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Peter Stichbury, *Roman*, 2011, Acrylic on linen, 20 x 23 ½ in. (50 x 60 cm),
Courtesy the artist and Tracy Williams, Ltd., New York.

PETER STICHBURY

ARTIST TO WATCH

The flat painting style of Peter Stichbury jumped off the pages of the September 2010 issue of *The New Yorker*, compelling *The Art Economist's* editorial staff to learn more about this seemingly portraitist predecessor of Alex Katz. The wide-eyed, slightly awkward faces also suggest a look to Japanese anime and underground comics, and given our current society, it is easy to draw a parallel to the world of avatars. He cites Richard Avedon, Amy Arbus, Lucian Freud, Otto Dix and Ingres as his influences, and as a cross between Disney and French Neoclassical portraiture. The faces are individualized and stylized with an airbrushed, blemish-free quality, but not to the extent of being idealized. Each work carries a specific name, but really is more of a symbolic representation of man and woman and not a distinctive portrait. Stichbury accounts for his subject choices by stating: "In general, the privileged, wealthy and beautiful take precedence when it comes to representation, while other groups remain invisible. I like to address that balance." For his first solo New York show, held

at Tracy Williams in 2010, he continued in his chosen medium of acrylic (which so aptly lends itself to his desired flat, magazine-like surface quality); his works go for up to \$30,000.

Stichbury was born in Auckland, New Zealand, where he attended Elam School of Fine Arts (graduating in 1997) and University of Auckland (graduating in 1999); he continues to reside there. He was awarded one of New Zealand's most prestigious art prizes, the Wallace Art Award, in 1997. He is represented by Tracy Williams, Ltd., who again will present his work at Art Brussels in 2011. In 2010, his work was featured at the Hong Kong International Art Fair and Art Los Angeles Contemporary Fair. -MJP