

ArtPic: Campbell Wallace at Scott Gallery

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Campbell Wallace's *The Surrealists*, up at Scott Gallery. FISH GRIWKOWSKY / EDMONTON JOURNAL

ArtPic artist: Campbell Wallace

Artwork: *The Surrealists*, acrylic and oil on canvas, 48"x32" at Scott Gallery (10411 124th St.)

Edmonton's Campbell Wallace has the remarkable ability to make nearly photorealistic portraits that are simultaneously funny and tragic. His subjects

taken from real-life photos, Wallace is known for elevating to museum status mundane moments of party posing, often echoing the bad lighting of cellphone cameras.

Part of his series Party Paintings, this work echoes the disturbing plant zombies in the heartbreaking video game The Last of Us.

Wallace explains how he came to paint these two. “I happened to be at an Edmonton thrift shop when an employee discovered a batch of older photos in a brown paper bag in a desk drawer. My friend and I were able to convince the manager to let me have the pictures, almost all of which were very exciting and enigmatic source photos.

“The photo used for this painting sat in a box in the studio for a couple of years while I finished up some other pieces, but I knew it needed to be worked up into a Party Painting. And I felt it needed to have a near life-sized format, as though seen in a mirror. As I began working on the painting, I realized that it reminded me of Picasso’s painting Harlequin with Companion, and I began to make alterations to some of the objects and colours in The Surrealists to better reference his 1901 work.

“To me this painting could be set in the living room or basement of the households in my neighbourhood when I was growing up, but something is also a little off. The guitar is missing a string, and while the flowers in her hair give her a sense of occasion, his turn him into a surreal and alien presence.”

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