

## Alex Tabet

California, USA

*Leather and Thread*, oil, 18 x 14" (45 x 35 cm)

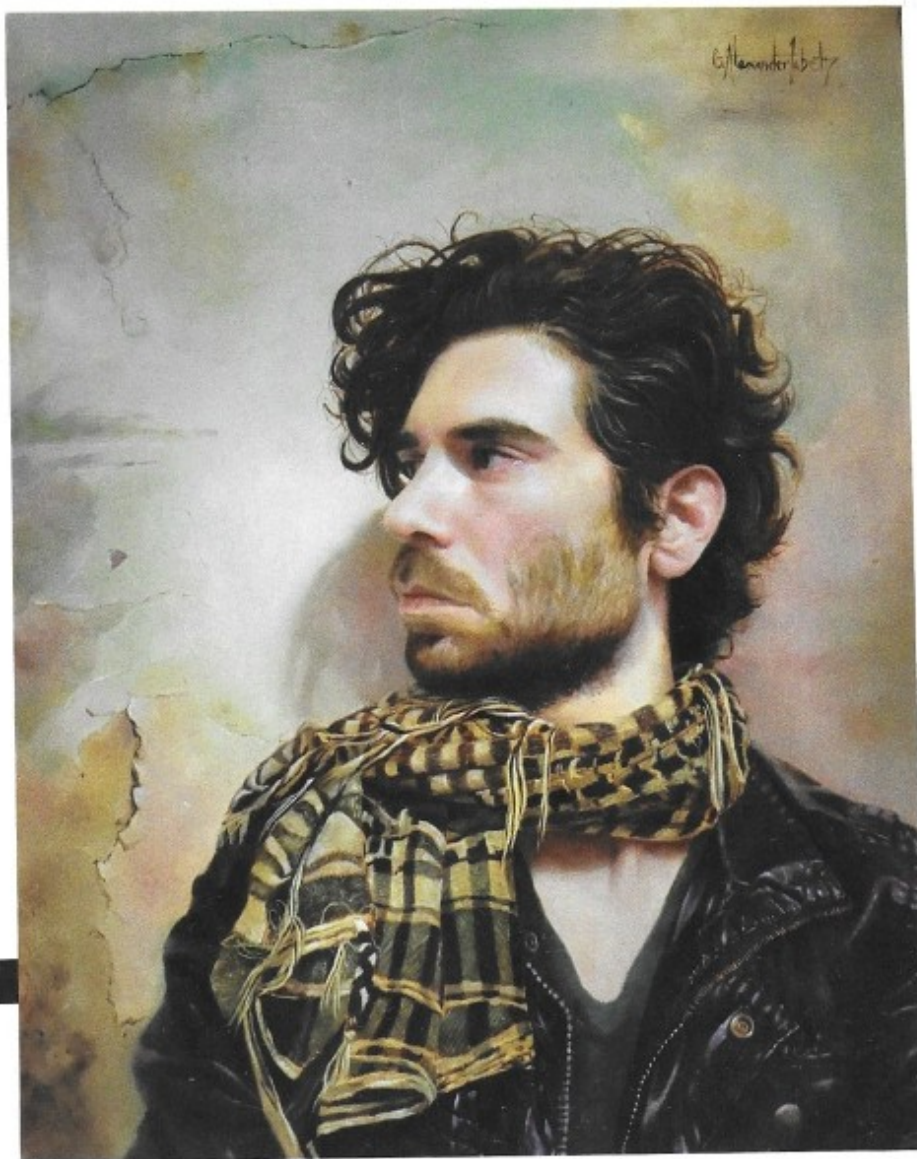
Finalist

### My Inspiration

I love painting people. My joy is to not only capture a person's likeness, but more importantly their essence. An entire story can be told simply from an expression, gesture or attire. However, the global pandemic presented a problem in finding a model willing to pose for me. After a long struggle of thinking what to paint, I found the solution staring at me in my bathroom mirror. I realized I could just paint myself. I was moved by the challenge to self-reflect and discover. With quarantine in full swing, I had nothing but time to explore. Perhaps something about myself would be revealed during this strange time.

### My Design Strategy

While I experimented with a range of various poses, I became drawn to the profile. There is something stoic and mysterious to me about profile portraits, maybe due to a



lack of eye contact with the viewer. Clothing can reveal just as much about character as facial expression. I chose my favorite leather jacket and a scarf to match, adding a level of interest, sophistication and intricacy to the painting. I used hues of red and green on the chipped wall to complement the colors on the face. I felt the cracks would add more character to the painting, creating a contrast between myself and my surroundings. Perhaps it's a subconscious expression of anxiety resulting from uncertain times.

### My Working Process

Painting to me is a balance of spontaneity and precision. I first prime my canvas with multiple coats of gesso that's later sanded to a smooth surface. This allows me to work

with greater detail and delicacy. Afterwards, I enjoy a straight paint to canvas method. I find a certain freedom in the absence of a preliminary drawing; discovering the subject for the first time as I paint. The foundational layer consists of a monochromatic underpainting using only burnt umber and titanium white to understand the form. Once dried, I apply thin layers of color and glazes to fully realize the portrait. The key for me is to never lose sight of the "drawing" aspect. I constantly adjust and rework the form until I'm satisfied.

### Contact Details

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