

M A MutualArt

Intense eyes meet you wherever you look in Apolonia Sokol's colourful paintings. Powerful and possessed of great immediacy, her works have grown straight out of her life as part of the rebellious, artistic underground scene of Paris. The paintings offer up a colourful, intimate personal gallery of the artist's friends, family and lovers. People of different ethnicities and gender identities – tenderly portrayed and placed right at eye level. They look at you when you look at them – and you are let into their lives, full of dreams and nightmares, love and conflict.

Images have power, and Sokol uses it to open our eyes to the human beings behind them. Sokol often uses a classic, traditional portrait format, but she does not immortalise rulers and kings. Her models are artistic and activist people living on the fringes of society, whom she imbues with significance, agency and authority through the portraits. Sokol's entire artistic practice is characterised by an intertwining of art history and her own life – a life led among people who reject social norms and want to change the world. She herself says that it is impossible for her to separate her art and her identity.

