

The Magazine
ANTIQUES

Current | and coming

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In 1961 several artists were invited to take part in a group exhibition for which they were asked to create portraits of Iris Clert, the owner and curator of the eponymous Paris gallery where the show was to take place. Among the works on display was Robert Rauschenberg's infamous telegram stating "This Is a Portrait of Iris Clert If I Say So." With this pronouncement, the artist challenged the conventional definition of portraiture and pushed it beyond its representational form—and thus, the title of Bowdoin College Museum of Art's new exhibition. Riffing on Rauschenberg's words, *This Is a Portrait If I Say So: Identity in American Art, 1912 to Today* explores the development of non-mimetic portraiture as it veers off into more conceptual, symbolic, and abstract modes of expression. The show presents roughly seventy-five works from American artists such as Gertrude Stein, Marsden Hartley, Alfred Stieglitz, Yoko Ono, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres.

Accompanying the show is a catalogue from Yale University Press that, in addition to those in the show, includes works by Jasper Johns, Marcel Duchamp, and Georgia O'Keeffe, among others. Focusing on three periods of non-mimetic portraits—1912 to 1925, 1961 to 1970, and 1990 to the present—the book explores how different artists investigate the meaning of identity through a range of issues, from sexuality and technology to race and politics.

The exhibition and comprehensive catalogue reveal both the expansiveness and the diversity within the genre of American portraiture.

This Is a Portrait If I Say So: Identity in American Art, 1912 to Today • Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine • June 25 to October 23 • bowdoin.edu/art-museum

**Non-mimetic
portraiture at
Bowdoin**