

# M+B

## ARTFORUM

### Critics' Picks: Nathaniel Mary Quinn

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Nathaniel Mary Quinn, *Diddy*, 2018, oil paint, paint stick, oil pastel, and gouache on linen, 16 x 12"

How do we exist in the minds of others, in the glances of strangers, in the memories of those who know us well? Surely not as razor-edged effigies—properly proportioned bodies with crisply outlined fingers and toes. Instead, we probably look more like the characters in the paintings of Nathaniel Mary Quinn. The Chicago-born artist emphasizes certain features (a wary gaze, the cleft of a chin) and eliminates others (a forgettable forehead, an unimportant earlobe) to create expressive, empathetic portraits.

Quinn's first solo show at Salon 94, across its two locations, delivers impressions of his Brooklyn neighbors on canvas and paper. In *Diddy* (all works 2018), a large cyclopean eye looms above a smudged slice of nose and grisaille lips pursed in a grimace. *The Local Dealer* is broken into offset horizontal strips, like a photograph of a lover torn up in anger and pieced back together. Quinn renders different features of each face in various media, including oil paint, pastel, charcoal, and gouache.

The disparate textures contribute to the illusion that

these works are collages. Some parts are rendered clearly while others are blurred, as though they are being dragged away by time. The hybrid nature of Quinn's characters speaks to their multiplicity, to how many selves can coexist within one. Each painting has a distinct presence, although many stare off into space with what feels like melancholy or resignation. Gentrification, Quinn notes in the press release, is overtaking Crown Heights. No wonder these portraits feel at once celebratory and elegiac.