

For Immediate Release

## KAREL FUNK

Opening Friday, January 28<sup>th</sup>

303 Gallery is proud to present our fifth exhibition of paintings by Karel Funk, opening in the gallery's Project Room later this month. Funk's hyper-realistic portraits depict his subjects from the back, their physical bodies hidden by hooded coats made of synthetic, technologically engineered materials. His subjects' identities remain anonymous, their unseen presence visible only through the folds and contours of their colorful outerwear.



The artist's highly stylized approach nods to both the revered symbolism of traditional Renaissance and 17<sup>th</sup> century Flemish portraiture, and that of contemporary outerwear and tech gear. With these new works, Funk brings his paintings into a more psychedelic realm. Devising a method to render kaleidoscopic color, as seen in *Untitled #105*, Funk used photoshop to create a symmetrical amalgamation of the garment's optimal visual state. This kaleidoscopic effect contributes further complexity and intensity to Funk's portraits, while adding a satisfying psychological dimension. In *Untitled #102* Funk turns his hand towards metallic materials which further amplify his interrogation of form and refraction.

Funk's conscious inversion of portraiture's traditional function serves his ongoing exploration of selfhood, as seen and experienced amongst strangers in the public realm. By placing these larger-than-life, shrouded figures against stark, white backdrops, and using an obsessive attention to detail, Funk evokes an investigative response from the viewer. His paintings become intimate encounters with the unknown, depicting a closeness or understanding of the subject that remains just out of the viewer's grasp.

### About the Artist

Karel Funk lives and works in Winnipeg, Canada. He received a BFA from the University of Manitoba in 1997 and an MFA from Columbia University in New York in 2003. Over the last decade he has investigated the possibilities of figurative portraits, finding a bridge between historical signifiers, the dominant being renaissance portraiture, and contemporary urbanism. Using acrylic paint Funk builds his portraits through a glazing technique, often taking months to

complete one painting. Funk has had five solo shows at 303 Gallery in New York, three museum shows and participated in several group shows in North America and abroad. In 2016 Funk was the subject of a museum retrospective held at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. His work is in the collections of institutions such as the Guggenheim, Whitney Museum and the National Gallery of Canada, as well as many private collections.

## CONTACT

For further information on Karel Funk, please visit his artist page or contact Cate Higgins at [cate@303gallery.com](mailto:cate@303gallery.com).

For press inquiries, please contact Sarah St. Amand at [sarah@303gallery.com](mailto:sarah@303gallery.com).

303 Gallery is open Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm.

Image: Karel Funk, *Untitled #105*, 2022, acrylic on panel, 25 x 32.5 inches (63.5 x 82.6 cm)

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