

The Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion

Presents transformative experience through the arts by focusing on the contemporary visual culture and creates dynamic programming that inspires interaction and dialogue between artists, students, scholars, local and international communities. Designed by architect Steven Ehrlich, the Doyle Arts Pavilion is OCC's on-campus contemporary arts gallery that features a Main Gallery and Project Gallery. Free admission is offered in order to make these experiences accessible for everyone.



Receptions

Preview reception: Sept. 28, Thursday, 5-7 p.m.
Opening reception: Sept. 30, Saturday, 1-4 p.m., with short walk-through by artist at 1 p.m.

Artist Talk

Oct. 5, Thursday, 12:15-1 p.m., artist walk-thru with Julia Bui

Free admission to gallery and events

Julia Bui: *The Couch Surfing Paintings* was organized by Frank M. Doyle Arts Pavilion, and curated by Tyler Stallings. Major support for exhibitions provided by Linda & Tod White Charitable Fund, The Rallis Foundation, Yasuko & John Bush, Sylvia Impert, Orange Coast College Foundation, and Associated Students of Orange Coast College.

Top: *Cleo & Tomasz*, 2017, oil on canvas, 22 x 28 in. (from Poland); bottom: couch in Julia Bui's home where "couch surfers" slept and sat as models for paintings; cover: *Courtney*, 2017, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 in. (from U.S.A.)



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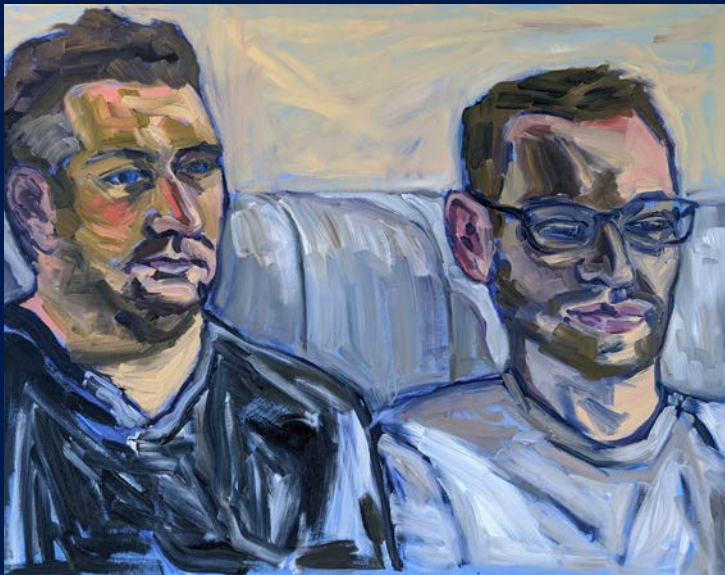


JULIA BUI

The Couch Surfing Paintings

Exploring international cultural and hospitality exchange

September 25 - November 30, 2023



In **Julia Bui: The Couch Surfing Paintings**, I explore life's impermanence and fragility, along with the potential for transcendence through art. Living in an era of endless choices, many of us are burdened by overthinking, anxiety, and decision paralysis. To counter this, I used the alla prima painting technique (wet on wet) with live, untrained models in these portrait paintings, made from 2017 to 2018. This approach necessitated quick decision-making, reinforcing the theme of being "in the moment" and acknowledging the fleeting nature of life.

My models were "couch surfers," members of an online network that connects travelers for free lodging and cultural exchange. I offered them a place to stay in exchange for modeling. While each painting was completed within a few hours, the entire process spanned days, including time spent interacting, sharing

meals, and exploring Los Angeles with these "strangers" turned house guests. The series consists of over forty paintings, featuring travelers from nineteen different countries.

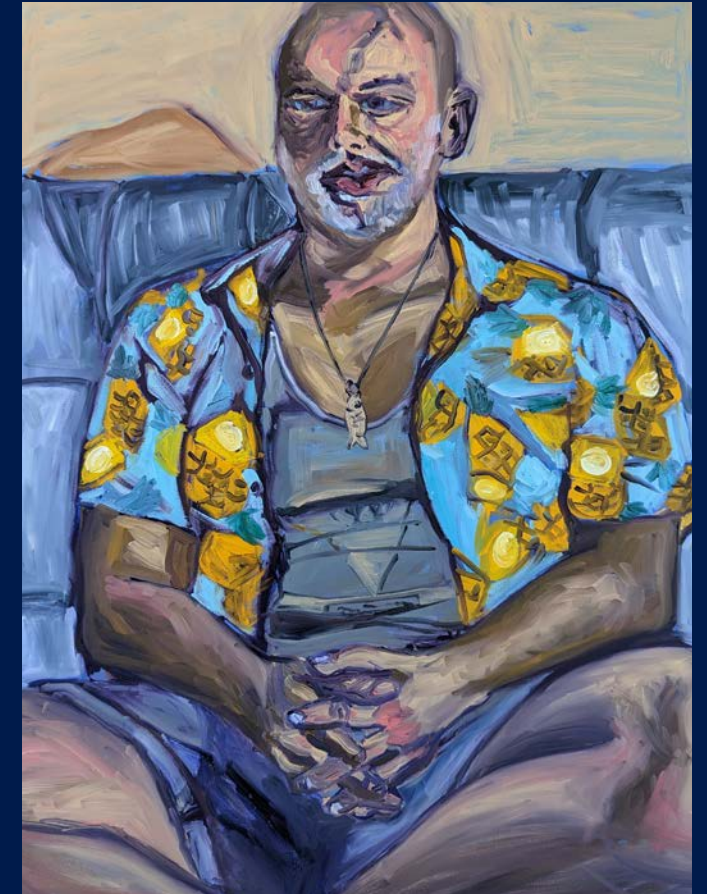
I initially began hosting couch surfers to combat my depression and existential loneliness. Opening my home to others forced me out of my comfort zone, leading to positive disruptions in my life. What started as an experiment soon evolved into a way of life and an exploration of loneliness versus connection. When models sat for a portrait, we dedicated time to being present with one another, a rare experience in today's world. The portraits are not just works of art but a social experiment in reestablishing connections in an increasingly isolating society.

The coronavirus pandemic amplified the project's relevance. During the pandemic, hosts had to weigh the risks of hosting potentially infected travelers, and the spontaneity of social hospitality was challenged by the need to screen guests for COVID-19 and vaccination status. The concept of sharing spaces with "strangers" took on new meaning in our uncertain world. If couch surfing becomes obsolete, these paintings may serve as snapshots of a bygone era.

After enduring the strict COVID-19 lockdowns in Vietnam and facing two close encounters with death while living abroad, I came to the realization, as did so many others during and after the pandemic, that our time here is so limited. This series is both a testament to our transient existence and an attempt to transcend the boundaries of our mortal lives through art.

– **Julia Bui, artist**

Top: Tomasz & Bartosz, 2017, oil on canvas, 22 x 28 in. (from Poland); bottom: Elodie, 2017, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 in. (from France)



Top, left to right: Jason, 2018, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 in. (from U.S.A.); Dan, 2017, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 in. (from Germany); bottom, left to right: Maxwell, 2017, oil on canvas, 28 x 22 in. (from France); Kim, 2018, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 in. (from South Korea)