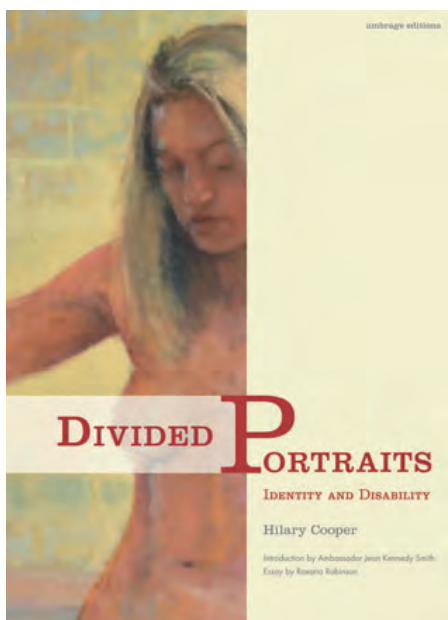


DIVIDED PORTRAITS: IDENTITY AND DISABILITY

PAINTINGS BY HILARY COOPER

Introduction by Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith • Essay by Roxana Robinson
 ACCOMPANIES A TRAVELING EXHIBITION



In portraiture, the head always comes first. In human interactions, too, the head, indeed, the eyes are also always the first thing seen. For people with disabilities what is first is the chair, implying to many able-bodied people that the disabled are different. Hilary Cooper's **DIVIDED PORTRAITS** are painted to challenge this misconception in a deeply visual and emotional way. Cooper spent some time in a wheelchair when she broke her neck in 1995; for a while it appeared she would spend the rest of her life there. This experience taught her what all able-bodied people should know: the stigma of otherness and the range of diversity in human experience. She believes that portraiture, as old as art itself, is peculiarly well placed to help correct distorted views of the disabled and put us all more accurately in touch with one another and with the blessed, grateful, and life-granting realization, *"I am still me!"*

HILARY COOPER is a portrait and landscape painter, whose commissions have included New York Mayor Ed Koch, writers Peter Mathiessen and George Plimpton, and many others. Her landscapes and still lifes have appeared in various galleries in New York and around the country. Her work has been seen in *The New Yorker*, *New York Magazine*, and *Art News* among others. She lives in New York City and Lakeville, Connecticut with her husband, the writer Chris Crowley.

JEAN KENNEDY SMITH is the founder of VSA arts and was the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland from 1993-1998. She has received numerous awards for her many contributions to the issue of disabilities, including the Jefferson Award for Outstanding Public Service from the American Institutes for Public Service, the Margaret Mead Humanitarian Award from the Council of Cerebral Palsy Auxiliaries, and the 1997 Terence Cardinal Cooke Humanitarian Award. She has four children.

ROXANA ROBINSON is the author of *A Perfect Stranger* (2005), *Sweetwater* (2003), *This Is My Daughter* (1998), *Asking for Love* (1996), *A Glimpse of Scarlet* (1991), *Georgia O'Keeffe: A Life* (1989), and *Summer Light* (1988). Four of these were named Notable Booksof the Year by *The New York Times*. Her short fiction and essays have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Vogue*, *The Wall Street Journal* and elsewhere. She has received fellowships from the NEA, and the Guggenheim Foundation, is a trustee emeritus of American PEN and the National Humanities Center, and teaches widely.

"She brings a keen painter's eye to bear ... the result is often striking: how the subject exists as well as looks." —James Salter

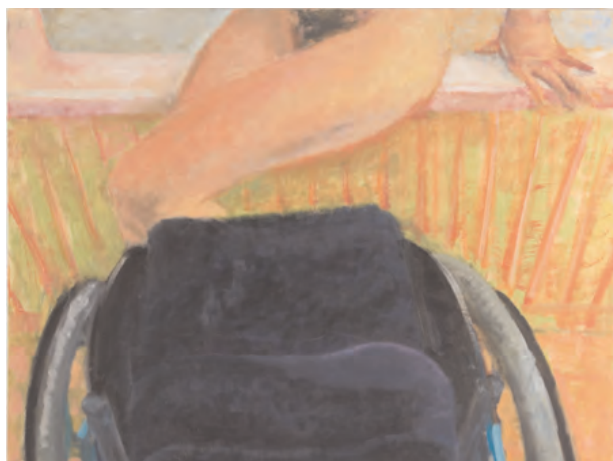
"Whether focused on a landscape or the human features, the result is an enchantment." —George Plimpton

BOOK SPECS

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clockwise from top right:

Amanda Boxtel, Oil on canvas, 35 x 42" and 36 x 44", 2003; *Dennis Murray*, Oil on canvas, 34 x 28" and 24 x 52", 2003; *Arden Lee*, Oil on canvas, 25 x 21" and 25 x 21", 2003.