

The Durst Organization Presents

STEPHEN BENNETT

"Kinship"

LOBBY GALLERY
1155 AVENUE OF THE AMERICAS
MARCH 14 - APRIL 25

CONDE NAST
4 TIMES SQUARE
MAY 1 - JUNE 12

RECEPTION FOR THE ARTIST
AT THE LOBBY GALLERY
THURSDAY MARCH 20, 6-8 PM
CURATOR: L.L. POWERS

Images left to right
"100 Mile Smile" Tanzania, 2001
"Hulk of the Highlands" Papua New Guinea, 2007
"Beach Baby" Seychelles, 2001
"Wirrapanda Ceremony" Australia, 2003
All images 80 x 64 inches, acrylic on canvas

Sales & Information
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Selected Exhibitions:

November 2007 Solo exhibition: "FACE to FACE, Uniting Humanity"
James Gray Gallery, New York, USA

July 2007 Solo exhibition: "Into Their Eyes"
Planet Thailand, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, USA

July 2007 Solo exhibition: Indigenous Portraits
United Nations Visitor's Lobby, New York, USA

July 2006 Solo exhibition "Portraits of the World"
Sarawak Museum, Kuching, Sarawak, East Malaysia

November 2005 Solo exhibition: "Portraits of the World"
Brunei, Empire Hotel and Country Club, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei

April 2004 Solo exhibition: "Portraits of Australia and Namibia"
Toledo, Ohio, The Wolfe Gallery, Toledo, Ohio, USA

February 2004 Solo exhibition: "Portraits of the World"
Brunei Empire Hotel and Country Club, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei

December 2002 Solo exhibition: "Prints of portraits
from Tanzania, Namibia and the Seychelles"
Arusha, Tanzania South Street Seaport Mall, New York, USA

July 2002 Solo exhibition: "Portraits of Tanzania, Namibia and the
Seychelles"
Arusha, Tanzania Cultural Heritage Centre, Arusha, Tanzania, Africa

October 2001 Solo exhibition: "Portraits of Tanzania and the
Seychelles"
Toledo, Ohio, The Wolfe Gallery, Toledo, Ohio, USA

June 2001 Solo exhibition: "Portraits of Tanzania and Seychelles"
Mahé, Seychelles National Art Gallery, Mahé, Seychelles

October 2000 Solo exhibition: "The Treasures of Polynesia"
Toledo, Ohio 20 North Gallery, Toledo, Ohio, USA

July 2000 Solo exhibition: "The Treasures of Polynesia"
Papeete, Tahiti City Hall, Papeete, French Polynesia

August 1999 Solo exhibition: "Portrait of the Americas"
Toledo, Ohio 20 North Gallery, Toledo, Ohio, USA

March 1999 Solo exhibition: "The Portrait Painter"
Mexico, The Contemporary Gallery, Plaza Kukulcan, Cancun, Mexico



The Durst Organization
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Stephen Bennett "Kinship"

Since the advent of photography made documentation relatively easy, fast and reproducible, the art of portraiture has undergone radical transformations. Our brains are hard wired to recognize faces and interpret their intentions, so the primacy of the face in our visual cortex is forever. Now, after 150 years of photography's dominance as reality check, painting is once again revealing new aspects of the portrait. The art of Stephen Bennett is a powerful example of the potency of painting as a medium of communication.

These huge heads, native faces that our society considers primitive and "other", enter our space with an exuberant, monumental presence. In their piercing frontal gaze we experience the shock of recognizing ourselves...even more, they seem to be observing us, peering into our reality as visitors from afar...we become the specimens on exhibit. We are the curiosity, they are the norm.

Unlike Chuck Close, whose portraits are dominated by and subsumed to the painting process, Stephen Bennett's portraits, while always aware of the formalisms (mark making, composition, color balance, and the ultimate reality of the picture plane), never lose touch with the humanity and character of their subjects. By shifting the color palette and emphasizing the paint application, the image is lifted from mundane ethnographic documentation to achieve a more expressive and insistent presence.

The sheer size of many of these works seems to invite us to scrutinize the intimate details of these faces. But their gaze invariably turns the mirror back on ourselves. Bennett's work truly shows us that we are part of the family of man, perhaps as we would be perceived by extraterrestrials, the differences between us little more than quirks of culture.

LL Powers
Curator




"I hope my portraits reveal that every single person of every race and culture is inter-connected, indispensable and radiant with astonishing beauty."

Stephen Bennett

Such is the life's goal of portrait painter, Stephen Bennett. His mission has evolved through 15 years of world travel to 23 countries as he chronicled each of these distinct, indigenous threads in the tapestry of our global community. The massive scale of many portraits conveys the dignity and vitality of cultures often overlooked, while his vibrant, intuitive colors and mesmerizing eyes evoke the spiritual essence of his subjects. If recognizing ourselves in others can unlock our hidden brotherhood – then Stephen Bennett has succeeded in uniting humanity one face at a time.

Victoria Graham

 The Durst Organization maintains a continuing program of support for the Arts. By providing venues for exhibition in the lobbies of our buildings we hope to increase the presence of Fine Art and contribute to the cultural richness of the city.