

SPERONE WESTWATER  
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**PORTRAITS / SELF-PORTRAITS**  
**from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**  
12 January – 25 February 2012

Curated by Gian Enzo Sperone

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**New York, NY: 21 December 2011** – Sperone Westwater will present an exhibition of portrait and self-portrait paintings by notable European and American artists from the sixteenth century to the present. This survey includes Old Master paintings from Italy, France, England, and The Netherlands, as well as works by modern and contemporary artists.

The breadth of the works in *Portraits/Self-Portraits* demonstrates that portraiture has been an on-going and reoccurring theme in art history, especially in Western culture, for centuries. The earliest portraits were created to illustrate physical or material attributes of the sitter, which historically included nobility, family, friends, lovers, and the self. According to Angus Trumble, Senior Curator of Paintings and Sculpture at the Yale Center for British Art – who has written the essay for the *Portraits/Self-Portraits* catalogue – in the seventeenth century, the focus of portraiture shifted to capturing the character or essence of the person. Since the Renaissance, there has been a dichotomy between what portraits – many of which were commissioned – represent or elucidate versus the “likeness” of the sitter. Portraits can depict a person’s wealth, power, piety, occupation, time period, cultural and personal interests, as well as emotional states.

The exhibition also acknowledges new scholarship on works from the sixteenth and seventeenth century. *Portrait of a Gentleman* from the mid-sixteenth century was recently attributed to Michele di Ridolfo del Ghirlandaio (Florence 1503-1577), the Italian painter of the Renaissance and Mannerist style whose workshop was one of the most important artist’s shops in Florence during this time. In contrast, the painting *Portrait of a Young Gentleman* by Jacopo Negretti called Palma the Younger (Venice 1548-1628) has a warmer palette, reminiscent of Tintoretto or Titian’s works. A primary portraitist for the Florentine court in the sixteenth century, Jacopino del Conte’s *Portrait of a man with gloves* is a half-length frontal view of an austere looking man holding gloves, and it has a refined and elegant dark palette. *A Young Soldier* (1624) by Theodor Rombouts (Antwerp 1597 – 1637) is one of the artist’s few dated paintings, and it captures the soldier’s emotional state. Other historical masterworks include those by Leandro da Ponte known as Leandro Bassano (Bassano 1557 – Venice 1622), Nicolas de Largillière (Paris 1656 – 1746), Richard Van Bleeck (The Hague 1670 – 1733 London), to name a few.

Juxtaposed with these paintings are contemporary works that reflect movements in portraiture painting over the last century. Francis Picabia’s *Portrait de Suzanne* (1942) depicts his lover in a view that was perhaps taken from a photograph. Her makeup and hair indicate the fashion of the time, while her face and posture indicate an emotional state of unease. Pablo Picasso’s *Tête de Femme* (1943) is painted with vibrant colors and bold brushstrokes in the artist’s signature flat, Cubist style. Andy Warhol’s *Self-Portrait* (1986) illustrates the artist’s characteristic “fright wig” and his exploration of identity including artist as star, while Kim Dingle’s *Group Portrait* (2011) explores multiple depictions of the artist. In Susan Rothenberg’s *Memory of 1951 (Self-Portrait)*, 2011, the artist identifies herself with a toy blue monkey she was given by her parents when she was hospitalized as a child. Tom Sachs’ *Krusty* (2011) elevates the status of a cartoon character from Pop culture as it becomes the subject of not only a portrait, but a self-portrait painting.

A fully illustrated catalogue, including scholarly entries for the Old Master paintings, will be published on occasion of this exhibition. For more information, please visit [www.speronewestwater.com](http://www.speronewestwater.com) or contact Maryse Brand at +1 212 999 7337 or [maryse@speronewestwater.com](mailto:maryse@speronewestwater.com).

This exhibition runs concurrently with *Marble Sculpture from 350 B.C. to Last Week*.