



microscope gallery

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## Pop Forum “I Wonder About Us Folks”

December 18, 2025 - January 24, 2026



Pop Forum, “PSA 10 — I WONDER ABOUT US FOLKS,” 2025, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Microscope Gallery, New York

Microscope is very pleased to present “I Wonder About Us Folks” as the first solo exhibition of works by Pop Forum.

In a new series of medium-sized oil paintings on linen, canvas and paper titled “PSA,” the artist reframes Public Service Announcements as seductive notices that reveal the manner in which “power, identity, and fantasy are choreographed and consumed” in visually overloaded, meme-oriented world.

*“Each work in PSA functions as a kind of cultural dispatch: part confession, part indictment, part warning. I’m interested in the roles we perform, the myths we inherit, and the unstable truths hiding in plain sight.” — Pop Forum*

An abandoned hotel, dinners, and people of diverse backgrounds, races, and socio-economic statuses are the subjects of the realistic, painterly portraits, and one self-portrait, on view. And, the artist’s over-laid, hand-painted textual interventions — which also serve as the works’ titles — offer unexpected, wry, and often contradictory commentary on the scenes of dinners, parties, fashion shoots, sex, drugs, and other activities taking place in various public and private settings. The works read like mirrors, with the interpretation influenced by one’s personal experience and perspective.

In “PSA: My Only Friends Are My Only Fans,” a white couple is pictured in bed. A woman, dressed in a ripped Coors t-shirt and a Reagan/Bush ’84 trucker’s hat, looks directly at the viewer as she pulls on the red tie of her partner, whose face is concealed by a rubber mask of Donald Trump. And, in “PSA: Chanel Went All Black this Season,” a black female model — wearing all black clothes and accessories, except for her black & white pumps — is posed precariously on the middle-rung of a tall step-ladder.

*“These images are not statements but provocations—designed to unsettle, implicate, and expose the performative grammar of identity in a media-saturated age.” — Pop Forum*

The source materials for the paintings are photographs of real-life moments with friends — captured by the artist's digital camera — or of choreographed scenes, often involving models. The works with friends often implicate the artist within his own social critique, while the staged scenes tend to point further to the “transactional nature of attention in the digital age,” one in which, the artist says: “visibility equals survival.”

Among Pop Forum's main influences is Dutch 17th-century portraiture, especially that of Frans Hals, as is overtly referenced in the work “PSA: Dutch Masters Are More Than Blunt,” a work featuring a black man lighting up a blunt. With a nod to the Dutch *vanitas* style, the still lifes, some of which depict food such as “In Polite Society Liars Eat Like Kings,” remind us of our daily acts of visual and other forms of consumption, as well as societal inequities.

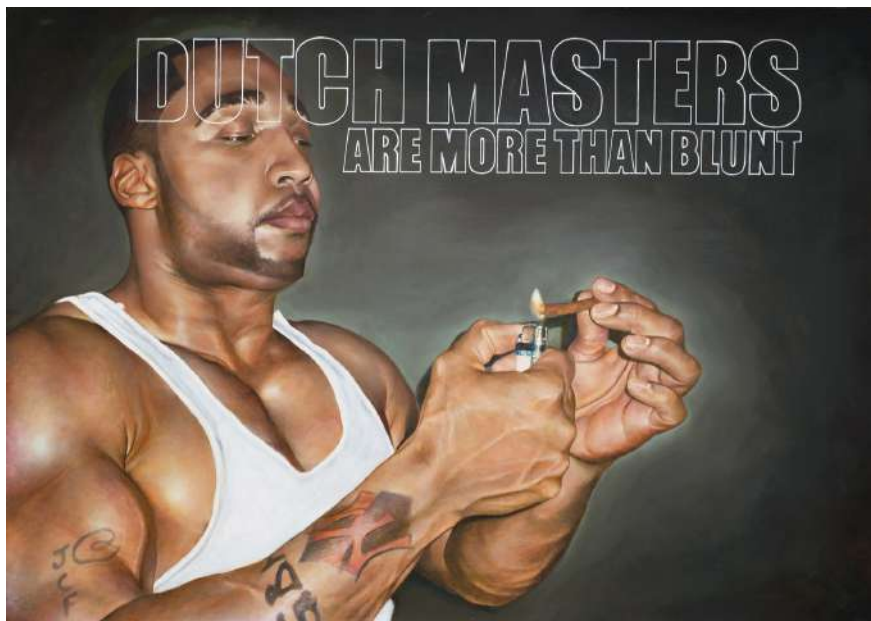
In the title-piece, Pop Forum traces a conceptual Droste effect depicting an abandoned hotel room in which hangs a portrait of another similarly wrecked room to suggest a “generational déjà vu.” The text “I Wonder About Us Folks,” despite its bright pink hue, is difficult to decipher.

Pop Forum's works pose the question of whether in this moment of democratization of portraiture brought about by the web — which far exceeds Frans Hals' own expansion of the portrayed audience — it is still possible to reveal the true personality of the portrayed subject. In a hyper-connected environment often driven by self promotion and commercialization, Pop Forum's subjects seem in search of an identity, one that does not coincide with their own feeds and search results.

The exhibition opens on Thursday December 18, 2025 and continues through January 24, 2026. Opening Reception Thursday December 18, 6-8pm. Gallery Hours Tuesday – Saturday, 12-6pm.

For additional information please contact the gallery at [inquiries@microscopegallery.com](mailto:inquiries@microscopegallery.com) or by telephone at 347.925.1433.

**Pop Forum** is a painter whose work fuses figuration, text, and cultural critique to examine the intersections of race, politics, sexuality, and desire. Formerly working under the name Ibn Kendall, he has developed a visual language that draws equally from advertising, pornography, propaganda, and art history, distilling the noise of contemporary life into scenes that are both intimate and confrontational. His work has been exhibited internationally, with solo presentations at Ambacher Contemporary, Munich, Germany and NY Studio Gallery, New York, NY and group exhibitions at Exit Art, New York, NY, Amerika Haus, Munich, Germany, and 440 Gallery (Brooklyn), among others. Pop Forum is a working artist based in the New York City area. Born in Brooklyn, New York, he earned his BFA from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, PA where he completed his undergraduate studies in fine art.



Pop Forum, “PSA 17 — DUTCH MASTERS ARE MORE THAN BLUNT,” 2025, oil on canvas, 28 1/4 x 40 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Microscope Gallery, New York



Pop Forum, "PSA 8 — MY ONLY FRIENDS ARE MY ONLY FANS," 2024, oil on canvas, 36 x 48 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and Microscope Gallery, New York