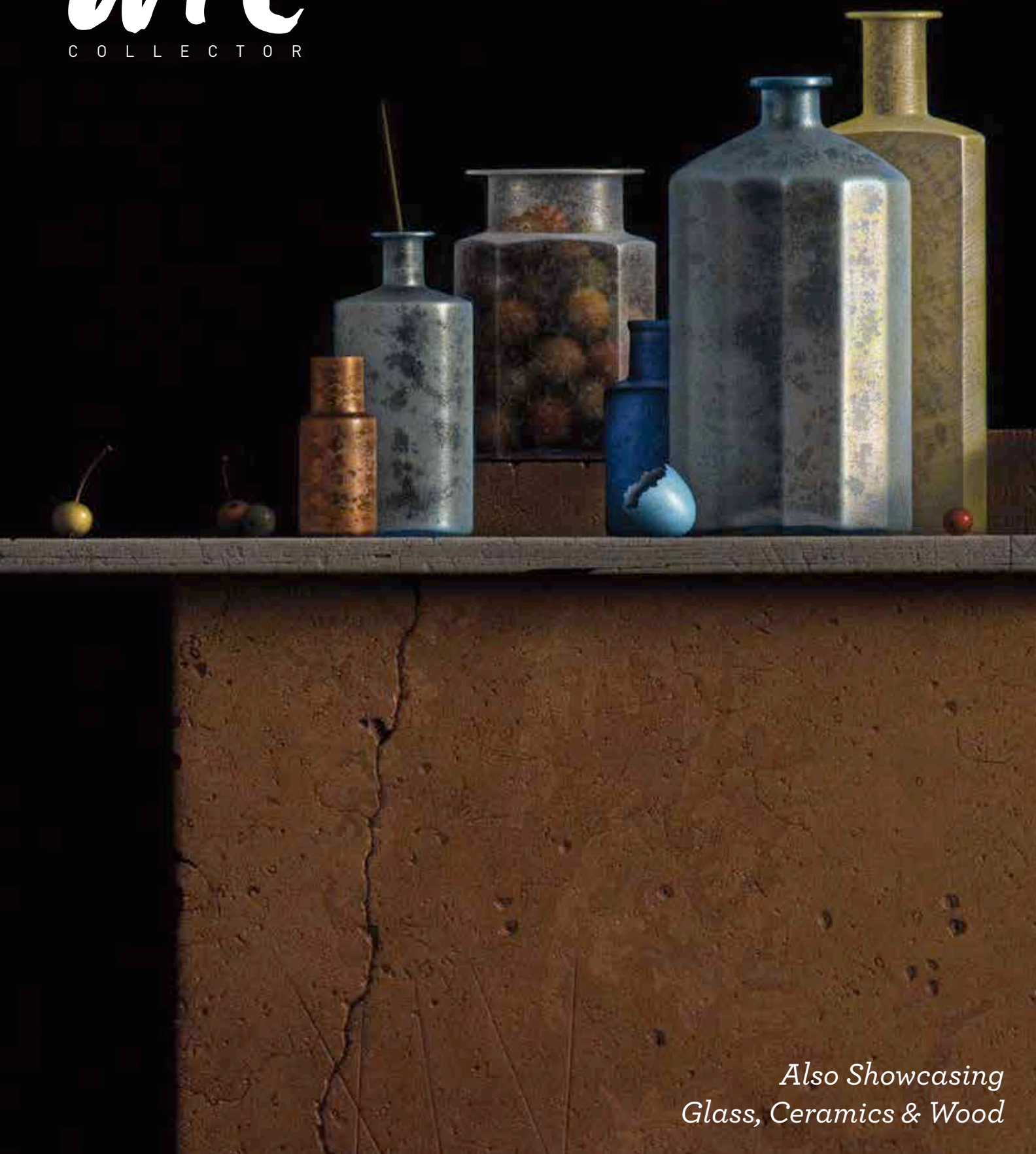




WATCH 3 VIDEOS
IN THIS ISSUE

AMERICAN
art
COLLECTOR



*Also Showcasing
Glass, Ceramics & Wood*

ASH & OIL

1
Ignoring I, charcoal,
pastel and thread on
paper, 85 x 51"

2
Each Other, oil and wire
on panel, 76 x 47"

AN EXHIBITION OF DRAWINGS
AND OIL PAINTINGS BY IAN
INGRAM OPENS IN JANUARY
AT 101/EXHIBIT IN LOS
ANGELES. BY JOHN O'HERN

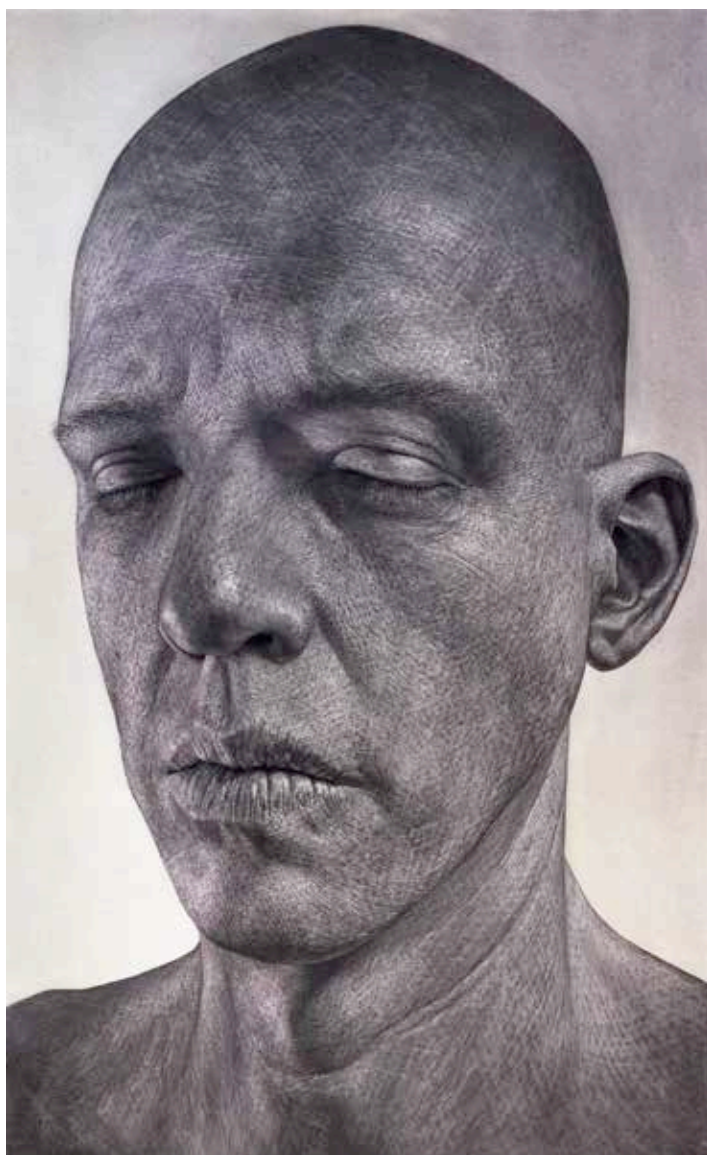
Rembrandt once told a pupil, "Try to put well in practice what you already know; and in so doing, you will in good time discover the hidden things which you now inquire about. Practice what you know, and it will help to make clear what now you do not know."

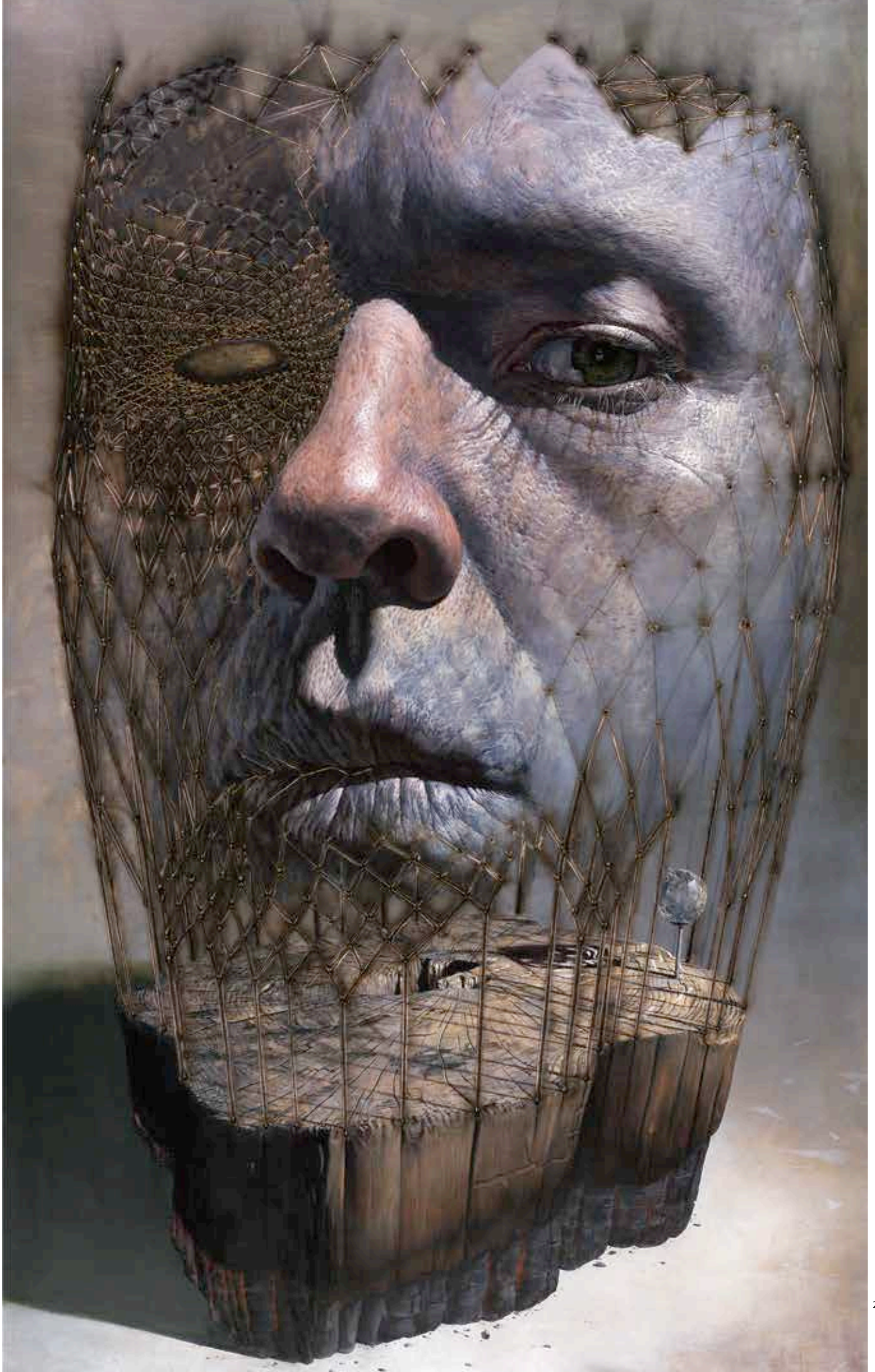
Ian Ingram knows drawing. He loves to draw, and he draws. He draws his face—a ready model—and in that process of observation and discovery, he learns about the world.

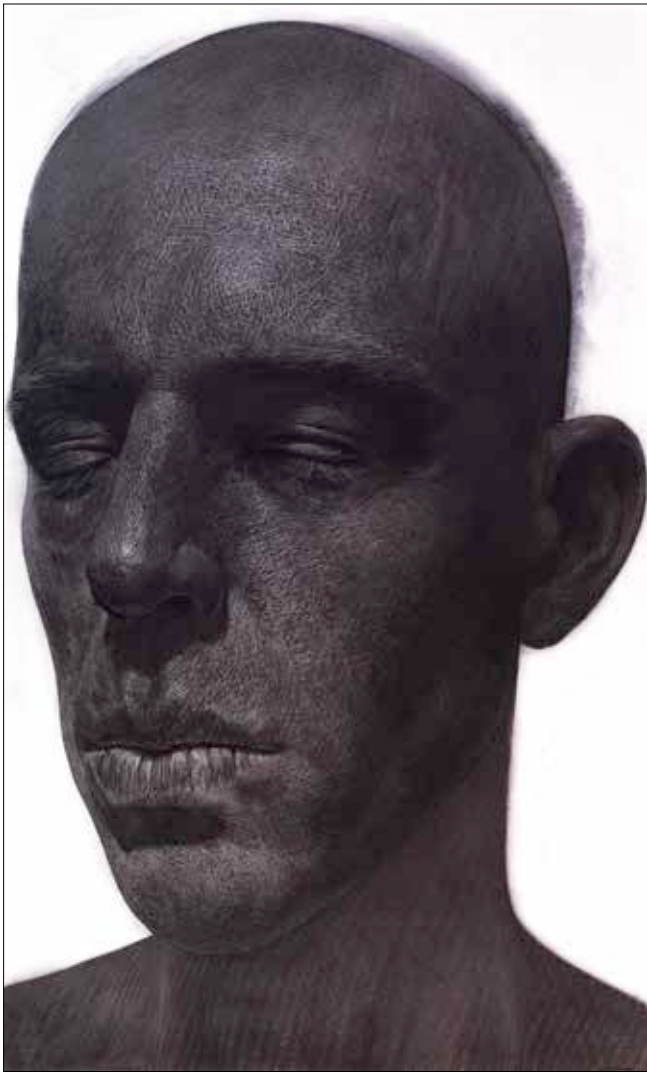
An 18th-century writer observed, "By means of a wonderful ability to fix an idea in his mind, [Rembrandt] knew how to capture the momentary appearances of emotion whenever they appeared in the face before him." Rembrandt unflinchingly recorded his aging and his moods.

Ingram often begins a portrait at a time of importance in his life, and his response is visible in the viewer's first perception of the drawing. His early self-portraits seemed to be just that, but pulsing beneath the surface of the portraits and deep within the artist himself, there were connections being made, connections that would soon become more visible and more firm, and would lead to more and more connections within the artist, with other individuals and with the universe as a whole.

The nuances among the early portraits were subtle but revealing. In 2005, I included seven of these portraits in an exhibition, hung side by side on a long wall. At 40 by 24 inches each, they had a commanding presence. Before the







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4

exhibition opening, I walked into the gallery and saw his wife sitting in front of the row of likenesses, in deep thought. I commented, "Jeri Lynn, you see him every day." She replied, "But I don't see seven of him."

Today, his portraits can be 85 by 51 inches, even more commanding and, perhaps, less about him than about the connections.

Ash and Oil, an exhibition of work from the past five years, will be held at 101/EXHIBIT in Los Angeles, January 16 to February 27. Ash refers to the charcoal and pastel drawings that are his mainstay, and oil refers to recent oil paintings.

Ingram talks about "observational drawing," especially in a series of portraits titled *Ignoring*. "This series looks serene and meditative. It is not. What is on display in the *Ignoring* series is a coping mechanism," he explains. "I started *Ignoring* when the crescendos of my reality became difficult to bear...I made the logical choice to close my eyes and march forward. I had been developing a faith in my art, and this was its test. I surrendered to the process of observational drawing. I had scarcely any space in my head for whimsy or metaphysical pondering, and so I went on without them. When I finally began to emerge from the choppy waters and get my bearings, I found that my eyes had

learned to see. With the mind stripped of its spotlight and leading roll, my hands and eyes were able to ingest more information than I thought possible."

It is always difficult to get the mind out of the way, as anyone with a meditation practice can tell you. Concentrating on the breath is a doorway to meditation. In Ingram's life, it's concentration on seeing, and seeing honestly, seeing both the ordered and the messy. "I have developed a faith in this from my drawing practice," he says. "Doubt seems to be a natural tendency for 'mind,' so when I feel doubtful about my art, I just try to turn that sucker off. Always back to the eyes. Look again, look without letting 'mind' steer the looking, and when I do that successfully, the miraculous comes into focus. Every time. You asked what I've learned about the process and purpose of art. Well, I guess this might be the cornerstone of what I've learned: take the mind away from an action, and that action will be closer to miraculous, closer to God."

Ingram's artistic journey of closer and closer observation at higher and higher magnification led him to find patterns on the surface of his skin, the structure beneath, and, eventually, the universe beyond. "As I moved to higher magnification (and as I got older and the lines became cracks)," he explains, "I got rather

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Ignoring II, charcoal, pastel and thread on paper, 85 x 51"

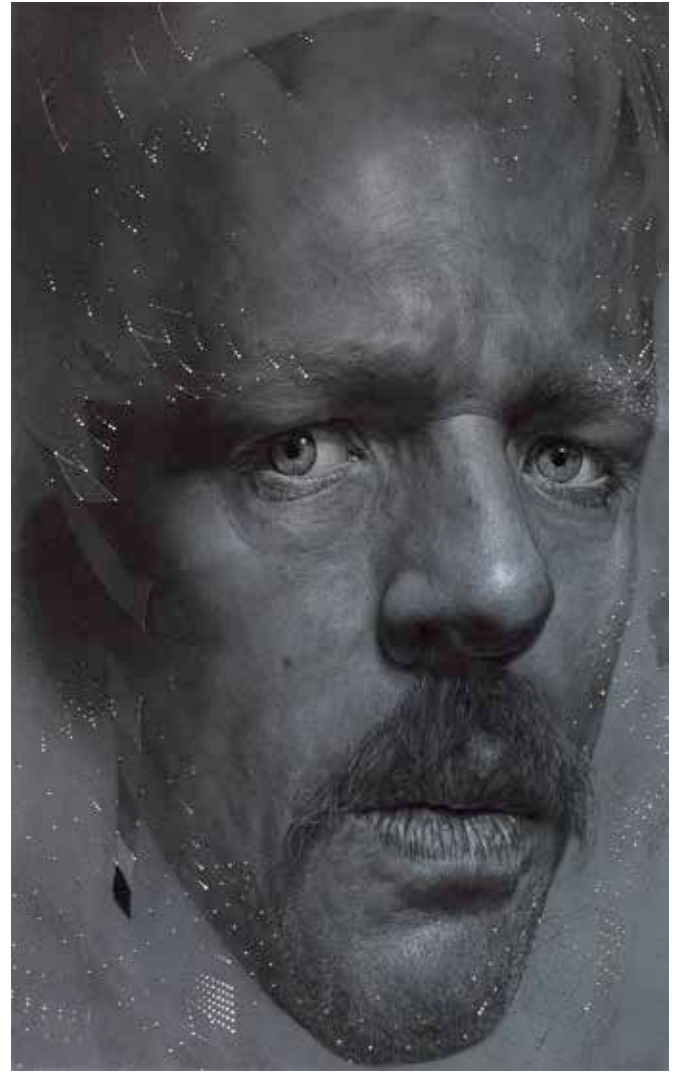
4
Ignoring III, charcoal, pastel and thread on paper, 85 x 51"

5
Of Salt and Faith, charcoal, pastel and thread on paper, 68 x 42"

6
The Middleman, charcoal, pastel, thread, silver leaf and teeth on paper, 68 x 42"



5



6

“Ingram’s self-portraits are particularly insightful when considering his phenomenologically informed theories of self-observation. Through the direct experience of approaching his likeness as an object of study, the viewer begins to feel the ‘confrontational’ nature of his works. This sense of confrontation is not due to their large size or any sign of aggression in the works, but instead that the artist is uncovering evidence of origin through a magnified approach.” — Kevin Van Gorp, director, 101/EXHIBIT





hypnotized by the patterns evident on the surface of the skin. It seemed logical to me that there was a mathematical and predictable distribution of pores on the surface...This pattern made appearances but somehow remained elusive when I tried to follow it over the entire surface.

“Always I remained faithful to the eye,” he continues, “so when I would become lost and the pattern lost predictability, I moved slowly forward with the mind as off as I could turn it. This is where discovery would come in. And it was during the *Ignoring* series that I managed to turn the mind way off and when visual discovery ramped way up. I discovered larger iterations of a pattern at one scale up from pore focus, and another larger pattern in the large sculptural shapes of the face. Each layer of pattern was there; I was not making them up like seeing patterns in static or naked forms in Rorschach prints. These were there. For me, the visual comprehension of these things was like staring at a star and realizing it’s a galaxy. The patterns are difficult to see, because they continue upward and downward infinitely. Trying to draw them accurately is futile, and explains how and why ambiguity can be attractive, because it is closer to truth than clarity. But there they are, patterns on patterns—each responsible for the other and dependent upon the other.



8

7
Inseparable Thieves,
charcoal and pastel
on paper, 68 x 42"

8
To Burgle or Borrow,
charcoal and pastel
on paper, 68 x 42"

“His work is emotional, powerful and deep. He reminds me of Lucian Freud, who took portrait painting to another level. Ian is a great artist in every sense of the world. We look at a lot of art, and we know the difference between hype and talent.”

—Howard Godel, collector

After a few hours of riding this beast, I come out of the studio beguiled by absolutely everything. All plants are the burning bush. Any cellular creature is a brother.”

Each Other is the first oil he has painted since college. It pays homage to “ash,” with the burning tree trunk as a base, producing charcoal for his drawings. Ingram, himself, emerges from the trunk. I observed that it appears that he is tethered to the stump. He replied, “I’m tethered to the stump like a poet is tethered to the construct of a sonnet.” The patterns he discovers in life and reveals in his work are common to all

cellular life forms. “The carbon forming at the base of the stump is one of the most abundant elements in the universe. It’s what we’re made of. We *are* each other.”

He continues, “*Of Salt and Faith* was the first piece I made after my education of *Ignoring*. I decided I was done ignoring and would start paying attention and giving voice to what I had learned. I decided to peel back a layer. I wanted to look honestly at the layer beneath the one I had been working on. It had the same rhythm! I began to discover that things that look like singular items are not singular

items. I saw that the skull is made up of many bones. I learned that ‘my’ condition is the human condition. I wanted to show a connection between the interior and the exterior and painted the interpenetration of air realizing that without air and without the physicality, I’m not ‘me’ anymore.

“Salt” represents the physical world,” he continues. “Interconnection brings about ‘faith,’ the sensation that you’re held comfortably by that interconnection. You’re part of a oneness.”

Echoing Rembrandt, he comments, “It’s really important for me to know that I do not know. The more I know, the more I know I don’t know. I just stay calm and go on.” ●

IAN INGRAM: ASH AND OIL

When: January 16–February 27, 2016

Where: 101/EXHIBIT, 8920 Melrose Avenue,
West Hollywood, CA 90069

Information: (310) 271-7980,
www.101exhibit.com