



Figuratively Speaking By Maggie Cibik

New York has always been an epicenter of artists on the edge of excellence, pushing the envelope and finding their voices. For every generation that cycles through the city, the historic Salmagundi Club in Greenwich Village has been a champion for artists from all walks of life. For well over a century, the club has cultivated a community, continually amplifying the voices and strengths of artists through exhibitions, competitions and events. It's what they aim to do for the contemporary figurative and portraiture artists featured in its fourth annual show and sale, *Figuratively Speaking*.

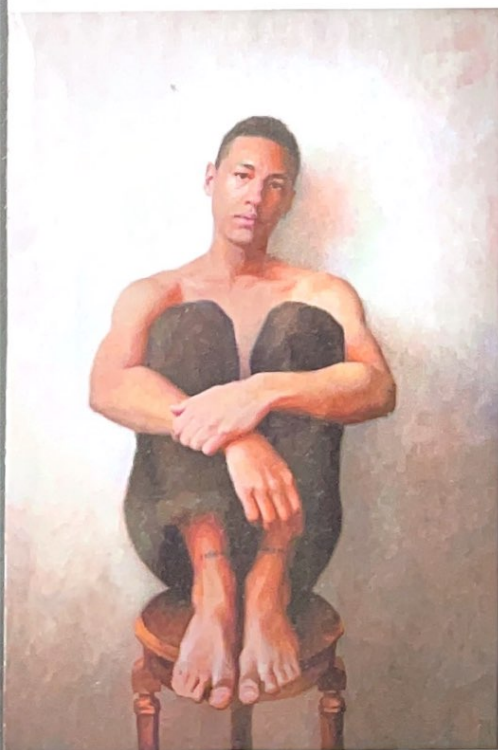
The exhibition is open to members and non-members of the Salmagundi Club and will be on view in the club's storied Skylight Gallery from August 28 to September 22, with a gala reception on September 7 with prizes totaling more than \$10,000. The exhibition features nearly 80 works by some of today's most exceptional artists of contemporary realism, and allows us to see

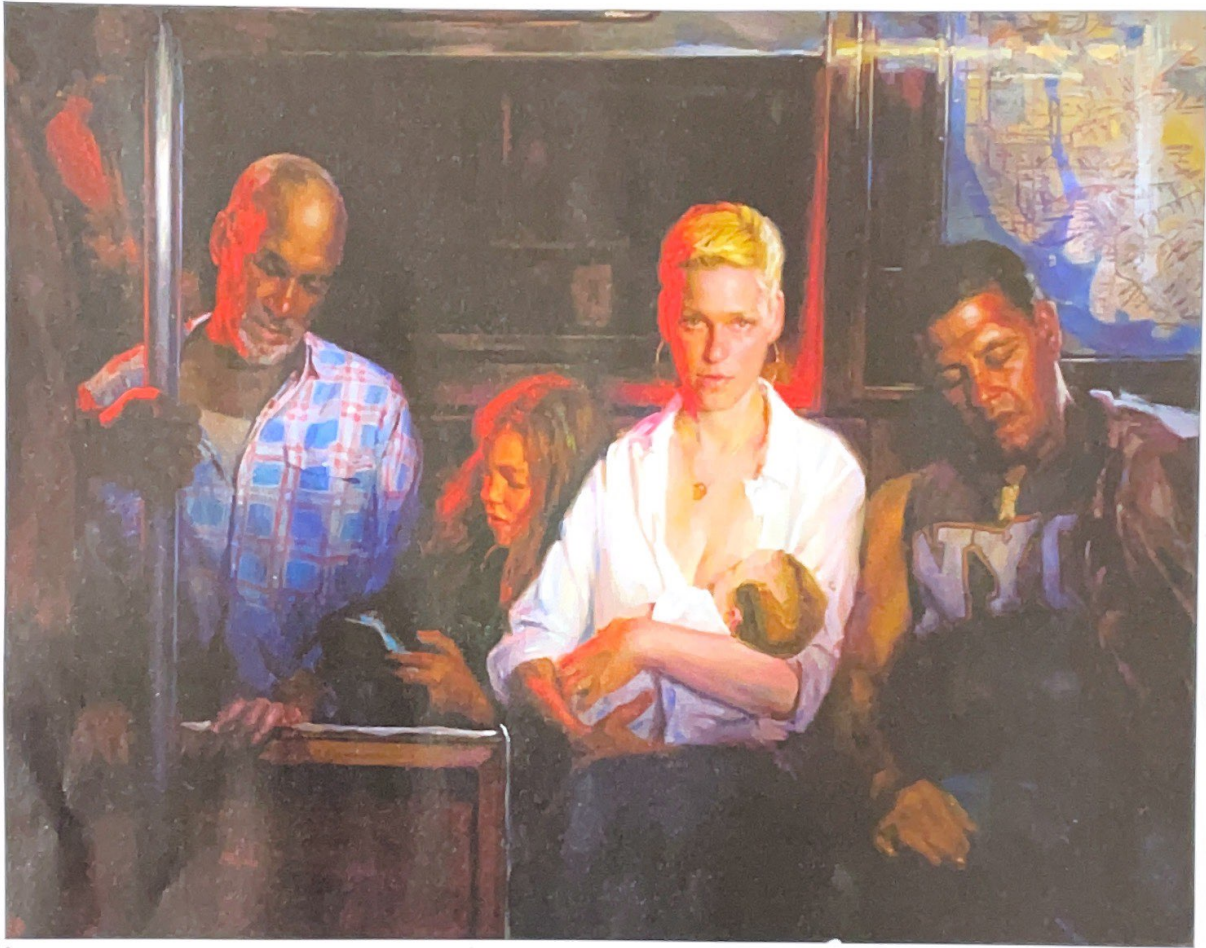
New York through their eyes and their best representation of the beautiful chaos that it is. They will explore its unique themes and narratives through multiple mediums including painting, drawing, sculpture and photography; and points of view.

Among the featured artists is Salmagundi Club member, Garin Baker, a painter and New York native happy to see figurative realism take center stage and be appreciated in a big way. His piece *21st Street* delivers a crosswalk swarmed with New Yorkers going to and fro, a scene so simple yet so layered with nuance and possibilities. Baker likens the pedestrian atmosphere to a ballet. "I'm kind of

enthralled with it, you know—the energy and the kind of rhythms of New York City," he says. "And that's kind of what this painting was." It is a quintessential New York scene and listening to Baker talk about his process, it's easy to feel like his work is a love letter to the city.

Ricky Mujica is another artist whose juried piece exudes the New York way of life. The idea for *Mother Courage* came from an experience taking the train with a screaming baby on board. The mother was doing everything she could to calm the baby down before realizing what she must do—breastfeed on the train, thus saving the day. Mujica was very moved by the



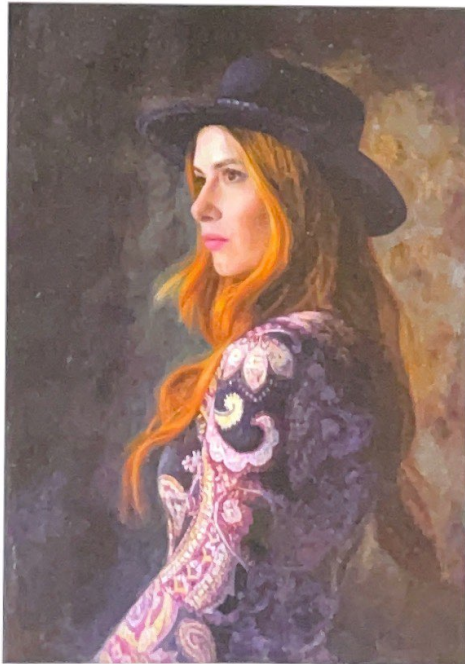


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incident, especially because his wife was breastfeeding at the same time. The theme felt personal to him and his work reflects his compassion for the human experience. The painting is a self-portrait of the artist with his family. His wife is front and center breastfeeding his son, radiating a maternal strength and empowerment. She will do what she must do for her family. The city won't sleep for her, so she won't sleep for the city.

In these pieces and the brilliant work of the other selected artists, *Figuratively Speaking* is a show that highlights achievements in realism not only in skill, but on a level of representation that can only be felt through the eyes of the beholder. Each artist, whether they are club veterans or up-and-comers, brings a piece of humanity to their art and come together as a community to shine a light on their accomplishments. They are folded into the fabric of Salmagundi's legacy as they uphold their tradition of spotlighting true excellence in figurative works of contemporary realism. ●

Salmagundi Club 47 Fifth Avenue • New York, NY 10003
(212) 255-7740 • www.salmagundi.org



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1
Shiori Mori, *Vito, No. 2*,
oil on linen, 42 x 30"

2
Garin Baker, *21st Street*,
oil on linen, 48 x 34"

3
Ricky Mujica, *Mother
Courage*, oil on linen,
36 x 48"

4
Nanci France-Vaz,
Nocturnal, oil on linen
panel, 24 x 18"