

February 25, 2015



DUANE MICHALS: THE PORTRAITIST

Photo Above: Duane Photographs Anthony Red, 2015/2015, Oil on five gelatin silver prints with, hand-applied text, mounted on board, Edition 1/5, © Duane Michals. Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York

No one is what they appear to be, especially posing in front of a camera.

– Duane Michals

DC Moore Gallery is showing the exhibition *Duane Michals: The Portraitist*, a selection of new work in which Michals reinvigorates the possibilities of portraiture through the innovative use of sequencing, reflections, multiple exposures, overpainting, and handwritten annotations.



Duane Michals at DC Moore Gallery on the opening night.

The black-and-white photographs on view were developed from never-before-printed negatives that Michals exposed in the course of his career. His subjects include artist Jasper Johns, photographer Art Kane, actress Hildegard Knef, and singer Barbra Streisand. A selection of earlier portraits, including those of Balthus, Bertha and Charles Burchfield, Joseph Cornell, and René Magritte, provides context for the recent work. As the variety of poses, settings, viewpoints, and formats in these images demonstrates, Michals adapts the style of each portrait to the individual, thereby eschewing any formula that speaks more to photographer than sitter.

THIS PHOTOGRAPH IS MY PROOF



This photograph is my proof. There was that afternoon, when things were still good between us, and she embraced me, and we were so happy. It had happened. She did love me. Look, see for yourself!

Image above: This Photograph is My Proof, 1967-74/c. 1974, Gelatin silver print with hand-applied text, Edition 21/25, © Duane Michals. Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York

Wary of the commonplaces of portraiture, Michals rejects the notion of “looking at people with the pretensions of looking into them.” He has developed an alternative approach, which he terms “prose portraiture.” Rather than recording a physical likeness, he works to “suggest the atmosphere of the sitter’s identity, which is the sum total of who they are....



DC Moore Gallery on the opening night.



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A prose portrait might require three or four photographs to reveal something about what the sitter does in life that defines him or her. A face does not necessarily need to be seen; most people's significance won't be found there." Michals further disrupts expectations by intervening on the surface with annotations often conveying his impressions of a person via witty or poetic commentary scrawled onto the print.



DC Moore Gallery on the opening night.

All Opening images by Carola Muis