

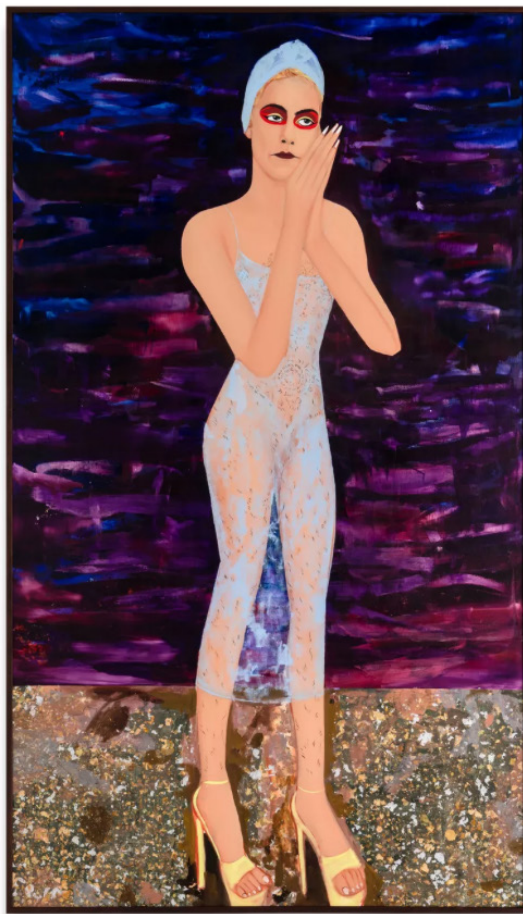
Press Review
Artsy, Ayanna Dozier, May 2023

Art

Curator's Choice: Women and Nonbinary Artists Subvert the Politics of Portraiture

Ayanna Dozier

Curator's Choice is a new monthly guest curator series featuring collections of artworks and essays by rising and leading voices in the arts, or in culture more broadly. The featured artworks are all available on Artsy.



Apolonia Sokol

Boysan Alone_ from a photo by Dilek, 2022

THE PILL®

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Apolonia Sokol's paintings of queer communities use narrative to render these portraits personal, while her flat painterly style creates a distance between audiences and subjects. The artist, who had a successful [sold-out solo booth](#) with [The Pill®](#) at Untitled Art Fair in Miami in 2022 and is the subject of the documentary *Apolonia, Apolonia* (2022), is making waves for her directness in portraying vulnerable communities.



Apolonia Sokol
LE PRINTEMPS [Spring] Linda, Nicolas, Raya, Dustin, Simone, Nirina, Claude, Bella, Dourane, 2020
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In her portraits, Sokol sheds light on how alternative spaces such as clubs can cultivate spaces for familial connections to exist beyond biological relations. Sokol's portraits can be viewed as an archive of chosen families, working against the image of the traditional family portrait that is contingent upon representational likeness. In Sokol's portraits, her subjects definitely gaze back at us; they watch us watching them. Sokol produces a provocative question about the gaze, power, and subordination across her work as audiences bear witness to her subjects, at times, in explicit acts.