

# Wilderness Known

24.08.22 – 23.09.22

PV Tuesday 23rd August 6:00 – 8:30



Maddie Yuille  
*Nophelia*, 2022, Oil on Canvas, 160 x 150 cm

Liliya Art Gallery is proud to present *Wilderness Known*, a duo exhibition with contemporary female painters Farnaz Gholami and Maddie Yuille. This exhibition brings together two artists who explore the relationship between figures - present and absent - and the landscapes they inhabit. Both artists utilise the medium of painting to search for a landscape in which the human figure feels a sense of belonging and connection to the land.

In Maddie Yuille's work, this state exists, and her figures are in a utopian state where they appear to merge with their environment. Farnaz Gholami enjoys the complexity of the search - settings in which figures should exist, yet curiously are devoid of human form. Her landscapes combine manmade built environments with nature that is constrained by human elements.

Gholami's work mediates on ideas of control, drawn from her research into the natural world. In her search for nature, Gholami found herself reacting to the presence of human control, discovering that it is a search for wild nature that creates the formation of controlled nature such as gardens. Inspired by Victorian ideals that nature needed to be controlled to be accessed, Gholami incorporates devices into her paintings - swimming pools, parasols, and hammocks - manmade forms and structures that make nature habitable. Gholami uses these contained natural spaces as a form of urban perspective to try and get back to nature.

Inspired by images of now-deserted buildings - dystopic relics of a rejected past - Gholami constructs places that feel unfamiliar and yet rooted in reality. The ambiguous nature of these places combined with controlled and recognisable forms creates an in-between space, or a 'non-place', filled with unknown possibilities. In presenting these places devoid of the human figure Gholami activates the viewer, creating a feeling of anticipation, whilst her considered use of perspective alludes to narratives that feel both known and unknown. Together, with the use of fragmented imagery, her multi-layered paintings create an interplay between presence and absence, concealing and revealing to the viewer, to create a sense of in-betweenness.



Farnaz Gholami  
*Grasp*, 2022, Oil on Canvas, 200 x 160 cm

Maddie Yuille focuses on painting to explore a sensory depiction of human embodiment. She creates dream-like landscapes in which bodies emerge from and merge with their environment - critiquing the idea that "nature" is a realm distinct and separate from human lives. Her focus is on female bodies; specifically, the connection between women and nature, and how historically a patriarchal society has conceived of both women and nature as being wild and unruly, needing to be tamed.

In her paintings she creates worlds in which the wild and unruly is celebrated, and women's bodies and the natural world are indeed entwined, but with a positive agency - one constituting the other.

Inspired by a re-imagining of the stories of women historically accused of witchcraft (often for being "too close" to nature such as The Witches of Belvoir in the 17th Century) Yuille paints utopian images where these women are instead free to take pleasure in their surroundings - swimming, resting, and tending to one another. The lime green colour palette is a repurposing of a colour that has come to be associated with artificiality and toxicity - a cartoonish idea of witchcraft.

By using this colour in a more positive context, she hopes to recontextualise it, instead referencing the bright greens found in nature. The recurring use of water in Yuille's nature paintings is both representative of a moment in which the body feels a heightened sense of oneness with its surroundings, as well as referencing the horrific and fatal method by which accused "witches" were supposedly identified - turning this history on its head to instead depict natural waters as a place of pleasure and rest, verdant with life.

She strengthens this idea of vitality and regrowth in her work through her application and materiality of paint; through creating soft spiralling dots on the edges of the canvas mimicking mould, emphasising the idea that life is constantly growing and changing. Yuille adopts an explorative and fluid use of paint, in which she works with a mixture of ink and oils, applying and removing the paint in varied and expressive ways to create images in which the bodies depicted are wholly a part of the landscape in which we find them. Her paintings embody a sense of the vitality of the natural world - buzzing with life and constant, irrepressible growth - as well as the messiness, complexity, and imperfection of humanity.

This exhibition brings together two contemporary painters considering the relationship between human figures and the natural. Combining contemporary and historical references, ideas around control and human embodiment, Gholami and Yuille champion an openness within which to consider the natural world.

## FARNAZ GHOLAMI

Farnaz Gholami is an Iranian, UK-based artist whose practice encompasses painting, drawing, printmaking, and installation. She graduated with Distinction in 2019 from the Slade School of Fine Art studying an MA in Fine Art Painting. She has been the recipient of The Olive Prize, shortlisted for Bloomberg New Contemporaries, and a finalist in Tiffany and Co. x Outset's Studio Makers Prize in 2019. She studied Studio Art at Brandeis University, Boston, USA in 2013 and holds a Graduate Diploma in Fine Art from Chelsea College of Arts.

Farnaz Gholami is continuously exploring issues around geographical, cultural, and social dislocation. Farnaz has developed a curious, uncertain, and solitary gaze, where-by there is usually an absence of human figures in ambiguous landscapes or interiors.

## MADDIE YUILLE

Maddie Yuille (b. 1988, London) is a visual artist living and working in London. Since graduating with an MA in Fine Art from City and Guilds of London Art School (2019), she has been shortlisted for the Ingram Prize (2021), the Ashurst Emerging Artist Award (2020), and the Contemporary British Painting Prize (2019). Her work is held in collections across the UK and globally. Yuille's most recent body of work centres around the relationship between figures and nature and how the two intertwine.

Yuille's practice focuses on painting to explore a sensory depiction of human embodiment. She creates dream-like landscapes in which bodies emerge from and meld with their environment - critiquing the idea that "nature" is a realm distinct and separate from human lives. In particular, the connection between women and nature and how historically a patriarchal society has conceived of both women and nature as being wild and unruly, needing to be tamed, interests her and is the focus of her work.

### LISTINGS INFORMATION

#### *Wilderness Known*

Farnaz Gholami & Maddie Yuille

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Private View: 23.08.22 6:00 – 8:30

158 Putney High Street, London, SW15 1RS

### ABOUT LILIYA ART GALLERY

Liliya Art Gallery provides a platform for some of the most 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.