

ABOUT FACE

THE BEST PLACE FOR A PORTRAIT ISN'T HANGING IN A MUSEUM GALLERY—IT'S ON THE WALL IN YOUR HOME.

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From the *Mona Lisa* and *Girl with a Pearl Earring* to *American Gothic*, the collective fascination with portrait art goes back far beyond even the most famous examples of the genre: back to prehistoric times, in fact, where crude renderings of faces in profile have been discovered by archaeologists in cave dwellings and in the tombs of Egyptian and Chinese royalty. Few mediums have had such staying power. So, what's with the fascination with faces? It's simple: Much like the best writing, portraits are a way to explore our humanity—something that highlights all the ways in which we are different and all the ways in which we are the same. So, it's no surprise that the introspective art form has been increasingly making its way into our homes, with portraits often acting as the stars of busy gallery walls and standalone displays alike. Here, *Luxe* rounds up some of our favorite local and international artists that are keeping the ages-old tradition alive and fresh with new interpretations and thrilling techniques.

The rich colors and dreamy gaze of this hand-stitched piece of portraiture, titled *Abbi*, 2013, by Missouri-based artist Cayce Zavaglia, bring Renaissance art to mind.



► **GABRIEL SCHAMA**

FAMILY PORTRAITS

Who: From his studio in Oakland, California, artist Gabriel Schama's powerful profiles and portraits are a cut above—literally. All of his pieces are either carefully excised by hand with an X-Acto knife or expertly produced with the help of his in-house assistant, a laser cutter he's named Elsie.

What: Schama's work runs the gamut, from reimagined images from newspaper articles and album covers where he's replaced the faces with boldly hued paper-cut explosions to classic profiles executed in wood with inner workings comprised of Elsie's precisely stacked layers (as shown in the section opener). **Why we love him:** There's something meditative about Schama's work, like a complex wood weaving or a dizzying mandala brought to life. It's hard to look away. gabrielschama.com

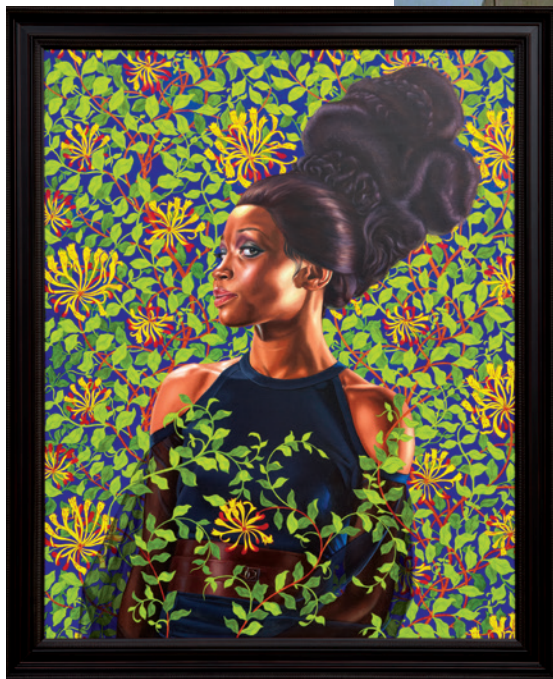


► **KEHINDE WILEY**

SHANTAVIA BEALE II, 2012

Who: No one breaks down boundaries and flips the narrative quite like Brooklyn-based artist Kehinde Wiley, whose classically inspired oil paintings are made modern thanks to their subjects.

What: Highly stylized and realistically rendered portraits in rich palettes depicting black and brown men and women from all over the world in poses influenced by the works of the old masters. **Why we love him:** There's so much ground the historical portrait-painting tradition has yet to cover, and Wiley's work is helping to narrow the distance between the genre's myopic view of the past and the incredible diversity of our everyday reality—while simultaneously celebrating it. kehindewiley.com; skny.com



▼ **ORIOLANGRILL JORDÀ**

OUKALY

Who: Spanish painter Oriol Angrill Jordà has taken two of art's most celebrated and oft-studied subjects—landscapes and the human form—and merged them together in his signature watercolor series, titled *Blendscapes*. The result? Portraits that break all the rules in the best way possible. **What:** Jordà's work feels like a dream within a dream, with everything from steep mountain ranges to serene lakeside scenes depicted across the side of a face or a cheek, like a window into what his subjects are thinking. **Why we love him:** Because Jordà brings one of our favorite platitudes to life in his portraits: People contain multitudes. It's a beautiful sentiment depicted in works that are both realistic and deeply imaginative. oriolangrill.com

◀ **CAYCE ZAVAGLIA**

GARRETT, 2011

Who: Artist Cayce Zavaglia had spent her career working on photo-realistic oil portraits, but when she became pregnant 15 years ago and had to forgo using the toxic chemicals required of the practice, she switched gears: relying on nontraditional embroidery techniques to capture her subjects. **What:** Large-scale embroidered portraits that may as well have been plucked from the studios of the old masters. One of these complex pieces can take Zavaglia anywhere from six weeks to six months to produce.

Why we love her: Zavaglia is able to capture the depth and personality of her subjects—all friends and members of her family—in their direct and unwavering glances; plus, the softness of the embroidery thread and wool she uses brings added warmth to each beautiful visage. caycezavaglia.com

