

Lindsay Burke

Weird Ways

Exhibition dates: May 24 – June 24, 2018

Reception for the artist: Thursday May 24, 2018

Marinero Gallery is pleased to present *Weird Ways*, an exhibition of new paintings by Lindsay Burke.

In a series of figurative tableaus delicately crafted in black and white airbrush with touches of saturated color, Burke's unconventional compositions and playfully Freudian vocabulary assert the seductive potential of figurative painting, of the nude and its idealized place in art history and its enduring capacity to draw the viewer into unusual narrative realms. In *At the End of a Sense of Disaster*, Burke personalizes an idealized nude male figure by using her own body to mask the airbrush's spray, upending illustrative traditions, at once associated with slickness and objectification, to more intimately map the body's idiosyncratic contour. Given volume by lightly digital gradients, intentionally awkward anatomical passages dispel the construct of perfection and remind us how much more compellingly the body functions when we prize its material specificity and uniqueness.

However rich and engaging the pleasure of figuration, the figure's context is always defined by the whims of the gaze conscripting the female body into servile aesthetic categories. In response, Burke codes her references to covertly parody, question or altogether upend the stereotypes demanded by art historical conventions in favor of a more probing and critical aesthetic. In *Please, Sure* a giant hairless phallus caresses a snake, seemingly exalting the masculine perfection of a guiltless pre-Lapsarian Adam and parodying the outrageous and often fantastic stories we craft to rationalize the origins of hegemonic sexuality. And while form remains an inextricably libidinal property, Burke's polymorphous and inventive symbolic language confuse a strictly possessive gaze. In *I Saw the Sign*, the hard edge of frisket cuts the picture plane into two breast-like mounds. Ambiguous circular forms that mark the boundary between different color fields at once echo the nipples clearly demarcated in *The Weight* and a pair of watchful eyes looking outward, giving the painting an uncanny agency of an emboldened and responsive subject. To view *I Saw the Sign*, as is to view all of Burke's paintings is to be hypnotized by its talismanic composition, to partake in the formal delight of radiant yellow suns and requires grappling with formal agents that are as eager to deconstruct the pleasure of the gaze as they are to supply its prehensile demands. Formal play itself becomes an opportunity to complicate the gaze's orthodoxy. Recurring yonic openings, one of Burke's most prevalent motifs, caricature the gaze's ravenous sexual origin and baseness by alluding to the most ideal object of its apprehension—but doubles as slit eyes standing sentinel and suffusing skeptical inner life and triples as esoteric glittering coins which remind us that the transfer of erotic energy, however abstract, cannot be removed from a context of transactional power difference.

At once hilarious and pointed, the unsettling overlap of reverence, satire and refusal that characterize Burke's use of symbols speak clearly about the expectations we place on bodies to sustain gendered narratives - that is, to either possess or being subjected to a power inextricably linked to gender - and the drama of their inevitable failure to do so. But their ambiguity parallels what might be Burke's the most troubling and complicated question: however deconstructed and removed from its origin, can any pleasure—visual, sexual or otherwise—exist outside of a gendered power dynamic?