

Anja

A sudden flash of bright, vivid eyes. A toss of exquisitely styled hair. These are timeless moments when we encounter high fashion, and artist Anja has caught them all and more in her truly remarkable new body of work mixing both classical and contemporary ideas of fashion. Anja specializes in large-scale portraiture featuring beautiful, expressive women, and her images have the power of enticing viewers and leading them to interpret a variety of meanings in each expression.

Born in Belgium in 1969, Anja Van Herle combines a European sense of high fashion in her artwork with an American sense of wonder. Her childhood years were devoted to exploring the fundamentals of her art using crayons, pencils and watercolors. In 1987, she enrolled in Belgium's Higher Institute for Art Education where she earned a Master's of Fine Arts in Painting. In 2003, Anja relocated to Los Angeles, where she now concentrates on figurative paintings that are inspired by both classic and contemporary fashion while exploring issues of identity, emotion and human interrelationships. As timelessly chic as Audrey Hepburn in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, Anja's women are playfully sexy, and their expressions and eyes tell stories that go far beyond the simple exhibition of fine fashion. In Anja's masterful hands, fashion becomes alive. "These women—they feel."

"My work is an attempt to capture the complexity of emotions that are conveyed in the human face. I've been painting portraits since I was a child, continually drawing closer to the face and eyes in order to explore the emotions they contain. There's a story behind every face; my paintings are an attempt to tell these stories by capturing delicate facial expressions and juxtaposing them with vibrant color and the dramatic interplay of shadow and light that both inform my subjects and maintain their enigmatic aura. I'm constantly delighted by the various interpretations my work receives. For some, a subject may be pensive, while to others it may be seductive or confrontational. Part of the viewing experience is for a viewer to attach his or her own emotional meaning to a work."