

## Artist Resources – Adrian Ghenie (Romanian, b. 1977)

[Ghenie at PACE Gallery](#)

[Ghenie at NICODIM Gallery](#)

[Ghenie at Thaddaeus Ropac](#)

“On one hand, I work on an image in an almost classical vein: composition, figuration, use of light. On the other hand, I do not refrain from resorting to all kinds of idioms, such as the surrealist principle of association or the abstract experiments which foreground texture and surface.”

Ghenie started Galeria Plan B in 2005 with a group of friends because they saw themselves as “total failures.” See an [interview with the artist](#) about this early endeavor. In 2011, SFMOMA also interviewed Ghenie [about his experience](#) attending art school in communist Romania.

Ghenie represented Romania in the 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale in 2015. Take a [virtual tour](#) of the exhibition curated by Mihai Pop and read Andrew Russeth’s [review](#) for ARTnews. A [video tour](#) is also available.

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver hosted an exhibition entitled [Adrian Ghenie: Pie-Fights and Pathos](#) in 2013, one of the first exhibitions of the artist’s work in the United States.

The market for Ghenie’s work has increased 160-fold over the past decade. In 2016, the New York Times featured the article [“How the Artist Adrian Ghenie Became an Auction Star.”](#) The Art Newspaper’s Judd Tully also examined the steep rise in [a 2018 article](#).



Ghenie in his Berlin studio, 2019  
Photography: Oliver Mark

“Every painting is abstract. I don’t believe in figurative. As soon as it starts to imitate, to depict something, then a painting is dead. This is the moment when you kill painting.”

A 2017 exhibition at PACE gallery explored the artist’s reflections on the refugee crisis in Europe. In [an article by Andy Battaglia](#), Ghenie reflects: “Painting has always reacted to big, epic stories, whether battles or biblical stories... Art history is already full of this kind of depiction [of struggle, toil, persecuted people moving en masse]. Everything you see on TV, if you remove the clothes, it’s the same as a Renaissance scene—a man followed by his wife holding a child with a landscape in the background. The only thing that’s missing is a donkey.”

In 2018, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac featured an exhibition, [Jungles in Paris](#), which was inspired by the 2005 Henri Rousseau [exhibition](#) at the Tate Modern of the same name.

[Adrian Ghenie: The Hooligans](#) was on display at New York’s PACE Gallery from November 2020 to March 2021.



Adrian Ghenie (Romanian, born 1977)  
**Self Portrait in 1945**, 2015  
Oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2021:68.1

Berlin-based painter Adrian Ghenie is known for visceral, psychologically charged canvases that skillfully merge a diverse stream of influences and interests from history, art, literature, religion, and philosophy. Applying paint to canvas with both brush and palette knife, Ghenie creates abstract yet highly suggestive surrealistic images with a raw, unfinished quality in which figures blur in and out of focus amongst dynamic swirls of color and tactile ridges of paint. The artist got his start at the Art and Design University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, where he developed a keen art historical eye and an interest in traditional genres, such as portraiture. Employing his personal method of figuration and abstraction to depict noteworthy figures from art, politics, and popular culture—including Vincent van Gogh, Charles Darwin, and Donald Trump—Ghenie explores his fascination with individual and collective psychology. “I’m interested in paradoxes within the history that is there,” Ghenie reflected in 2017. “I dive into a collective subconsciousness that already exists and is weird and paradoxical, without a clear direction.”

*On view June 9 – September 12, 2021*