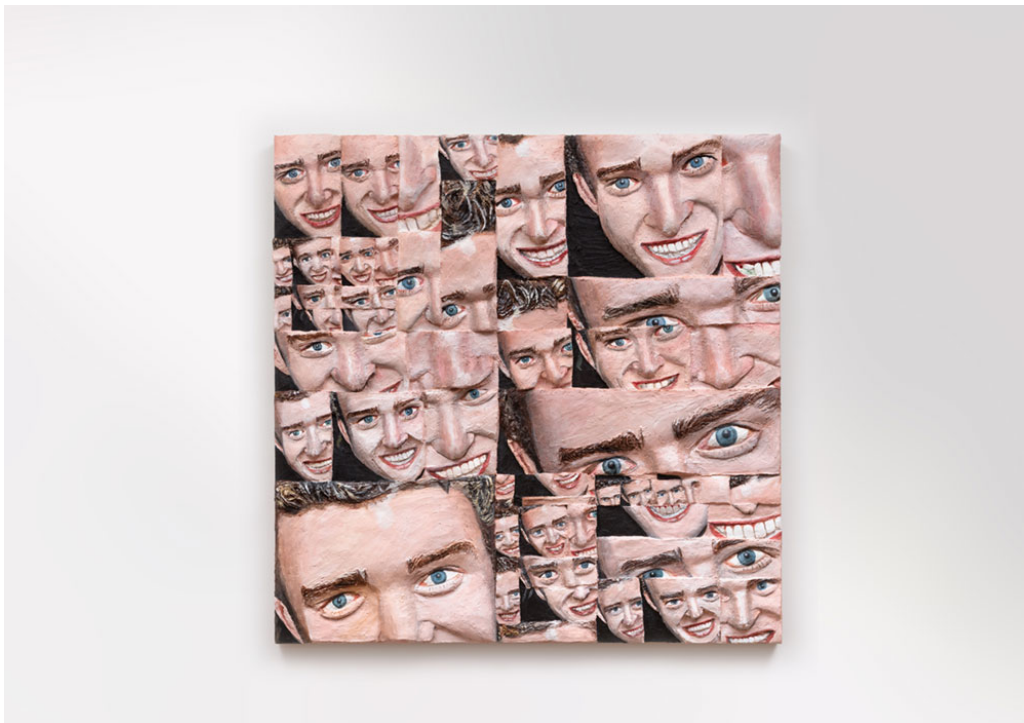




**Gina Beavers**

Interview with Richard Turley  
April 18, 2019



The New York–based artist Gina Beavers recently showed a series of paintings at Foxy Production. Included in the exhibition is a portrait — or rather 56 portraits — of Justin Timberlake. Here’s why she did it.

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**RICHARD TURLEY:** This painting. Explain.

**GINA BEAVERS:** [Laughs.] I source a lot of my paintings from things I see on Instagram. This was based on that whole “It’s gonna be May” meme-fest that happens on social media on April 30. People post funny memes featuring Justin Timberlake, and it’s a joke on the fact that he sings the line “It’s gonna be me” as “It’s gonna be May.” It’s the lowest-of-low-stakes anniversary, but it’s fun to watch.

**TURLEY:** Why Justin? And why Justin now?

**BEAVERS:** He’s been around in some capacity or another for almost my entire life, although his role in Janet Jackson’s wardrobe malfunction at the Super Bowl and what some see as his appropriation of black culture

and music has dimmed his star a bit. The Justin in this painting is from the early aughts, un-tainted by all that, frosted tips and all.

**TURLEY: Describe your studio and the room where you produced this piece.**

**BEAVERS:** This is the first piece I made in my new studio in Newark. It's above Hobby's, an amazing Jewish deli that has been around since the '20s, so the incredible smell of pastrami wafts in all afternoon. My space is built out in this very artist-loft-circa-1995 way, with a sleeping nook and a makeshift kitchen. There was also a weird little room that I'm pretty sure was a grow room for weed.

**TURLEY: Where did you find the photo? I assume you found it on the internet, but was it from a specific trawl or did you come across it by chance?**

**BEAVERS:** I'm pretty sure it was posted by Mike Doughty from the '90s band Soul Coughing, and that I came across it randomly, although it's possible Instagram's algorithm suggested this gridded-up face because I look at so many online makeup tutorials.

**TURLEY: Is there a fundamental difference in your approach to painting Justin's face as opposed to, say, a pork chop?**

**BEAVERS:** Not really. I felt like I had to make the scale of this piece a bit bigger than those other subjects because there are some really tiny, detailed areas on his face, but that's about it. It's way harder to paint a ton of smiling faces realistically than some more abstract food, but I did my best.

**TURLEY: What did you learn about Justin's face after painting it so many times?**

**BEAVERS:** Despite being thought of as a real cutie, his face is not so different than a lot of people's faces.

**TURLEY: How sick are you of Justin Timberlake?**

**BEAVERS:** Not very, although there's likely no one on earth who has studied that one random spot on the side of his ear as much as I have.