

Lyles & King

Mercedes Llanos, Juliana Cerqueira Leite, Paulina Stasik

May 12 - June 25, 2022

Lyles & King is pleased to present a three-artist exhibition with Mercedes Llanos, Juliana Cerqueira Leite, and Paulina Stasik.

Mercedes Llanos' illusory paintings of bodily intimacy foreground the feminine subconscious; breaking apart and intertwining the perceived dichotomies of fear and desire, pain and pleasure, shame and gratification. Combining lived and observed experiences of repression in her native Argentinian culture with the content of her dreams, Llanos' raw oil on canvas paintings encapsulate the longing for agency often entrenched within conceptions of female desire. In this work Llanos, regards desire as an expression of liberation, desire which, within repressive structures and dynamics of gender, is often figured as passive and unaffecting.

Juliana Cerqueira Leite's sculptural practice uses the mnemonic character of plaster to construct the human body as a transmutative, constantly re-articulated collection of postures, sequences, and states. Fusing casts of her own body together, Leite's sculptures form cocoon-like labyrinths; anthropomorphic architectures that suggest a non-linear passage through time and space. Leite challenges the object-based relational framework suggested by natural resource extraction, excessive waste, and colonization, formulating the human body and its environment not as passive objects, but agents engaged in a dynamic relationship that evades discrete representation and a fixed vocabulary.

Paulina Stasik's luminous paintings excise and transmogrify the skin to explore the way emotions are expressed through and within our bodies. Her often self-referential work gathers whole and dissected nude bodies in ambiguous milieus—amalgamations that could be erotic raptures or unsettling objectifications. Stasik treats skin as a veil behind which sincerity and sorrow cower; suturing, clutching, and sometimes devouring skin in a cannibalistic exorcism of inauthenticity. Continuous across Stasik's compositions is an underlying theme of deceit: a face can be a mask, an embrace can be a prison, wholeness can imply prior chaos, and embodiment can be the pinnacle of experience or the artifice that obscures an ever elusive authenticity.

Juliana Cerqueira Leite (b. 1981, Chicago, IL) has exhibited work at Sculpture Center, New York, NY; Saatchi Gallery, London, UK; Ilmin Museum, Seoul, KR; Marres House for Contemporary Culture, Maastricht, NL; Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, BR; Arsenal Contemporary, New York, NY and Montreal, CA; Antarctic Pavilion, Venice Biennale 2017, Venice, IT; Moscow Young Art Biennale, Moscow, RU; Marrakech Biennale, Marrakech, MA; and Vancouver Sculpture Biennial, Vancouver, CA; among others. Cerqueira Leite received the 2019 Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant for her exhibition, "Orogenesis" at the National Archaeological Museum in Naples, IT. Cerqueira Leite graduated from the Slade School of Fine Art (UCL) Graduate Sculpture Program. She is represented in London, England by T.J. Boulting, in São Paulo, Brazil by Casa Triângulo, and in Venice, Italy by Alma Zevi. Cerqueira Leite lives and works in New York.

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Mercedes Llanos (b. 1992, Mar del Plata, Argentina) has exhibited work at Balice Hertling, Paris, FR; Lyles & King, NY; Modus Locus, Minneapolis, MN; Fluorescent Gallery, Knoxville, TN; Ava, Chattanooga, TN; Frequency Arts, Chattanooga, TN; among others. She earned an MFA in Studio Art at Hunter College. Llanos lives and works in New York.

Paulina Stasik (b. 1990, Poland) has exhibited work at Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, PL; Spread Museum, Entrevau, FR; Lyles & King, NY; Raster Gallery, Warsaw, PL, The MODEM Center for Modern and Contemporary Arts, Debrecen, HU; Galeria Wozownia, Toruń, PL, Galeria Henryk, Kraków, PL; and Shefter Gallery, Kraków, PL; among others. She received her Doctorate in the Faculty of Painting at the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków, PL. Stasik lives and works in Kraków.