

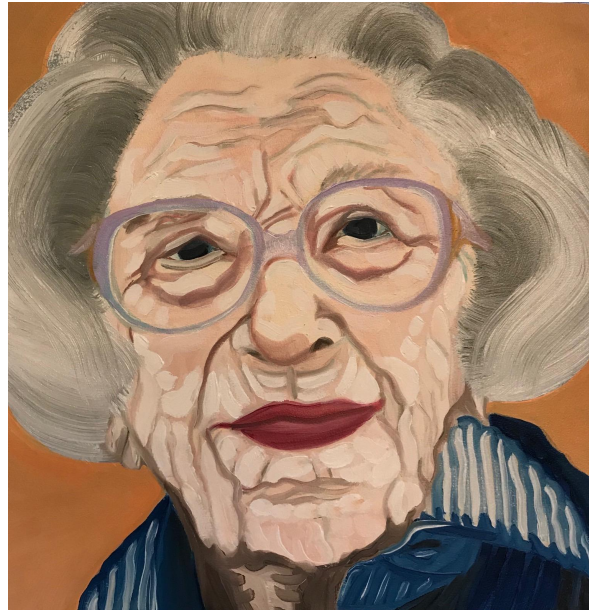


Art League Houston
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For Immediate Release

Late
Kathy Drago

Exhibition Dates: February 18 – April 16, 2022
Opening Reception: 6 – 8 PM Friday, February 18, 2022
Artist Talks: 2 PM Saturday, February 19, 2022
Hallway Gallery



Kathy Drago, *Margo*, 2019, Oil on wood. Image courtesy of the Artist

January 21, 2022. Houston, TX - Art League Houston (ALH) is proud to present *Late*, an exhibition of recent work by Houston-based Artist, Kathy Drago in the Hallway Gallery. *Late* features nearly 100 portraits of women, age 75 and up. Sourced from iPhone snapshots, social media posts, or grainy obituary photos, these portraits, which are painted on small, round-edged wood panels that evoke Kodak slides or Polaroid pictures in a family photo album, pay homage to women in their later years. With their direct gazes and faces cropped, the women seem to lean out from the wood panels, welcoming viewers into a conversation. Drago describes the paintings as a close look at her own mortality, sparked by the death of her mother in 2015. The format of the portrait invites not only a reckoning with aging, but an appreciation of wisdom in the accumulated years of the subjects.



“I paint in oil, in layers, and work on several paintings at a time,” Drago says. “It’s a slow, contemplative process, but it serves me because the old women surround me in my studio and I have time to get to know them. I think about each woman’s life story—who she used to be and who she is now and how best to show it. I draw on my background in theater arts and approach these paintings the way an actor builds a character, using the outer physicality to reveal inner emotions and motivations. Old faces—the topography of the eyelid drapes, droopy jowls, neck flab, and the asymmetry of the wrinkled face, all features that are disparaged in our culture—tell compelling stories.”

Kathy has exhibited work in and around Houston and was a Lawndale Big Show award winner in 2017. Her winning painting titled, “I am so UPSET!”, was the first portrait of an old woman she painted. Since then, she has painted over a hundred old women and, as she paints, she fills in the blanks as their life stories swirl around in her head.

“I enjoy painting ‘old-old’ women. I think they are underrepresented as subjects, and deserve to be painted,” Drago says. “One 94-year-old woman, Margo, cried when she saw my work. She explained that she loves it when her daughter takes her to a museum or a restaurant but is saddened when other people look past her, as if she were invisible. She said my paintings make people pay attention to old women and then asked me to paint her because she wanted to join the others on the wall. She’s there now, with all the others, and I imagine the conversations they may be having.”

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kathy Drago is a native Houstonian. She received a Theater Arts degree from University of Houston and worked for a decade at The Comedy Workshop, Houston’s first improvisational comedy club. During that time, she acted, directed, and taught comedy improvisation classes to countless Houstonians. She later taught theater in public schools before becoming a school administrator. All the while, she drew and painted as much as possible. Upon retirement, Kathy studied at the Glassell School of Art at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and from 2019 through 2020, she participated in the Glassell Studio School Block, a program for emerging artists with independent practices.

For more information, visit www.artleaguehouston.org, or contact Jimmy Castillo, Director of Exhibitions and Curatorial Projects, at jimmy@artleaguehouston.org or 713-523-9530.





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