



lookback@now

**A SOLO EXHIBITION BY
GABRIELA SCHUTZ**

Curated by Jane Boyer

5TH - 27TH OCTOBER 2018

ARTHOUSE1.

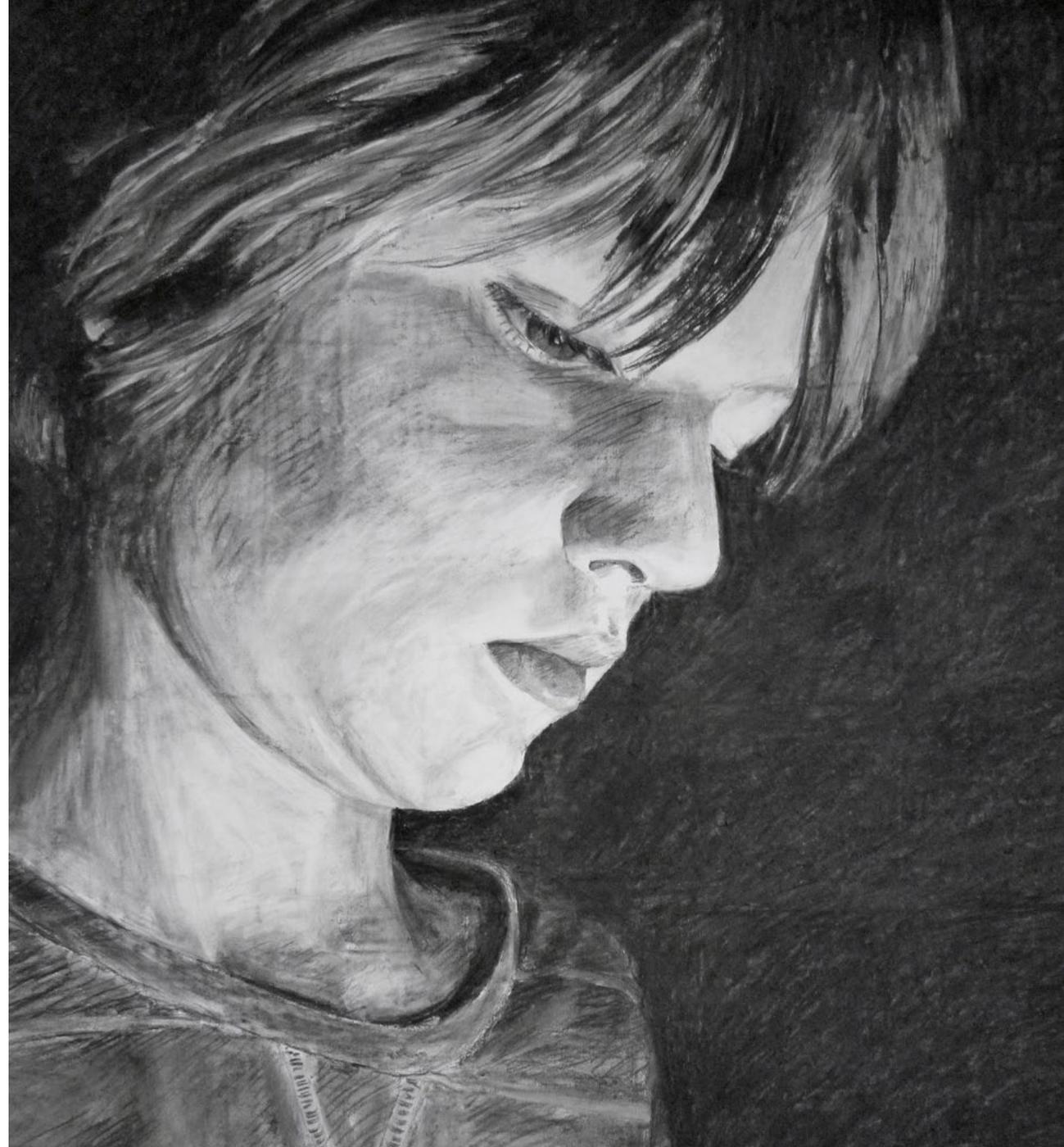


Gabriela Schutz has been exploring the topic of engaging with mobile phones since 2007, which is represented in the drawing, *Where Are You*, in the exhibition. But in that time, the mobile phone has changed from a transportable communication device to a pocket computer, camera, media player, gaming console, internet browser, and so many other things, with 'phone' being only one of numerous functions.

The portraits in *lookback@now* are of Gabriela's family and friends while engaged with their portable devices. Initially, she reacted negatively to the kind of absented presence caused when looking at these mobile devices, but after seeing the Richard Diebenkorn exhibition at the Royal Academy in 2015, she became very intrigued by the absorption she saw in his portraits of people reading books, or just being self-possessed in looking. Through this experience of Diebenkorn's work, Gabriela wanted to look more closely at being absorbed by mobile phones. She says, "I am still trying to understand why I am so bothered with people looking at their phones, but not [by] reading a book?" One possibility is that we know the book will be put down or placed back on the shelf where we can peruse it if we wish.

A mobile phone is like an activated self-portrait of its owner, formulated to a certain design structure by its corporate maker certainly, but offering just enough flexibility for the technology to be individualised. The dictates of the design structure are omnipresent on all devices, but the contents of any given phone are unique to its owner showing personal preferences, time and location of activities and communications amounting to a coded identity of the owner. Therefore, Gabriela feels there is a secretiveness to mobile phones, similar to the enigmatic black monolith in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: a space odyssey*. "When we see someone looking at their phone, there is something not transparent about it because we don't really know what they are doing or looking at," comments Gabriela. We don't see who or what is at the other end of the light.

Gabi. 2018. Charcoal on paper, 215 x 150cm £2,700

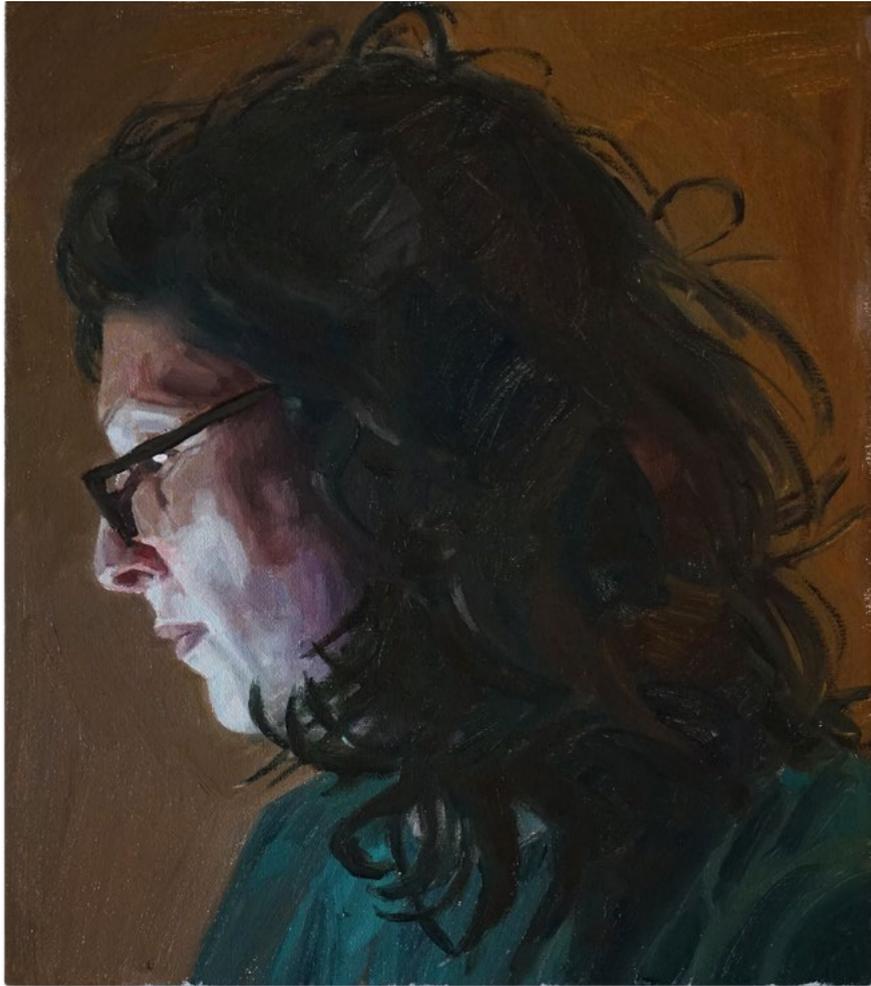


The paintings in *lookback@now* are somewhat constrained, in that they show people who are already comfortable in Gabriela's company. Under her protective gaze they can safely engage their devices. This dynamic gives these paintings their tranquillity, but it also gives them their edge because of the disengagement with Gabriela as she works. Diebenkorn painted his friends and family members, so often his sitters are calm and at ease. In this respect, the gaze at the mobile devices in Gabriela's paintings is similar to the sitter reading a newspaper or book in a Richard Diebenkorn painting, such as 'Woman with Newspaper' (1960) or 'Head' (1961), both in the Royal Academy exhibition visited by Gabriela.

What we have in these works is a view of captured attention. This is what Gabriela has undertaken in *lookback@now*, a review of the ease with which we give our attention to the 'light' of technology and what this diverted attention does to our presence – physically and emotionally. In every case, bar one where we're not given a frontal view of the face, these individuals are passive and receptive to what the light is showing them. They are in their domestic space, but the space seems to have no impact on their thoughts. Gabriela's subjects seem transported to another locality, another reality. We, as viewers, are placed outside that communion and far removed from their whereabouts, even though we are visually situated in the room with them. It may be odd to give the light agency, but in these paintings, the light is the thing that we see spread across the faces. It is the thing enticing these people away from their surroundings. It is the thing captivating their attention. But this is only the first half of the story for this exhibition.

In The Kitchen 2018. Oil on canvas, 50cm x 50cm. £2,000





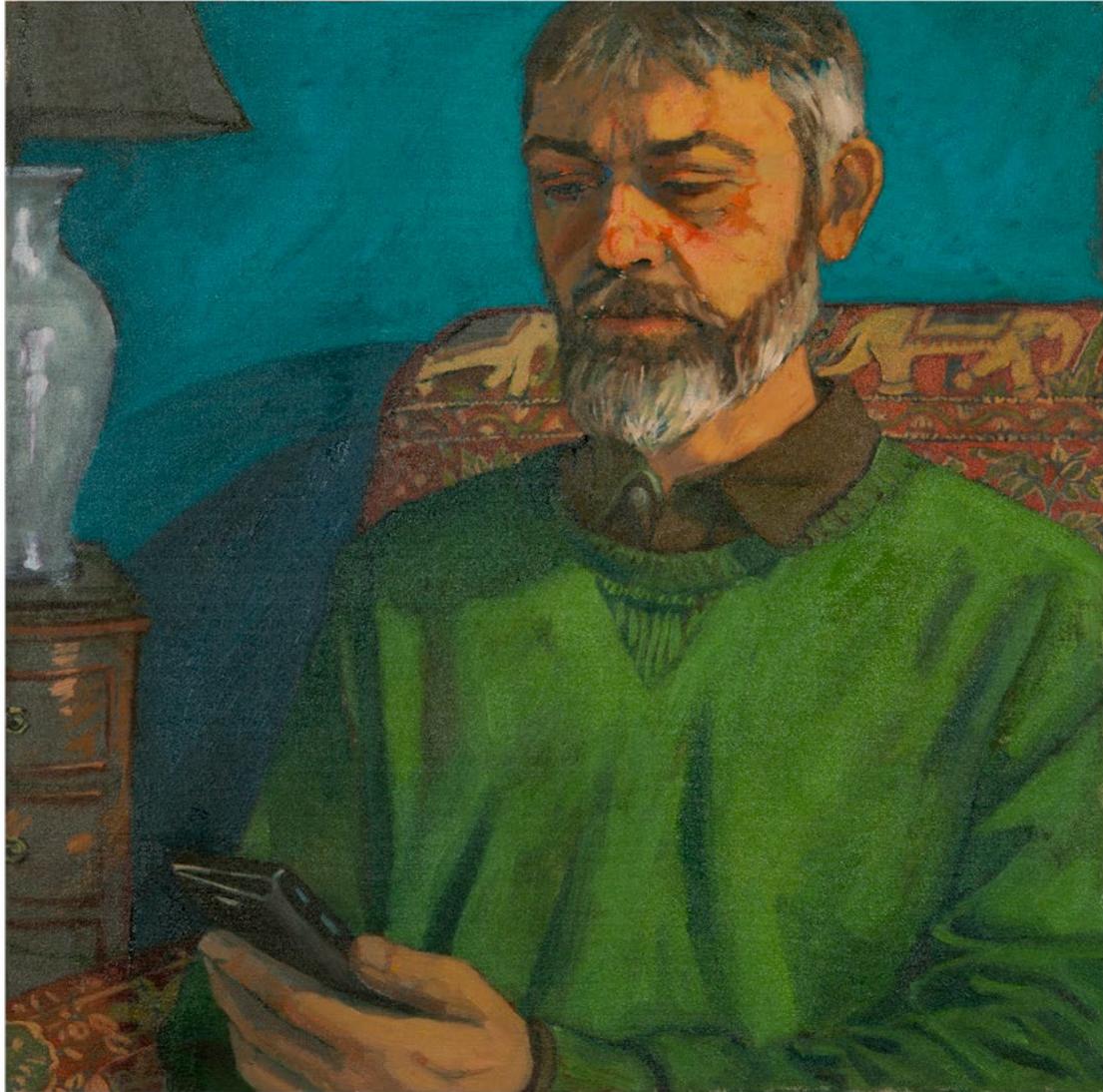
Only 2018. Oil on canvas, 40.5cm x 35.5cm. £1,800



Watching Eckhart Tolle 2018 Oil on canvas, 40.5cm x 40.5cm. £1,800



Together 2018.
Oil on canvas, 68cm x 90cm
£3,000



Sunday Afternoon 2018. Oil on canvas, 50cm x 50cm. £2,000



Friday Afternoon 2018. Oil on canvas, 50cm x 50cm. £2,500



Outside 2018. Oil on canvas 76cm x 61cm. £2,700



Sisters 2018. Oil on canvas, 50cm x 50cm. £2,000

Gabriela also has questioned what a future historical and cultural telling of this story of an intensely focused attention given to mobile communication devices might look like, and how it might be represented for future generations. Speeding forward in time, centuries into our future, the clay figurines, plaques and other museum-like objects in *lookback@now* present an allegorical telling of our engagement with the light of mobile technology.

Gabriela's aim was to make works in materials that have survived the test of time in telling our own cultural histories, for example, clay, oil paint, and fibre. She wanted to represent our engagement with these mobile devices in durable materials as a foil to the non-physical data which currently stores so much of our personal and cultural information. The isolation, the rapt attention, the tethered connections, and the allegorical cautionary tales are visible in these symbolic works, as is the synthesised view of us, the society who uses this technology. It's no accident the image depicted in these 'museum' objects is an adolescent girl. Gabriela wanted "to create a time capsule for our [epoch], the in-between period, between how it used to be, and an unknown future. The sculptures are of teenage girls because I find that this age group is the first to be born into this new reality [of mobile technology]." Gabriela has created an artistic record of one aspect of our social activity, not only to question that activity, but also to comment on how it is shaping us, and how the precarious nature of the data generated risks being lost, losing us with it.



Connected 2016. Clay, glaze and paint, H30cm x L21cm x W8cm. £2,500



Connected, 2018. Relief in clay, H 23.9cm x w 14cm x D4cm. £700



Connected, 2018. Relief in clay, H 20.3cm x W 11.3cm x D 2.5cm. £700



Disconnect 2016 Clay, H46cm x L18.5cm x W12.5cm. £2,300

What will happen to our attention?
Will we become even more deeply absorbed in the light of technology?
Is this light hurting us, changing us?
What will we become as this technology pervades our psyches?
We don't have full answers yet, we can only look back at now.

© Jane Boyer, 2018



Connected 2017. Original from clay, and casts of plaster, H 32cm x W 11cm x D 8cm
£300 each or £2,400 for 9



The sculptures and jugs in the 'museum display' installation are like relics from the beginning of the 21st century that have been discovered by a futuristic archaeologist. Many of the artefacts are far from being perfect. Some are broken, seemingly unaware that they are lying on the floor, as they still absorbed with their phone. Others are imperfect copies of girls absorbed with their phones- these are casts made from an original sculpture, but they are a coarser, less detailed version. This is similar to the difference between a first hand authentic experience we share on social media, and how others perceive this experience through their screen. It becomes just an image without the scale, smells, noises etc. These works try to sum something about us in this time, and are made with durable materials designed to survive for long time, as appose to digital photos, music and data that might disappear into a virtual cloud.

Left: **Solo figure**
Sgraffito on stoneware slipped vessel
(Vessel by Orly Kritzman)
h20 x w20 £300

Right: **Chain of figures**
Sgraffito on stoneware slipped vessel
(Vessel by Orly Kritzman)
h20 x w20 £350





Where Are You. 2007
Pencil on paper. Each work is 120 x 150cm
£2,500 each

Gabriela Schutz is an Israeli artist based in London since 1999. In her work she is fascinated with the way technology, information, communication and consumerism are increasingly shaping our life.

She graduated in 1996 with a BA degree in Fine Arts from Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem. During this course she spent a term on an exchange programme at The Slade School of Fine Art, London. In the last 2 years Gabriela has been studying Etching at the Working Men's College in London.

Gabriela has exhibited nationally and internationally in museums such as The Gefferye Museum, London, The Collection, Lincoln, Ein Harod Museum and Petach Tikva Museum, Israel, and in galleries such as the Jerwood Space, Gasworks, Danielle Arnaud Contemporary and Standpoint in London, The Wilson, Cheltenham, Artists Space and The Elizabeth Foundation for The Arts in New York.

Her work has been short-listed for the British Jerwood Drawing Prize three times as well as twice for the Neo Print Prize. Her work is included in large corporate art collections as well as many private collections in Europe, the U.S.A and Israel.

Gabriela was an art teacher at Richmond Adult Community College (RACC) in London for ten years and has also taught at the Natural History Museum London. Currently she is teaching in her own studio in North London.

Gabriela is represented in Israel by Keren Bar-Gil

Sisters. (detail) 2018 Embroidery, stretched and framed : total size 31 x 28cm
£900



ARTHOUSE1.

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Gallery open Thursday - Sunday between 3pm - 7pm or by appt.

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