

Kent Monkman – Clip 8

Portrait of the artist as hunter

Portrait of the artist as hunter was inspired by a number of paintings in that genre, the 19th century painters. Specifically there's a painting by George Catlin where he has painted himself painting a portrait of some Indians and everybody, all the native people are gathered around him with this sort of sense of wonder. And according to his journals and so forth he was really, you know, revered for having this magical power to create these images and portraits of these native people. But because he placed himself in the work there was also a sense of self-promotion, self-aggrandizement, and he wasn't the only painter of that period to do it. There were a number of others. John Mix Stanley (1814-1872) painted himself in this buffalo hunt that I appropriated and re-titled '*Portrait of the artist as hunter*'. So there was a kind of macho, viral attitude about going to the frontier. I think they liked to paint themselves into these canvasses to show how butch and macho they were. So when I started working on the series, I wanted to kind of match their own self-aggrandizement and paint myself into one of these scenes, to, yeah, just to play on that idea of, you know, stealing, taking centre stage in my own painting.

