

V1 Gallery presents



Oxen

A solo exhibition by Grace Metzler

GALLERY II

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY MARCH 1. 2019. TIME: 17.00 - 21.00

EXHIBITION PERIOD: MARCH 2 - 30. 2019

In her first solo show with V1 Gallery, Grace Metzler establishes an aesthetic that exceeds normative boundaries, one that articulates encounter of non-visible forces and engender modes of sexual being and becoming. In *Untitled (Arena)* (2018, oil and acrylic on canvas, 122 x 152,5 cm) naked humans, oxen, horses and centaurs are submerged in a marshland, enacting a collective mating ritual, some clinging to ropes and animal tails, others stuck in the ooze of the arena. Isolated from the outside world by a numbered board, these nameless, genderless, raceless figures seem free, engaged in all their permissive manners, however only to a limited extent.

There is a feeling of ripe decay. A potential for danger in a near future.

In Metzler's reinterpretations of the 16th century panoramic landscape painting, couples quarrel and unite under a foreboding night sky. Hungry for life, but they won't give in. Staring at us – a detail among details on the open arena – a man carries a woman on his shoulders, she wears a flag garland around her neck. A beacon glowing in the darkness.

As her irregular palette of colors manifests into exasperated brush strokes, Metzler subverts the familiar encounter between man and beast in the arena so richly depicted by Picasso, Degas, Goya and Manet. In this world, human and animal bodies are as likely to merge in polymorphous embrace, as they are to struggle (*Woman + Ox*, 2019, oil and acrylic on canvas, 61 x 46 cm). Sexual morphology is indeed at stake in Metzler's gestural take on the Mannerist motif of Madonna and Child (*Last Summer's Suit*, 2019, oil and acrylic on canvas, 61 x 46 cm), in which the separation between infant and mother finds a parallel in man's uneasy relation to nature.

Following 1900s novelist Stanisław Przybyszewski, the androgynous is a premise for life and death, man and woman, self and other, a kaleidoscopic reflection upon absence and separation to oneself. Using androgyny as a means to disrupt art historical narratives, Metzler restores ancient and baroque polymorph creatures. It is about transgression, breaching boundaries, being limitless. Dream and reality merged. Nature and culture reworked. One can no longer be the resource for appropriation by the other. In our contemporary culture, the last constraints have been muddied, if not turned into amusement parks, as in Metzler's painting *Untitled (Arena)* – language, social behavior, mental events – nothing convincingly demands for separation of man/animal. An illegitimate promise that engenders anxiety and euphoria in equal measure.

Inspired by endless summer escapes from her conventional upbringing in Pennsylvania to her grandparent's farm in Slaterville Springs (New York), *Oxen* is an exploration of the psychological and physical realm of life through the foreboding marshland. A spontaneous enjoyment, a primordial *joie de vivre*.

Grace Metzler (born in 1989, New York) holds an MFA from Hunter College. In 2018 Metzler mounted her first solo exhibition at Half Gallery (New York). She has been included in group exhibitions at Thierry Goldberg (New York) and in *New "Bad" Painting* at V1 Gallery (Copenhagen).

Please do not hesitate to contact the gallery for further information, press photos or artists interviews:
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Opening hours: Wednesday-Friday: 12-18. Saturday: 12-16. Or by appointment.
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