

David Zwirner

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Captivating Confluence: Lisa Yuskavage's Rendez-vous at the David Zwirner Gallery till July 29th

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David Zwirner

David Zwirner unveils an extraordinary exhibition that marks the much-anticipated rendezvous between acclaimed American artist Lisa Yuskavage and its Paris location. Aptly titled “Rendez-vous,” this showcase serves as the eighth solo exhibition of Yuskavage’s illustrious career at the esteemed gallery and the first in its Paris location.

Yuskavage’s profound connection to art is deeply rooted in her upbringing in Philadelphia, where frequent visits to the Philadelphia Art Museum and the Barnes Foundation left an indelible impression on her artistic perception. It is within this context that her reflection in her work emerges as a unique amalgamation of American reality and the influence of European masters, particularly evident in her masterful treatment of light and color. As one of the most original and influential artists of the past three decades, Yuskavage’s creative prowess extends beyond the confines of painting, as she fearlessly challenges established boundaries in artistic genres and spectatorship. Her works, characterized by a mesmerizing dance between exhibitionism and introspection, introduce viewers to a captivating ensemble of characters intricately entwined with elements both representational and abstract, with color reigning supreme as the paramount force of significance.

Within this exhibition, Yuskavage presents a series of new large-scale paintings, each capturing the essence of an imagined artist’s studio. Immersed in the depths of jewel-toned pigments, these works serve as a testament to her ongoing exploration of the intricate processes and complexities intrinsic to the act of creation. Amidst these studio settings, Yuskavage’s recurring characters intertwine, fearlessly transcending the constraints of time and space.

The exhibition’s evocative title, “Rendez-vous,” alludes to the unique power of painting to unite disparate temporal moments within a single realm. Yuskavage’s works engage in a captivating dialogue between personal iconography and the rich tradition of studio portrayals, paying homage to a diverse array of artists such as Gustave Courbet, Henri Matisse, Georges Braque, Philip Guston, and Bruce Nauman. Through her portrayal of ordinary yet distinctly American subjects, juxtaposed with her original treatment of color and light, Yuskavage establishes connections to earlier painterly traditions, including color field painting, impressionism, and post-impressionism.

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“The Artist’s Studio” (2022) stands as a kaleidoscopic composition, offering glimpses of Yuskavage’s artworks within a barn-like studio. Notably, it reintroduces a character from one of Yuskavage’s groundbreaking early works, “The Ones That Don’t Want To: Bad Baby” (1991). This character, resembling a mischievous artist, takes center stage in front of a vibrant green painting-within-a-painting. By seamlessly merging different realms and temporal dimensions, Yuskavage intricately weaves a complex tapestry while challenging the notion of self-portraiture—a genre she delves into more fully for the first time. Symbolism is further layered throughout the composition with the inclusion of studio furniture, fences, ladders, and scattered still-life arrangements. Additionally, Yuskavage herself makes a discreet appearance, assuming the role of a model in the background. These nuanced references evoke the playful tradition of artists exploring their own presence as creators within their own artistic creations.

In “Rendez-vous (boschmademedoit)” (2023), a theatrical scene unfolds upon what appears to be a stage or a tilted tabletop. The composition features a cropped rendition of Yuskavage’s painting “Bonfire” (2013–2015, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) and two models embodying the poses of figures from Hieronymus Bosch’s masterwork, “The Garden of Earthly Delights” (1590–1610). Yuskavage skillfully captures the juxtaposition of Dionysian desire and virtuous restraint found in the Dutch painter’s oeuvre, within her own portrayal of a studio teeming with potential violence, as indicated by the presence of props such as planks, sledgehammers, cables, and beads.

In her masterful works, Yuskavage fearlessly challenges societal norms and defies conventional expectations. With a remarkable command of color, she creates lush and luminous paintings that purposefully embrace a sense of intentional gaucheness. As an artist, Yuskavage revels in the provocative, both delighting in the ability to shock and inviting viewers to be startled by her bold choices. Her paintings, often featuring oversized breasts, serve as visual provocations that disrupt simplistic interpretations of misogyny, femininity, and the female gaze. Through her manipulation of the medium, Yuskavage unveils a complex and multifaceted exploration of these themes, inviting audiences to question and reconsider their own preconceived notions. Her artistic vision, showcased through her deliberate use of color and unapologetic approach, leaves an indelible mark on the art world, challenging and unsettling conventional ideas while paving the way for new understandings of identity, perception, and representation.

Later,

Diane

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