



## **Governing Body**

A group exhibition at  
Temporary Agency Art Gallery

Works by:

Emily Gibson

Francis Estrada

Nate Sensel

Saul Chernick

Opening Reception:

Saturday, February 7 (5-8pm)

This exhibition brings together a group of artists that explore the idea of anonymity within portraiture, a contradiction in terms. It challenges the established expectation that portraiture expresses a specific identity. Instead, the subjects of these portraits present themselves in anonymous ways. However, these figures come from personal moments or documents in our collective history. The contributing artists engage in this provocation using a variety of different approaches to drawing.

Nathan Sensel uses descriptors culled from the front page of the New York Times to construct a text-based painting that remakes portraiture into a provocative list or a single ambiguous word. The word choice and arrangement make implications and allude to a narrative that exists outside of the original context. In Francis Estrada's drawings, attention is directed to the covert action being performed by solitary figures whose backs are turned towards the viewer. Rather than being explicit, the action is suggested, and the interpretation is based on personal associations. In both cases, the meaning of the works becomes dependent on the viewer's experiences. The artist, Saul Chernick creates images of infants and cherubs that fuse historical reference with contemporary subject matter. Since infants have not formed an identity yet, they remain suspended in a realm of anonymity, often defined by the hopes and expectations that adults assign to them. Cherubs are known for playing supporting roles in the narrative adventures of others. Chernick recasts them as the central figures in his drawings, yet they remain nameless and inscrutable. Emily Gibson uses silhouettes in her installations of paper bits. These bits originated in a panoramic drawing of a personal narrative, which, has been cut apart into thousands of uniform squares. In each subsequent installation the bits are reconfigured to become a temporary image that is continually subject to change. Essentially, the end result is an anonymous coded portrait with many potential narratives.

Each of these artists omits, obscures, and reconfigures information to play against the expectation that portraiture reveal an individual's identity. Instead, the viewer is confronted with an anonymous figure that calls into question this assumption, redirecting the emphasis onto a governing body, a collective that involves the viewer, the artist, and the image. The works presented here by Emily Gibson, Francis Estrada, Nathan Sensel, and Saul Chernick are about people, and in subtle ways, their relationship to each other. Each plays a role through the act of perception and projection from witness and collaborator to accomplice and informant.

### **Temporary Agency**

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<https://temporaryagency.wordpress.com/>