vehicle? Each one carries their share of shadow, in a work which does not precisely include any.

The power of the artist is to make us think and imagine even when nothing in her paintings apparently arouses our reflection, our curiosity, our questioning. It is a triangular back and forth game between the painter, the canvas and the spectator who is forced to invest in order to fully play their role, when they least expect it.

All the poetry of her work emerges in this way, with great subtlety. And you feel its charm and sweetness at the same time as its force, not an aggressive, invasive, obvious force, but one of those forces which start from the bottom of the soul and can overturn worlds.

Olivia Pendergast is a very experienced artist! She completed her BFA at Columbus College's five year Art and Design program and began exhibiting her work in 1999. She first worked as a conceptual designer in the film industry in Los Angeles for five years.

And then, the call of artistic creativity was at its strongest; she left California and retired to the mountains of Utah to paint full time, away from the world and its artificial temptations. In 2007, she moved to Seattle to invest more in her artistic activity before discovering Africa the following year and finally deciding not to leave.

Traveling with her daughter, this self-claimed world citizen, calls herself both an artist and a full-time mother!

A renowned artist with multiple distinctions since 1999, Olivia Pendergast has also exhibited on three continents (America, Asia, Africa), in thirty exhibitions, with equal success and her works are in several important collections, including that of the Kenyan president, Uhuru Kenyatta.

Let us enter her universe, which claims to be the only dimension of man, take hold of her share of humanism which she generously offers us and take away this piece of soft light that she spreads through our souls.

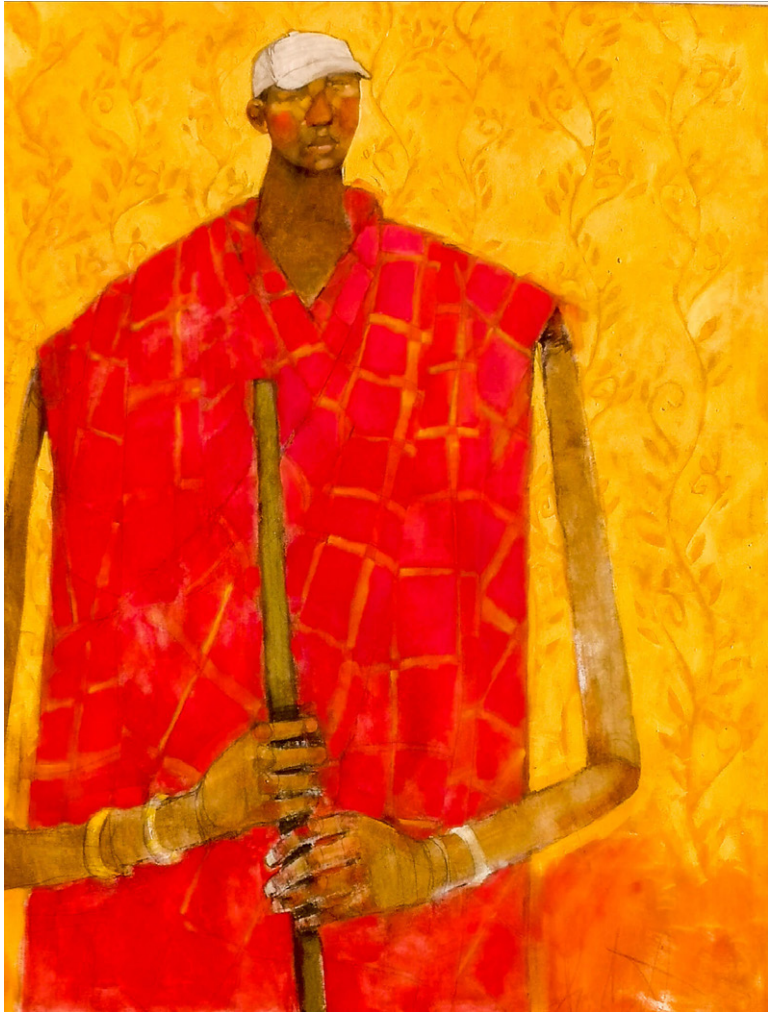
Sylvain Sankalé
Art critic
Dakar - Senegal



Tuk Tuk | 2020 | 183cm x 183cm | Oil on canvas - Contact for price



Man sitting with Aura | 2019 | 183cm H x 122cm W | Oil on canvas – Contact for price



Young Maasai Herder | 2019 | 122cm H x 91cm W | Oil on canvas – Contact for price



Woman on Pink | 2018 | 122cm H x 93cm W – Oil on canvas – Contact for price



Gachie Profile on White | 2018 | 92cm x 92cm | Oil on canvas – Contact for price



Lucy on Pink | 2018 | 92cm H x 75cm W | Oil on canvas – Contact for price

List of shows

- 2020** | One Off Fine Art Gallery **"Facing Change"** – Solo Show – Nairobi, Kenya
- 2019** | One Off Fine Art Gallery **"Aura"**– Solo Show – Nairobi, Kenya
- 2018** | Tralevolte Gallery **"Gentle"** – Solo Show – Rome, Kenya
Showcase Gallery – Group Show – Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- 2017** | One Off Fine Art Gallery **"Nudes"** – Group Show – Nairobi, Kenya
One Off Fine Art Gallery – **"Nudes II"** – Group Show – Nairobi, Kenya
One Off Fine Art Gallery **"Kenyan Atmosphere"** – Solo Show – Nairobi, Kenya
- 2016** | Hardware Gallery – **"Home"** – Vashon, Washington, USA
- 2015** | Showcase Gallery – Solo Show – **"Portraits of the Middle Way"** – Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- 2013** | Blue Heron Group Show **"Elders"** – Vashon, Washington, USA
Solo Show Hardware Gallery **"World of Women"** – Vashon, Washington, USA
- 2012** | Blue Heron Gallery – Commissioned Artist – Gala Fundraiser – Washington, USA
Children of OFK – Serenade Gallery – Addis Abeba, Ethiopia
- 2011** | **"Forgetting Haiti"** Show – Blue Heron Gallery – Washington, USA
Blue Heron Gallery – Group Show – Washington, USA
- 2010** | Utah Museum of Fine Art – Gala Invitational Group Show – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
Salt Lake City Library Gallery – **"African Violet"** – Solo Show – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
Art Access Gallery – **"Our Father's Kitchen"** – Solo Show – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
- 2009** | Thomas Gilcrease Museum Invitational –Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA
Turchin Fine Art Center – Appalachian State University – Solo Show, Boone, North Carolina, USA
- 2008** | Utah Museum of Fine Art – Monet to Picasso Gala – Group Show – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
Phoenix Gallery – **"View of Malawi"** – Solo Show – Park City – Utah, USA
Four Seasons – **"Paintings of Malawi"** – Solo Show – Lilongwe, Malawi

- 2007** | UVSC Woodbury Museum Invitational – **"Art of Life"** Group Show Provo – Utah, USA
 Thomas Gilcrease Museum Invitational – Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA
 Phoenix Gallery – **"Lyrical Nature"** – Utah Symphony Featured Artist Show – Park City, Utah, USA
 Art Access Gallery – **"Women's Contour"** Group Show – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
 Art Access Gallery – Invitational **"Plates"** Show – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
- 2006** | Patrick Moore Gallery – **"Terrain"** Show – Landscape Show – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
 Phoenix Gallery – **"Gentle Men"** Show – Solo – Park City, Utah, USA
 Springville Art Museum – Spring Salon Group Show – Springville, Utah, USA
 Art Access Annual – Group Show – Invitational – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
 Museum Of Fine Art **"Family Experience"** – Group Show FSU Tallahassee, Florida, USA
 Women's Art Center – Solo Show – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
- 2005** | Juried Solo Show – Art Access Gallery – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
- 2004** | Women's Art Center – Group Show – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
 American Ass. of University Women – Utah Women's Artists Exhibition – Utah, USA
 Thomas Gilcrease Museum Invitational – Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA
 UVSC Woodbury Museum – Women's Show – Provo, Utah, USA
 Provo Art Festival – Group Show – Provo, Utah, USA
 Artspace Forum Gallery Solo Show – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
 Best and Brightest Scottsdale Artist School Alumni Juried Show – Scottsdale, Arizona, USA
- 2003** | Maryland Federation of Art Circle Gallery – Group Show – Annapolis, Maryland, USA
 35x35 Art Space Forum – Group Show – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
- 2002** | Thomas Gilcrease Museum Invitational Competition – Juried show – Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA
 Old Town Gallery – Featured Artist Show – Park City – Utah, USA
 Chroma Gallery – Group Show – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
"Faces V" – Period Gallery Juried show – two pieces – Omaha, Nebraska, USA
 Portraiture Show – Loge Gallery – Salt Lake City, Utah, USA
- 2000** | **"Colors of Sainte Terre"** Show – Park City, Utah, USA
- 1999** | Kimball Art Center Group Show – Park City, Utah, USA

Awards

2007 | City Weekly – Best Painter in Utah, USA

2006 | Springville Museum of Art Spring Salon – Third Place – Springville, Utah, USA

2004 | American Ass. of University Women – Utah Women Artist Exhibition Best of Show

2004 | UVSC Woodbury Museum – Women’s Show –First Place and Honorable Mention

2002 | Scottsdale Artist School – Full Merit Scholarship – Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

2002 | “Art of the Parks” Competition Top Two Hundred Show – Jackson, Wyoming, USA

2000 | Vermont Studio Center Merit Scholarship – Johnson, Vermont, USA

1999 | Kimball Art Center Honorable Mention Award – Park City, Utah, USA

Collections

– President Uhuru Kenyatta . Kenya, Permanent Collection

– Art Access Gallery – Permanent Collection

– Salt Lake County – Permanent Art Collection

– Park City Mountain Resort

– Juniper Sky Gallery – Permanent Collection

Press

- Business Daily – 01–02–2019 – Painting Ordinary People with Extraordinary Glows
- 15 Bytes – "From a Warm Heart" – 08/2008
<http://www.artistsofutah.org/15bytes/08june/page9.html>
- Concert Program Magazine – 07/2007 – Featured Artist Utah Symphony and Opera
- Salt Lake Magazine – 09/2006 – "Artists to Watch"
- South West Art Magazine – 02/2005 – "Start Your Collection"
- 15 Bytes – 07/2005 – Contemporary Native American Show Review
- 15 Bytes – Holly Mae Pendergast" 03/2003 – www.artiststofutah.com – e-zine.
Park Record – "Behind the Mask"

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