

NARANJO 141

ANNA KENNEALLY
LIZZY LUNDAY

Here, Elsewhere

February 5 - March 10, 2024

Opening: February 5, 2024, 4-7pm

NARANJO 141 is pleased to present *Here, Elsewhere*, a two-artist exhibition of new paintings by Anna Kenneally (b.1995, London-based) and Lizzy Lunday (b.1992, Brooklyn-based). After both being included in a group show in New York at Fredericks & Freiser Gallery in 2021, this presentation will be the artists' first formal exhibition where their works will be presented alongside one another again, and will mark both Kenneally's and Lunday's first presentation in Mexico.

The virtue of presentness is extolled as a cure-all – but what does it mean to be present in a new city with an unfamiliar rhythm, a culture that you don't yet understand? The works in *Here, Elsewhere*, wrestle with what it means to remain mindful when we're cut off from what we're accustomed to. Brought together by a shared desire to eschew formulaic processes, the two artists' second show together in three years thrums with improvisational energy – each stroke of paint is another opportunity for composition, narrative, and gesture to be reimagined. Characters fashioned out of archetypes that span epochs struggle to find their footing on unsteady grounds. Sirens, crows, avatars of masculinity and allure weave in and out of scenery that spans the classical and the digital as they attempt to become whole. In both the artists' hands and in the psychology of their subjects, a relentless pursuit of the present is brought to the fore.

Responding to the contrast between London, New York, and Mexico City, Anna Kenneally's paintings in *Here, Elsewhere* draw on moments of alienation – of gazes averted, or bodies inhibited – to depict individuals relating tenuously to their surroundings. A postcard featuring Tower Bridge, an image of a young woman smoking on a balcony at the Hotel Chelsea, and a host of floral motifs culled from across continents conjure up spaces that reside somewhere between the psychological and the physical. Hints of pensiveness come through on reflective faces, ominous forces emerge in subtly-drawn skulls, and figures in the midst of revelation dissolve seamlessly into their newfound surroundings. Immersed in unfamiliar cultures, trepidatious characters are compelled to intervene in their relationships to their peers, their audience, and their environments.

Lizzy Lunday's latest suite of paintings incorporate environmental features of her time in Mexico City into scenes that straddle the digital and the historical. Dramatic sunsets seen from the Naranjo roof, black-and-white tiling that lines the townhouse floors, and black-eyed Susans that flank the stairwell to the studio are fractured and reformulated into pictorial spaces where the luster of online media mingles with the aura of traditional architecture. Behind each brightly colored composition, Lunday's subjects contend with an insecurity that betrays the superficial excitement they wear on their faces. As they enact gender, power, and intimacy, Lunday's figures inhabit an idealized realm that seems to be on the verge of fizzling out. Constantly reacting, effacing, and reworking her paintings, Lunday's spontaneous mark-making adds to the sense that something is still in the midst of being resolved. Uncertainty – of who, or where, we are – becomes the through-line in the work.

Text by Ben Adams-Keane

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Lizzy Lunday probes the constant stream of digital images – on reality TV, in advertising, on social media – to identify the modern-day mythologies that shape our conceptions of self. Following in the line of history painters who used biblical imagery, historical trope, and Greek and Roman iconography to tell the stories of their time, Lunday works within the vernacular of contemporary-consumerist imagery to reflect the multi-layered realities we inhabit. Serialized notions of femininity and masculinity, vulnerability and intimacy are performed by figures that seem to exist somewhere between the screen and the flesh. Beneath the sheen of celebrity culture, moments of authenticity reveal themselves – a woman recoiling from an artificial act of affection, or an observer whispering something taboo into their neighbor's ear. It's in this melding of superficiality and candor that the viewer locates the unsteady, omniscient influence of our present-day avatars: What was once painted a snake in the Garden of Eden or a siren on a shore is now something on a feed, or a stream, that's just as infectious and alluring.

Bright palettes and a dynamic visual language welcome viewers into spectacles where individual and environment are in constant, cyclical dialogue. Initially seduced into a world that appears wonderful and thrilling, viewers then encounter a disorienting mix of abstraction and hard edges that asks us to consider questions of reality versus performativity. As Lunday's characters begin to blend into their surroundings, and as the extremity of their emotions comes to the fore, a sense of uncertainty, instability and anxiety is introduced. What was an exciting illusion quickly becomes precarious; we start to wonder whether this narrative is unrealistic or unreliable. Offering a commentary on both the superficiality but also the romance of media-consumerism, the viewer is invited to consider the intimacy of the contemporary relationship between celebrity and consumer, society and self, reality and artifice.

Lunday received her BFA at the University of Miami in Miami, FL in 2019, and later received her MFA at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York in 2019. She has been the subject of international solo shows, including recent solo exhibitions at Fredericks & Freiser, New York, NY (2023 & 2021); Jupiter Gallery, Miami, FL (2023); and GNYF Gallery, Berlin, DE (2022).

Anna Kenneally's work explores the contradictions between the organic and the artificial in our social worlds, our built environments, and our inner lives. Beginning with a central female subject, Kenneally collages sketches, photos, and art-historical references into the surrounding environment until an uneasy narrative emerges: Of a young woman disconnected from her surroundings; of a hardened soul gazing defiantly back at her audience; of an individual captured in the midst of reverie. The work's elusive, slippery grounds are made up of layers that reside somewhere between abstraction and representation, never quite giving viewer's enough information to place the figures on a physical plane while still evoking the moods, memories, and connotations associated with physical objects. The central characters become enmeshed in a veil of angst and epiphany that is at once imagined and all-consuming.

With big swaths of paint and bold brushstrokes that teeter between warm and cool sources of light, Kenneally's paintings evoke the Impressionist formal relationship between the artist's hand and her environment. Casting known contemporary figures in a Neo-Gothic style, Kenneally's austere paintings allow the viewer to consider the contradictions that persist in the present day: between indulgence and melancholy, introspection and expectation, vulnerability and restraint. Kenneally's work invites us into realms where the real and the fantastical collide – where the demands of composition, the gravity of storytelling, and the intrigue of accident come together to render familiar faces anew.

Kenneally received her Foundation Diploma in Art & Design at Kingston University in Kingston, UK in 2014, and later received her BA in Fine Art at Bath Spa University in Bath, UK. She has had solo exhibitions at Fredericks & Freiser in New York in both 2023 and 2022, and has recently been included in shows internationally at Academy Mansion, New York, NY (2023); Gallery LVS, Seoul, KR (2023); Ojiri Gallery, London, UK (2022); Victoria Miro Gallery, London, UK (2022); Stems Gallery, Paris, FR (2022); Cob Gallery, London, UK (2021); and Fulham Town Hall, London, UK (2021).

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