

New York Exhibition

MIRANDA BYK & ANJA SALONEN

TETHER / CONTAMINATE

May 12 – Jun 17, 2023



Miranda Byk, *Going in Circles* (2023), acrylic and oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in.

Arsenal Contemporary Art New York is pleased to present a two-person exhibition by Los Angeles-based emerging artists Miranda Byk and Anja Salonen. *Tether / Contaminate* is Byk's first ever exhibition in New York and Salonen's first exhibition in New York since 2017.

The series of five paintings produced by Byk for this exhibition was created in honor the memory of the innovative American musician Wayne Shorter who recently passed away on March 2, 2023. Shorter admitted to having been inspired by *The Water Babies*, a Victorian Children book written by Charles Kingsley in 1863 which he gifted to Byk a few years ago. Its fable tells the story of a chimney sweeper who falls into a river and is transformed into a "water-baby" before embarking on a series of adventures and lessons. For this new body of work, Byk contextualizes water as a metaphorical portal between the physical and the metaphysical. As the surface of water is reflective, an easy trap is to overlook what lays beneath to view only our own image. Byk's paintings seem to imply that the difference between real and imaginary is nothing but a limpid looking glass. But her juxtaposing of the tangible world against a fantastical one is also a way of manifesting a site of encounter with the afterlife, thus establishing a point of contact with her lost friend.

As for her, Anja Salonen draws inspiration from the digital world and the effects of a techno-neoliberal economic model at war with planetary boundaries. Gasoline rainbows, water pollution and the visual phenomena of chemical contamination are all referenced in her paintings as irreparable consequences of technological developments, resource extraction, and large-scale industrialization. Her work places the human body at the center of this conflict as the main subject of biometric surveillance and personal data mining. In her work, contamination exists as a two-fold dystopian phenomenon, the failed strategic management of human and natural resources, but also resolute interconnectedness of all things living and inert.

Both Byk and Salonen draw from science-fiction and fantasy novels for inspiration. Each artist has deployed a visual vocabulary that is resolutely their own while referencing their respective areas of interest. Together, however, their work testifies to a world that is undergoing profound changes and emphasizes the importance of imagination and creativity as critical tools towards a better future for humanity.

Miranda Byk (b. 1994, Ventura, CA, USA) Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. She is a painter and holds a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. Recent exhibitions include Sow & Tailor (Los Angeles), Make Room (Los Angeles), Primary Projects (Miami) and K11 Museum and Woaw Gallery (Hong Kong).

Anja Salonen (b. 1994, Los Angeles, CA) Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. She attended the Rhode Island School of Design and California Institute of the Arts, where she earned her BFA in Fine Arts. She is a visual artist, musician, and performer. Recent exhibitions include In Lieu (Los Angeles), Loyal Gallery (Stockholm, Sweden) and Kravets Wehby (New York).

Information :

+1 917 262 0233

info.ny@arsenalcontemporary.com

www.arsenalcontemporary.com