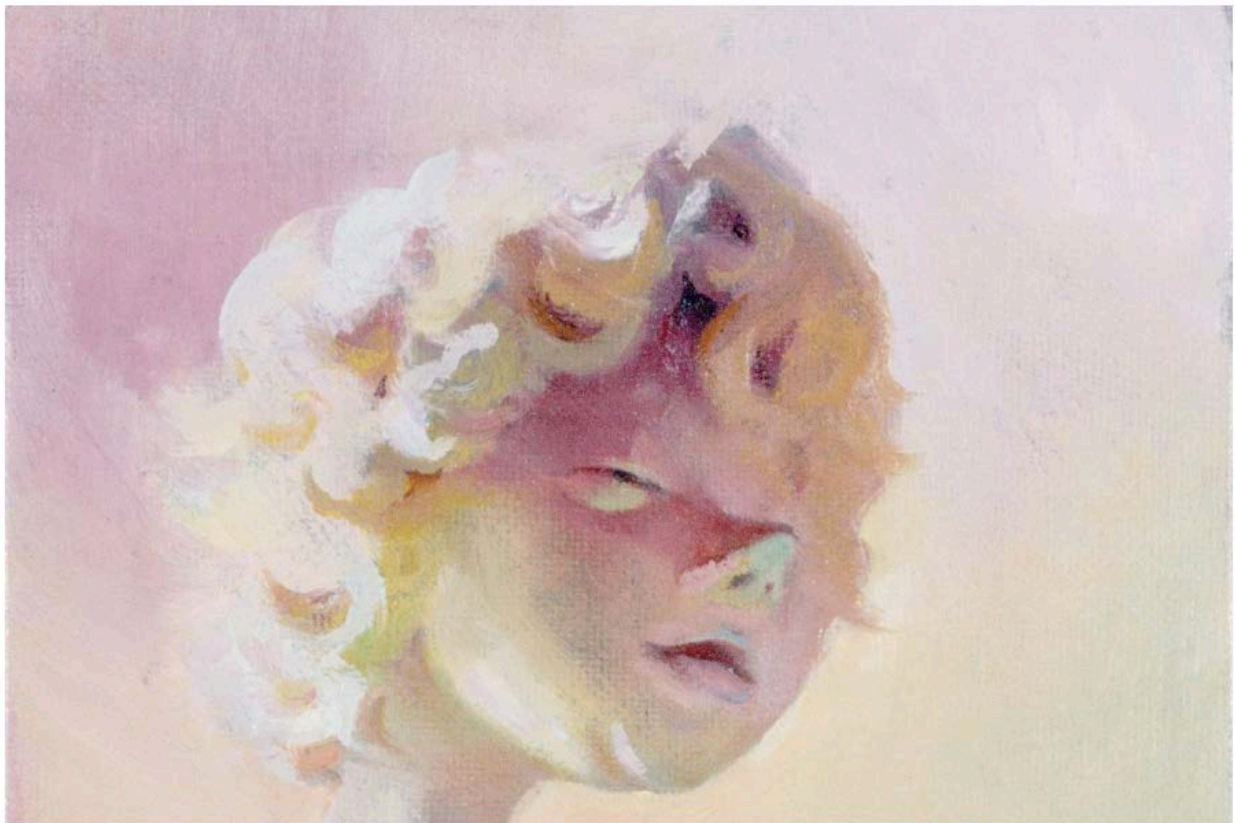


David Zwirner

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# WIDEWALLS

## 5 Lisa Yuskavage Nudes From Her Upcoming Survey at David Zwirner



**November 7, 2018**

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Balasz Takac

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Balasz Takac is alias of Vladimir Bjelicic who is actively engaged in art criticism, curatorial and artistic practice.

The nude is a recurrent topic in contemporary artistic practices regardless of the media. It constantly intrigues artists to explore it further by exploiting their own visions, desires, and emotions and referring to different (historical) modes of representation. The depictions of naked bodies are almost always associated with the gaze, and it is just the matter of the artists' agenda of how that gaze is articulated.

Lisa Yuskavage is an American artist who devotedly investigates how the nudes stimulate, provoke or subvert the gaze. For more than thirty years, her sensual figurations have been highly regarded and approached with interest. David Zwirner gallery, which has been representing Yuskavage since 2005, decided to organize two exhibitions at their venues in New York in order to present accordingly both her earlier and latest works.

## The Gaze Matters

Although at first glance conventional, the artistic practice of Lisa Yuskavage develops behind the restrictions of the genre. By portraying bold and exhibitionist figures, which are both the ones to be looked at and the ones who are looking, the artist produces enticing narratives about the very nature of spectatorship or voyeurism.

The influences present in Yuskavage's work can be searched in the oeuvres of the precedents such as Elizabeth Peyton or Francis Bacon, yet the artist still manages to reach a high level of authenticity by focusing on dichotomies between high and low, harmony and dissonance, sacred and profane.

## The Selected Works

For this particular occasion, David Zwirner decided to juxtapose two selections. At the first venue, the artist's small-scale paintings present in her oeuvre since the mid-1980s will be on display. Some are studies for large paintings, and are based on the artist's imagination, live models, found and staged photographs.

The second installment will feature her eight new large paintings depicting mostly couples. These depictions of interdependent male and female figures came from Yuskavage's series of *Symbiotic* portraits from the early 2000s.

# Lisa Yuskavage at David Zwirner Gallery

Two simultaneous exhibitions will offer a fine insight into the development of Yuskavage's practice; especially the continuation, and her craftsmanship will be underlined.

An extensive catalog created in close collaboration with the artist will include texts by renowned art historians, curators, and writers.

The retrospective of Lisa Yuskavage titled *Babie Brood: Small Paintings 1985–2018* will be on display at [David Zwirner gallery](#) on West 19th Street, while the second one *Lisa Yuskavage: New Paintings* will be on display on East 69th Street. Both exhibitions will open on 8 November and stay on view until 15 December 2018.

Featured image: Lisa Yuskavage – Foodeater, detail, 1996. © Lisa Yuskavage, Hall Collection. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner



## Home

*Home* was produced in 2018 and it depicts a nude couple standing within a door frame. The scene is serene, and it seems as if the composition symbolizes a gateway between the conscious and unconscious mind, a recurring dichotomy present in the oeuvre of Lisa Yuskavage.

The couple is juxtaposed against the dominating pastel tones, yet a colorful background creates an impression of harmony because of the couple's interlocking hands in the exact center of the composition.

Featured image: Lisa Yuskavage – Home, 2018. © Lisa Yuskavage. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner



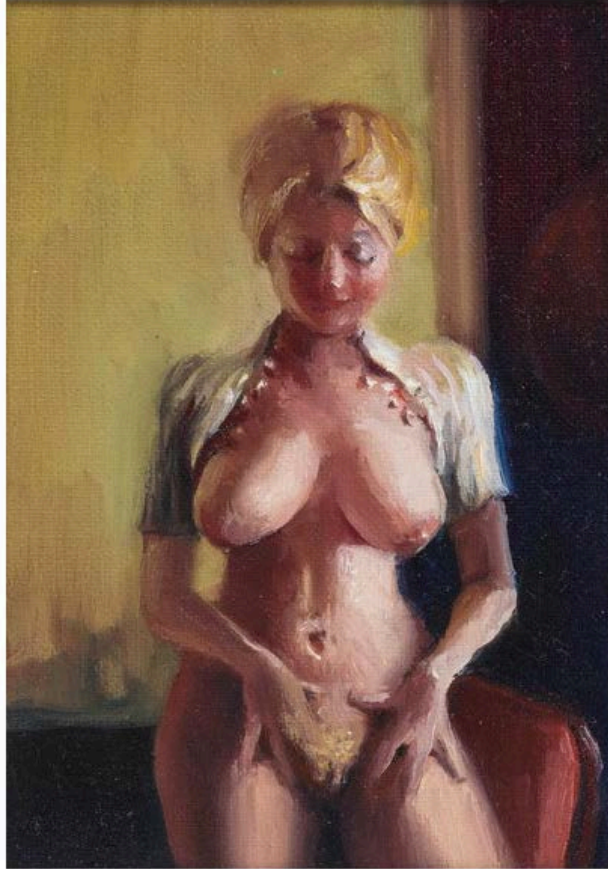
## Little Kingdom

This dazzling and surreal painting titled *Little Kingdom* was made in 2005. Two female nudes are represented in a dreamy state; they are like ancient divinities, which is accentuated with the bouquet of flowers positioned between them; they are otherworldly creatures, perhaps fairies, yet their unclear, distorted faces seem sad, or rather without any particular expression.

It can be said that this composition symbolically signifies a feeling of loss and longing.

Featured image: Lisa Yuskavage – *Little Kingdom*, 2005. ©

Lisa Yuskavage. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner



### Screwing Her Pussy on Straight

One of the most notorious paintings by Lisa Yuskavage is *Screwing Her Pussy on Straight* produced in 1997. This explicit composition features a busty woman in an act of self-examination or perhaps masturbation. She does not feel embarrassed neither tempted by the gaze, the feeling of self-sufficiency prevails, so the artist's gendered commentary comes to point. The painting is reminiscent of the work by Pierre Bonnard, while the mark-making pays tribute to Rembrandt.

Featured image: Lisa Yuskavage – *Screwing Her Pussy on Straight*, 1997. © Lisa Yuskavage. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner





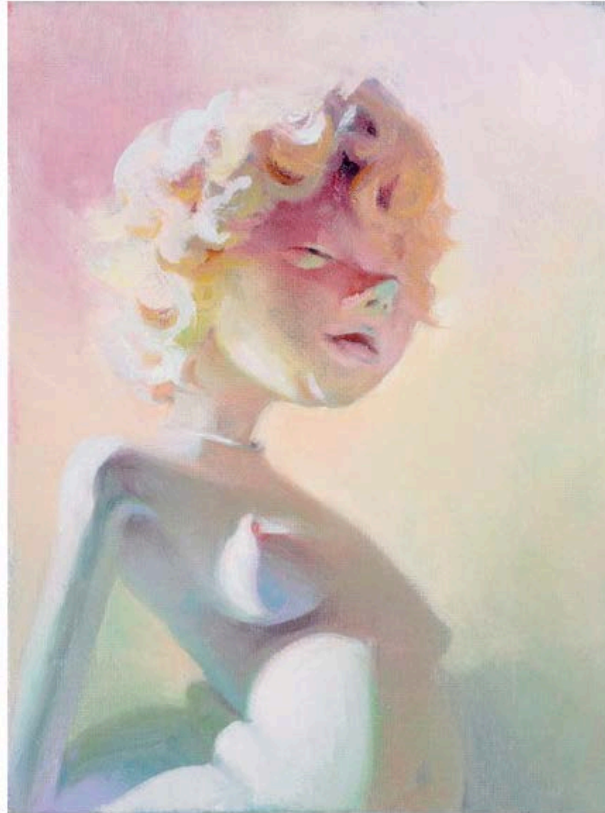
### Self Portrait

The next painting is an actual *Self Portrait* of the artist from 2017. The female nude is contrasted with the dramatic light and is located in front of what appears to be a male silhouette. The scene is somehow surreal and reflects the psychological tension between the two figures, so the recurrent theme of dualism is again at stake. Director of The Rose Art Museum Christopher Bedford, who curated Yuskavage's works, stated more generally that:



*the formal and conceptual value of color [is] both synonymous and unequivocal. ... [To] understand the painting is not to understand a story represented, but instead to understand the very means of representation.*

Featured image: Lisa Yuskavage – Self Portrait, 2017. © Lisa Yuskavage. Collection of Susan and Leonard Feinstein. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner



## Foodeater

The last on our list is a painting titled *Foodeater* from 1996, which belongs to the mentioned small size series. This particular nude is a representation of an androgynous body, telling us about the artist's interest in exploring the theme of gender throughout her practice.

The pale pink and blue color palette accentuates the fragility and the apparent otherness of the featured figure, so the whole composition is reminiscent of the Rococo delicacy and vividness.

Featured image: Lisa Yuskavage – *Foodeater*, 1996. © Lisa Yuskavage Hall Collection. Courtesy the artist and David Zwirner