



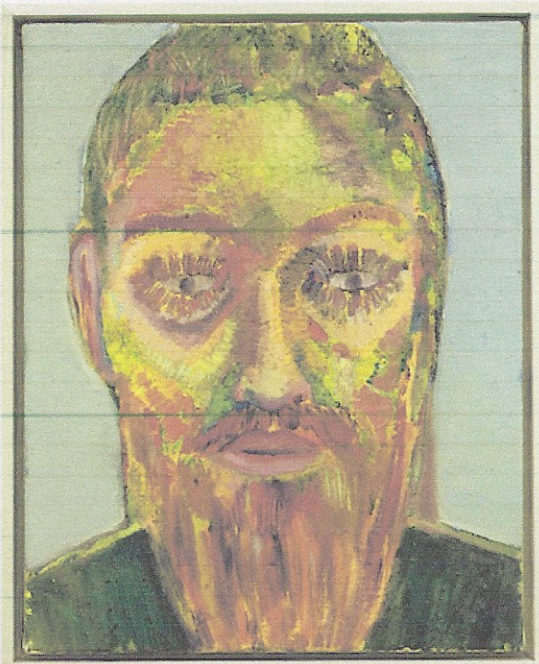
TORONTO

TERENCE DICK
SKY GLABUSH AT MKG127

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Like 19

The new Flaming Lips record came out last week and predictably it failed to measure up against their previous work. Someone once said, "You're only as good as your last song," but there's also an inclination to judge an artist against their past classics. Most people aren't lucky enough to have any classics in their history, but for those who do, they have an uphill battle to be appreciated for what comes after. It's a problem for those who peak early – or, for the Lips, in mid-career – and then keep working. Sometimes the best thing a band can do is break up. But what about a visual artist? All that's left is to keep struggling and not repeat the past. Repetition is just as bad (maybe even worse?) than throwing in the towel. Those who persevere deserve at least a modicum of respect. Ever striving, ever searching, and ever failing (à la Samuel Beckett). This is when art shifts most drastically from being a product to being a process and the audience alters its critical apparatus because we need to re-evaluate our position on the artist, their art, and the work under scrutiny.



Sky Glabush, *The true brother*, 2016, oil and sand on canvas

Sky Glabush is not one for repetition. He doesn't play his hits. He is always striving. I reviewed an exhibition of his paintings a dozen years ago and I imagine he could have stuck with those same scenes to this day and made his gallerist happy. However, each of his subsequent exhibitions has had less of the familiar and more of an exploratory mode. His restlessness emerged in abstractions, unexpected portraits, and a catholic taste for mediums. I still think of him as that house painter from 2004, but he hasn't been the same since. Consistency is a blessing for critics because it allows us to pigeonhole artists. Unpredictability is harder to love, but it has its rewards as it turns one attention to influence and projection rather than direct attention.