

# ARUSHA

GALLERY



Pippa Young, *Threads of the history that clings to me*, 2023  
Oil on linen, 125 x 125 cm

## ***The Coordinate Plane***

Laila Tara H, Megan Rea, Ilona Szalay, Sophie Milner, Kate Walters, Pippa Young and Suzy Spence

Private View: Wednesday May 3rd, 6 - 8pm

exhibition continues 4th May to 14th May, open daily 10 - 6pm

Gallery One, High Line Nine, 507 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001

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Our first exhibition in our 2024 New York Summer Series, *The Coordinate Plane* brings together new work by artists Laila Tara H, Megan Rae, Ilona Szalay, Sophie Milner, Kate Walters, Pippa Young and Suzy Spence.

The exhibition looks at the cartesian idea of placing oneself, and one's life, on an axis and examining the truth of one's beliefs. It looks at the constructs we hold onto that are carved into the deepest corners of our psyche and shape the way we perceive the self and the other. Looking at oneself moving throughout the coordinate plane as we experience life. It aims to bring together a group of artists who in their practice look at the development of self, its fragmentation and marriages with the external world.

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The coordinate system we commonly use is called the Cartesian system, after the French mathematician René Descartes (1596-1650), who developed it in the 17th century. Legend has it that Descartes, who liked to stay in bed until late, was watching a fly on the ceiling from his bed. He wondered how to best describe the fly's location and decided that one of the corners of the ceiling could be used as a reference point.

Imagine the ceiling as a rectangle drawn on a piece of paper: taking the left bottom corner as the reference point, you can specify the location of the fly by measuring how far you need to go in the horizontal direction and how far you need to go in the vertical direction to get to it. These two numbers are the fly's coordinates. Every pair of coordinates specifies a unique point on the ceiling and every point on the ceiling comes with a unique pair of coordinates. It's possible to extend this idea, allowing the axes (the two sides of the room) to become infinitely long in both directions, and using negative numbers to label the bottom part of the vertical axis and the left part of the horizontal axis. That way you can specify all points on an infinite plane.

**ENDS/**

For further information including review, interview and images requests please contact [info@arushagallery.com](mailto:info@arushagallery.com) / 0131 557 1412

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## **Arusha Gallery**

Arusha Gallery is a contemporary art gallery with its main premises in Edinburgh's historic New Town, a satellite space in Bruton, Somerset and a new gallery in London opening in Summer 2023. Established in 2013, Arusha runs an annual programme of exhibitions, events and fairs, both nationally and internationally, with regular collaborations with guest artists, curators, festivals and institutions.

## **Pippa Young**

*Young's work proposes a reality in which the chaos of contemporary life – our scattered attention, pervasive uncertainties and dependence on technology for private reassurance and communal feeling – are not cause for despair, but are instead a possible resource. In Young's guide for surviving this altered present, the disintegration of our established routines and imagined horizons clears the way for experimental dialogues, transhistorical affinities, unanticipated intimacies and a new attunement to beauty.*

*Her singular paintings emerged through digesting an omnivorous range of intellectual and cultural source materials, but were equally the product of many small, deceptively simple physical acts. It is this inconspicuous, diligent work which at once transforms her painting into a contemplative practice, and lends the images themselves their serene, introspective feel.*

*Young's paintings invite us to linger over precisely detailed, almost photorealistic, facial features and angular structures, while her collages and redactions present us with enigmatic texts which reward re-readings, and aphorisms which under closer scrutiny shape-shift into private confessions.*

- Rebecca Birrell

Since being awarded a first-class degree from Falmouth College of Art in 2012, artist Pippa Young has had eight solo exhibitions, the latest of which include, *Dancing on the Brim of Chaos*, which was exhibited in London on 10th - 20th June 2022 and *Drawn from the well*, exhibited in Bruton, Somerset from 12th October - 13th November 2022.

## **Laila Tara H**

Laila Tara H (b.1995, London) is an Iranian-British artist, based between Tehran and London whose work stems from Indo-Persian miniature painting.

Symbolic forms and multiple, concurrent narratives punctuate the space. Laila's practice is infused with a visual language borrowed from Indo-Persian miniature painting. A complex history of migration and an amalgam of painting traditions, gave birth to these hybrid styles in the 17th century, which saw painters traveling from Persia to the Mughal Court and the Deccan in India, through established shipping or

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overland routes. Laila's Iranian heritage, and years spent moving through continents not only exposed her to these forms, but have also inspired the language through which she articulates her own history of living in different cultural settings. Utilising these historical techniques, her works explore and experiment in scale and negative space. Detailed figures suspended amidst contemporary urban scenes, disjointed limbs amidst delicate foliage, are all arranged in stark, startling compositions that defy stylistic cannons and stretch boundaries. She often cuts and folds paper, puncturing and destabilising space to introduce new three-dimensional depth and shadow play.

Her works, most often painted on hand-made natural hemp paper sourced from Sanganer, India, explore a range of emotions, and create a charged surface where the tension between form and formlessness; the object and its surrounding emptiness, plays out. The figures explore our sense of perspective and time, and are interlaced with deeply personal narratives. Laila mostly uses pigments that are either naturally derived, or prepared using traditional methods from found materials—these range from crushed red London bricks; walnut ink; madder red pigment; deep blue lapis lazuli from Badakhshan province of Afghanistan and India, sourced from Florence; ochres from Iran, collected from the island of Hormoz.

### **Sophie Milner**

Sophie Milner is a London based artist and writer. Her practice explores interrelations between poetic symbolism, gesture and narrative within painting, drawing upon both historic and personal symbolism to explore moments of biomorphic or psychological change. Her work functions to both encourage and disrupt the narratives she engages with, as a means of encouraging the viewer into a liminal engagement with the webs of associated imagery she interweaves. The resulting scenes are often filled with a sense of biological restlessness, that toy with the languages associated with violence and stillness, the figurative and abstract, and the self as perceived and felt.

She is currently working on a new series of paintings and writings exploring ideas of womanhood expressed within art, psychology and poetry.

As well as regularly exhibiting in group exhibitions and art fairs Milner has also had two solo exhibitions to date, Spilt Salt at Studio 1.1 in 2015, London and Sleepwalkers at Arusha Gallery 2016, Edinburgh. Her work has been widely featured in publications including Harpers Bazaar Magazine, Aesthetica Magazine, Create Magazine and Wide Walls. She is also known for her record cover artwork for musicians including Laura Marling, Mumford and Sons, Rachel Sermanni, Emily and the Woods and Pete Roe.

Her writing builds upon the traditions of prose poetry, flash fiction and the lyric essay. Subjects of exploration include aesthetics, selfhood, the female voice and eroticism within art. A regular reader at London poetry nights including Soho Poetry Nights, Mortimer House Speakeasy and Ear Smoke, she has also performed sets on request at Portobello Live Festival, South London Festival of Spoken Word, and Brave Poets. In 2019 she developed her first audio visual work which was the result of a collaboration

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with the sound artist Robert Price and was performed at Laylow, Notting Hill. She is currently completing an MA in Creative Writing at Royal Holloway, London.

## **Kate Walters**

Viewing Walters's totemic figures, so delicately rendered in Rorschach-esque watercolour, for the first time, is as though peering into the very cycles of life and death. These paintings show both an abstract interest and material contact between the primordial and the universal -- a suggested communion with that same spirit who first cast images on those low-lit caves in Lascaux. Indeed, like them, it is not so much figure Walters's works seek to represent: her preoccupation is rather with movement, with spirit and sensation, with being itself.

Stark patches of canvas invite the viewer to configure the beasts and burdens of Walters's Cornwall in a kind of prehistoric vocabulary. Her paintings oscillate between scenes of the hunt and the weald, but also the mother in the home and the hallowed grounds that provide their context.

Theirs is Cornish sand and soil, of that place's magicks and phantasms, in its fables and folksongs, in the very stains of its birth and its struggle. Joy, creation, labour and power, the gods and a truth caught between the seats of the physician and the psychoanalyst are the murky zone of these paintings and all permeate both execution and concept.

## **Ilona Szalay**

Born in Beirut in 1975, Ilona Szalay completed an English Literature degree at the University of Oxford in 1997, before undertaking further studies at Central St Martins (Byam Shaw School of Art) from which she graduated in 2002 with an MFA. She's the recipient of the ORA Contemporary Art Prize (Italy), a finalist for the prestigious Threadneedle Prize (UK), and with an exhibition history that includes the Royal Academy, the British Painter's Association and the Barbican; her work has been extensively exhibited in cities including Milan, London, Miami, Basel, Rome, Zurich, Toronto and New York.

Through a range of media from canvas to tracing paper, LED light to glass, Szalay engages the multitudinous dichotomies that make up both collective and individual subjective experience in restrained, poetic visual language. It is in liminal space – that between sites of dominance and submission, or power and vulnerability – that the figures in her work encounter one another.

The contrast between the subject she paints and how it is painted is never sharp or demanding; the heavy, looping strokes and soft lines made by her brush point towards something much more ingenious and intuitive. These are contrasts that are gestured at, never insisted upon, and allow for a kind of dialectic with the viewer: a set of techniques more native to the literary arts than to the visual medium in which she works.

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## **Megan Rea**

Megan's fierce, romantic structures are hybrids of architectural features and artefacts seen in domestic and religious spaces. Taking inspiration from paintings made in the middle ages, 13th – 15th-century Italian frescoes and gothic design, collisions between the imaginary and the reliquary suggest a rediscovery of a life once lived or perhaps one yet to be. Fountains and crenellations bear senses of movement and touch, an ode to the bustling narratives illustrated on old church walls. The handmade paper imitates a passing of time, pocked to reveal tiny gems of paint from previous layers and reflects the weathered surface of an old frescoed wall.

## **Suzy Spence**

Suzy Spence (born 1969) grew up on Mount Desert Island in Maine before attending Smith College and Parsons School of Design. She was a Fellow at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and received an MFA at the School of Visual Arts. Spence had her first solo exhibition in 1998 at Colin De Land's, American Fine Arts, a gallery at the intersection of art, fashion and performance whose archives are held at The Smithsonian Archives of American Art and Bard College Library. Spence is represented by Sears Peyton Gallery (New York and L.A.), Tayloe Piggot (Jackson Hole, WY), and she is a frequent exhibitor with Cathouse Proper (Brooklyn). Her work has received critical praise in The New York Times, The New Yorker, Paper Magazine, Artcritical, The Brooklyn Rail, and other publications. She lives and works in New York City and Vermont.