



# Bodies of Work: Contemporary Figurative Painting

*Lauren P. Della Monica*

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Human forms can be intensely intimate or broadly universal. Here, figurative artists use the human form as a tool to express varied content and contemporary issues. These paintings depict our feelings and sentiments, our sense of belonging to a larger community in the contemporary world, while capturing the impulses behind the range of figuration presented by today's contemporary international artists. Portraitist Marlene Dumas presents figures in a gritty, unsentimental manner, evoking the essence of the human condition, while Kerry James Marshall paints the life of African-Americans in the twentieth-century, employing recent historical review to document the social challenges. British artist Jenny Saville paints the figure in massive scale, combined with an overt, never-ending interest in the pure rendering of human flesh. Hope Gangloff paints her figures as characters, intimate friends, and acquaintances, narrating a drama from their canvases. An important resource for those interested in contemporary figurative painting.

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