



V1 Gallery is pleased to present

Naturally Selected

A solo exhibition by Grace Metzler

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY JUNE 3. 2022. TIME: 16.00 - 21.00
EXHIBITION PERIOD: JUNE 4 – AUGUST 13. 2022

In Metzler's vivid compositions, rendered in oil paint on canvas, the mundane and the mysterious are interconnected. The gestural paintings are visceral, strangely seductive, and hauntingly strange. The protagonists jump rope, play table tennis, ride horses, get married, hang by the creek, throw an American football, and commune together. The landscapes, scenes and interiors have a feel from another time; an older, rural America. But these are modern scenes of familiar pastimes, places and things: trees, barns, rivers, horses and picnics. Idyllic? Not really. Many of Metzler's paintings are inspired by the summers she spent at her grandparents' dairy farm in Slaterville Springs, New York. No good at milking cows, she instead wandered the many acres of land, hanging out at the local Dandy Mart, where the farmers would get their coffee, gas up their trucks, and share stories with the counter woman preparing hot dogs and pizzas. In these works, you can feel how time slows down, when people take a break from their chores and come together.

There is a tension in the paintings. What is happening, just below the surface of the river, behind the wooden barn walls – are they wrestling or having sex? Are the horses dead, sleeping or daydreaming? What are they building inside the toy barn? Two women dressed in white robes smoke cigarettes and stand before a red carpet, leading to what? Is that an Airbnb or a UFO? Are the aliens friend or foe? Who is welcome in the promised land? All the raised middle fingers - just a jest or an unwelcome aggression?

Amid this wonderful, surreal neo-western, there are also acts of love and kindness - intense embraces and subtle caresses. One feels Metzler's empathy for her subjects, their lives, their singular stories. In these fragmented and open-ended narratives, the viewer is engaged in media res; we must find our own way in and out of the paintings.

“The figures in my paintings often feel like an extension of myself, and I want the characters in these paintings to be seen with kindness, because they are trying their best. My journey to accepting myself is embedded in the mystery of these characters, and my goal is to help the characters feel so comfortable with themselves that they stop apologizing. While working on this exhibition, I went through a lot of personal changes, and I see these paintings as a celebration of the independence I've earned along the way.”

Grace Metzler, New York, 2022

Naturally Selected, 13 paintings, feels like a celebration of real life; not idealized, or easy, but life lived - beautiful, mundane, mysterious, and unpredictable.

Grace Metzler (b. 1989) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York, USA. Metzler received her BFA from Tyler School of Art at Temple University, USA and her MFA from Hunter College, USA (2017). She was named the 2017 recipient of the Rema Hort Foundation Emerging Artist Grant. Metzler has taken part in exhibitions with Yossi Milo Gallery, New York, USA, Half Gallery, New York, USA, Thierry Goldberg, New York, USA, Neochrome, Torino, Italy, and Taymour Grahne Projects, London, UK. *Naturally Selected* is her second solo exhibition with V1 Gallery.