

Pippa YOUNG

Looking for a Reason

Pencil and conté crayon on Fabriano paper.

Signed and titled Looking for a reason / pencil & conte on / fabriano / Pippa Young on a label pasted onto the reverse of the frame.

297 x 209 mm. (11 5/8 x 8 1/4 in.)

As has been noted of Pippa Young, 'Though primarily known for her painting, with its ambiguous mixture of symbolism and combinations of visual languages, drawing is the foundation of her practice, the medium in which she explores and develops her ideas.' Young's drawings are executed in pencil, mixed media, charcoal or silverpoint, and her precise technique is, as she has said, inspired by early Renaissance or Netherlandish painting. While at first glance enigmatic drawings such as the present sheet appear to be a form of portraiture, the artist does not regard them as such. As she has pointed out, 'The images often show representations of people, but they are not intended to be portraits – rather they are a metaphor for something more universal. The figure in my painting is a means to communicate directly with the viewer and the absence of context allows the figures to occupy their own subjective space, timeless and unadorned.'

Young elaborated on this aspect of her practice in a recent interview: 'Given the predominance of the human figure in my work – often although not always a single figure – there is an assumption that it is portraiture. However, my intention is not to create a likeness: the figures are not real people, they are portraits of the human condition. Through the collaging of slightly mismatched body parts, and the

inclusion of non-traditional elements of portraiture, I wanted to make clear these were not real people. I am trying to see where I can take the genre…Figures are set against blank backdrops, removing any specific historical or social context. I often avoid showing hair for the same reason, as it fixes the figure in a time and place. There are no clues for identification, so the viewer is encouraged to think differently about the figure, to focus on psychological depths rather than surface characteristics. I have tried different backgrounds at various points, but with certain details added the work inevitably becomes overly narrative-driven, which is not my intention; those experiments always get painted over. Rather than tell a story, I want to plant questions in the viewer's mind.'

Artist description:

Pippa Young came to art late in life, after a previous career in a graphic design and marketing consultancy. As she has stated, 'I think I was destined to do something creative from an early age, but it took me a long time to become a fine artist…I was always drawing or making something as a child and apart from a brief period as a teenager when an aptitude for maths made me consider sound engineering as a career, I've always been involved in visual art in one way or another…It was only later, when my children were older, that I realised I wanted to create work on my own terms rather than always answering someone else's brief. That was when I signed up for a fine art degree course at Falmouth University as a mature student.' Young graduated with a first-class honours degree in 2012, with a degree show that was sold out. Since 2010 she has shown paintings and drawings in solo and group exhibitions at galleries in England and Scotland. She lives and works today in Penzance in Cornwall.