

The Gaylord Apartments

3355 Wilshire Blvd.

Los Angeles, CA 90010

THINGS THAT LAY BENEATH THE FEET ARE NOT ALWAYS GOOD FOR THE SOUL

PHILLIPA HORAN

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Phillipa Horan's work explores systems of power, technology and masculinity. Images of men, often naked, subvert the traditional male gaze. These are not images of sexual objectification. Instead they force the viewer to consider our relationship to men who have accumulated power, showing them stripped of its trappings and symbols, without suits (or the luxury leisure wear of silicon valley), devices, acolytes or the coded power projection of their offices and workplaces.

Who are these men in their private, intimate moments? Do they ever reflect on how they gained and how they use their positions of wealth and influence. What does it mean to be a voyeur, when the object of our interest is a person of great power, who only appears temporarily vulnerable. Is there a risk to us? Why did they agree to these portraits, what does it say about their ambivalence with their own status?

The most rapid accumulations of fortunes and political power in recent decades have been in the tech industry. It promised us a utopia, of lives of greater convenience, less work, computers calculating their way to new cures for obscure diseases. The reality has been darker. Algorithms that reinforce the sexist, racist worldview of the white men who have dominated their creation.

In *Technotorso* a generic hyper-toned alpha torso, painted in black and white, is decorated with a ribbon cable in technicolour. In *Reflections of the Inner Self*, a man stares into a mirror as his hand reaches over his shoulder, shadowing a tattoo whose deep lines could also be old scars.

In *Contemplation in Solitude*, a man sits naked in an expensive chair, a crouched cipher of despair, his head in hands, his glasses lying in a table in front of him.

A supply chain we often choose to look away from that sees children mining cobalt to power batteries in DR Congo and farmers turned workers in Chinese factories so ruthlessly exploited that one company installed anti-suicide nets at dormitories to stop them jumping. In a surreal juxtaposition of worlds that will never meet in reality, men crouched over devices on a production line are separated by women doing aqua-aerobics, as focused

on their image and health as the factory workers are on earning a living. Two other potential customers glance incuriously, from behind sunglasses and cucumber slices, at the people who make their devices affordable. In *A Thousand Lashes*, images of hundreds of fluttering eyelashes painted on canvas or blown from murano glass raise questions about femininity and how patriarchal societies demand women make themselves attractive to men while fiercely policing their sexuality. On another canvas, *Swirls of Color*, is a depiction of glass worked into the shape of sperm, beautiful but fragile, a reflection of masculinity in crisis.

Phillipa's debut exhibition in Los Angeles is at the Gaylord Apartments, overlooking the former Ambassador Hotel, the spot where Senator R. F. Kennedy was assassinated, an apt location for work exploring the nexus of power, private lives and technology in a world of increasing conspiracy.

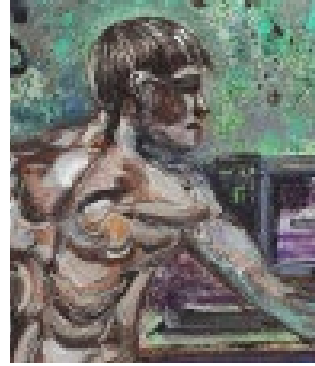
One counterpoint to a world of endlessly increasing consumption, with colonies on Mars presented as one solution to stripping the earth of its resources, is greater sustainability. Phillipa's interest in the urgent changes need to tackle the climate and environmental crisis is reflected in her working practice. She paints in oil on sustainably-sourced linen and recycled plastic water bottles woven into a canvas-like surface and primed.

She has been working with mycelium sculptures for over a decade, exploring a different, more positive vision of the world in these works. A head gazes out the window at the Ambassador Hotel turned school, one of the largest public schools in LA, and one optimistic symbol of how a site designed for consumption, and made famous by political crisis, can be repurposed for education. Above the scalp, flaming wings of reishi mushrooms are lit up from inside by a lightbulb, a modern day halo or a manifestation of the inspiration needed for the world to survive the climate crisis.

-Senior International Affairs Correspondent



FOXCONN
Oil on woven recycled plastic surface, lamp-worked and fired Murano glass, 2023
46.25 x 98.75 inches



Digital Epoch,
Oil on canvas, lamp-worked and fired Murano glass, 2023
16 x 20 inches



Vibrant Whorls,
Oil on canvas, lamp-worked and fired Murano glass, 2023,
16 x 12 inches



Reflections of the Inner Self,
Oil on Belgian linen, lamp-worked and fired Murano glass, 2023,
24 x 24 inches



Technotorso,
Oil on Belgian linen, lamp-worked and fired Murano glass, 2023,
22 x 18 inches



Glass Gazes,
Oil on Belgian linen, lamp-worked and fired Murano glass, 2023,
16 x 12 inches



Contemplation in solitude
2023, 79 x 55 inches
Oil on canvas, lamp-worked and fired Murano glass, 2023,
31.5 x 27.5 inches



Cerebral Fungi,
Reishi substrate mycelium cast head, fruiting Reishi body shade, light fixture, terracotta plinth, lamp-worked and fired Murano glass, 2023
67" height x 15" circumference