
TOUCHSTONEGALLERY

TIMOTHY JOHNSON:

“Two if I See”

AT THE TOUCHSTONE GALLERY, WASHINGTON D.C. IN JUNE 2015

The playwright George Bernard Shaw once wrote, “You use a glass mirror to see your face. You use works of art to see your soul.” Ponder that quote when you see Washington D.C. artist Timothy Johnson’s latest exhibit of paintings, entitled *Two If I See*, showing at the Touchstone Gallery during June.



Johnson, a recipient last year of a fellowship grant from the D.C. Commission for the Arts and Humanities, pairs historical and noted figures in mirrors with their own alter egos: that brother, that partner, that nemesis, with whom it is unlikely we would even know their names; the second self incarnate painted in lush color and texture. Don’t expect to see the famous visages accurately depicted; the artist uses friends, colleagues and himself as models, with striking results.

In *the Wright Brothers...Orville and Wilbur envision*, Johnson paints the aviation pioneers: the contemplative Wilbur and the impulsive Orville. But the artist shows them as mirror images, flip sides of a coin and who alone could never have achieved the heights they did. We see the brothers at a triumphant moment; oracles into the future without leaving their small Dayton living room.

In *The Kray twins...Reggie and Ronnie visit Mum*, the violent East End gangsters don suits of muted grey which contrast with Mum’s indigo housedress and the brash green wallpaper. Mum is shown just out of range; her expression stark and twisted, while the boys pose self-possessively. In *Theo on a Visit to Arles*, Johnson shows Vincent Van Gogh and his younger brother as mirrored reflections during a visit to the former’s bed chambers in Arles: the ruddy, depressive Vincent and the nurturing Theo, one the tormented artist and the other a supportive and shrewd art dealer. Only united do we know today the post-impressionist paintings of sunflowers and starry nights.

Not all of Johnson’s canvas pairings portray brothers. With a playful skewing of chronology, his piece *Sarah and Hagar ... nation building*, shows the reflected biblical mothers of Abraham’s sons Ishmael and Isaac: mottled, middle aged matron and younger servant, both in aquamarine pullovers; both great with the sons who would father the Arab and Israeli tribes. The declinations of the story and the characters: slavery and freedom; law and grace; earthliness and transcendence, are famous. Yet, as Johnson paints them, in glorious shades of blue and clay red, the women are mirror images, one in the same.

Johnson’s exhibit includes several more extraordinary paintings and will be on display at the Touchstone Gallery from June 3rd through June 28th.

For more information please contact Ksenia Grishkova, Director, at 202-347-2787 or info@touchstonegallery.com
Gallery hours: Wednesday- Friday 11-6, Saturday-Sunday 12-5

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