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ON VIEW: Detail from *The Seeds*, on canvas, 2007. JACKIE GENDEL

Jackie Gendel

I've been using the portrait — mostly portraits of women — as a starting point, as a base to improvise upon.

"There's a lot of play and a sense of humor in my paintings, but there's also a lot of commentary going on — social commentary."

The Seeds could be depicting a lot of things. It could be a group of people conversing over time, or one person forming his own identity or a band. It took a couple of years to make, so there's a passage of time in real life, too, in the actual construction of it.

"For a long time I was thinking of these three faces as people who were forming their identities as they were being painted, and it got to the point that when they were done, it was a paused moment."

"I keep on painting the heads and faces over and over again until they get to a place that feels resolved and poignant and mysterious. I try to get to a place that is unexpected to me."

"Painting a face, if you make an eyelash a little bit longer, all of a sudden, the mood is totally changed. Tiny little marks can change a person's expression really fast."

"I think a lot of the fun of painting is doing that, and a lot of times I take it too far because I enjoy watching my paintings being animated in front of me, so I'll work on a face too long because I like to watch them going from smiling to something completely different in a matter of minutes."

— As told to Douglas Britt

TO SEE MORE
The Seeds is on view in Jackie Gendel | Valerie Hegarty at CTRL Gallery, 3907 Main, through Jan. 12; 713-523-2875.

20 HOUSTON CHRONICLE SUNDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2007

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Philip Martin Gallery

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