

Nolan Simon, "Portraits"

Critics' pick



Simon's off-center paintings would have fit right in with MoMA's "Forever Now" show. They employ a light, ironic touch to depict random images—faces, cute animals, boats—in a series of realistic watercolors on canvas. Resembling stock photographs or commercial illustrations, these pictures are sometimes ganged together on a single canvas to enhance their weird sense of disconnection. Simon edges them with strips of trompe l'oeil masking tape, as if to suggest that they're fastened to a studio wall. But they could just as easily represent the result of an Google image search and the impermanence of the Internet age.

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