

LILIYA ART

GALLERY

RAFAELA DE ASCANIO

UNIVERSAL YEARNINGS

21st MAY – 13th APRIL 2021

Private View: 21st May 2021

158 Putney High Street, London, SW15 1RS

“My work is rooted in feminism. I want to create female characters that are empowered, and empowering for the viewer, as well as psychologically resilient and in charge of their own sexuality, and I want them to be the protagonist in the story.” – Rafaela de Ascanio

Liliya Art Gallery is pleased to present *Universal Yearnings*, a brand-new body of work by Rafaela de Ascanio.

Working predominantly as a painter and ceramicist, *Universal Yearnings* is an intimate and powerful exhibition focusing on explorations of feminism, the solar system and mythology.

Starting with a strong academic background having studied at both Central Saint Martins and the Courtauld, de Ascanio's practice is heavily influenced by Art History, and the recognition of the male-dominated canon that follows alongside. Consequently, *Universal Yearnings* is a multi-disciplinary exhibition that unites classical, art historical and mythological imagery with empowered female characters.

Consisting of a series of paintings, both on canvas and paper, and eleven intricately illustrated ceramic sculptures, *Universal Yearnings* traces de Ascanio's interest in feminine power and personal relationships, placing them side by side to create a beautiful and intimate dialogue between the different mediums.

The paintings included in this exhibition are arguably the most personal of all the works. Reflecting upon both romantic and familial relationships, they ooze with emotion. Rich in colour, and sensitive in subject matter, they show moments of quiet intimacy between friends; scenes of empty interiors that evoke her native Spain and colourful synesthetic descriptions of parties and music. The thick impasto of paint that streams across the canvases reveals the speed at which de Ascanio releases her ideas onto canvas. The paintings are simultaneously energetic, active, and emotional.

The relationship between paint and ceramic is one of constant negotiation. Often a sculpture begins in one of her many sketchbooks, a space where research, history and imagery collide. Constantly working together, the forms that often appear in both sketches and paintings are then transcribed into three dimensions, undulating over the surface, and weaving together storylines and influences.

Whilst there is a strong relationship between the media, their processes could not be further apart. For de Ascanio, the creation of a sculpture is an incredibly personal, slow and even meditative process. The artist hand-builds each sculpture with coils, as opposed to throwing on the wheel. Drawing upon the enormously rich history of ceramics, along with adhering to a wide range of techniques that the medium allows, de Ascanio manipulates the material with her fingers and palm, inflicting upon it dents and smudges, smoothing out imperfections and creating shape.

As a consequence, the resulting sculptures are an extension of the artist herself, imbued with the physicality of the medium, and the artist's personal identity. In *Universal Yearnings*, each sculpture represents a planet, and is ascribed a narrative following a female protagonist's journey of self discovery, power, and beauty. Through detailed research, stunning illustration and a dedication to form, de Ascanio's sculptures and paintings speak a novel visual language that urges the viewer to recognise the power of feminine energy. The exhibition serves as a mirror for the viewer, allowing them to reflect upon their own relationship with history, femininity, and power.

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About The Gallery:

Liliya Art Gallery provides a platform for engaging and innovative artists working in the fields of painting, sculpture, and ceramics.

We foster diversity, transparency, and excellence in everything we do; offering an exciting space that supports multi-discipline, emerging talent from around the world. Working with some of the best art professionals in London, we have a strong and knowledgeable team who specialise in helping clients build unique and valuable collections.

Beginning with a series of month-long back-to-back solo shows, we are proud to be opening our space during a time when supporting artists has never been more important.