

Andrew Kreps
Gallery

22 Cortlandt Alley,
New York, NY 10013

Tue–Sat, 10 am–6 pm
andrewkreps.com

Tel. (212)741-8849
Fax. (212)741-8163

Body Language

January 7 - February 18, 2022

Opening Reception:

Friday, January 7, 12 - 7 pm

Sara Issakharian, Manuel Mathieu, Cassi Namoda, Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi, Antonio Obá, Elle Pérez

Andrew Kreps Gallery is pleased to announce *Body Language*, a group exhibition including six international artists whose work reflects on the human body. In their diverse practices, the artists included do not utilize the body for its physical form, but instead, as a conduit to explore both internal and political dimensions. Acknowledging that our bodies are constantly subject to cultural, and identity-based readings, the artists in the exhibition utilize these preconceptions in order to explore the body's political dimensions, and to encourage deeper understandings of its humanity.

In Sara Issakharian's (b. 1983, Tehran, Iran) work, ghostly, chimerical figures are embellished with vibrant colors and marks that waver between disciplined, figurative illustration and frustrated outbursts of childlike, violent scribbling. Issakharian's expressionistic imagery dwells on adversarial relationships such as predator and prey, aggression and calmness, and light and dark—terms that the artist uses to describe her own subjects. While these dichotomies characterize Issakharian's aesthetic sensibility, they extend to form a contemplation of her ambivalent feelings toward her native Iran, a contradictory mix of longing and anger. Sara Issakharian completed her MFA in painting at the New York Academy of Art in 2015. She was awarded the 2014 inaugural New York Academy of Art Residency in Moscow, Russia, and in 2015 she was part of the first-round award winners of the Art Olympia prize, Japan. Issakharian's first exhibition at Tanya Leighton, Los Angeles, *There's a whole life in that, in knowing that the sun is there*, opened in 2021.

Manuel Mathieu (b. 1986, Port-au-Prince, Haiti) blends figuration and abstraction in his work to explore the intersection of racial, geographical, and cultural identities. Working with muted and pastel colors, Mathieu manipulates paint by employing techniques such as scratching, rubbing, and layering—at times adding tape and chalk to the canvas surface—to create the ghostly figures and varied textures that characterize his paintings. This process becomes a vehicle for Mathieu to contemplate legacies of trauma—both personal

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and collective— calling for a revisitation of the past in order to relieve ongoing trauma in the present. Mathieu lives and works in Montreal. Exhibitions of Mathieu’s work include *Manuel Mathieu: World Discovered Under Other Skies*, The Power Plant, Toronto, Canada; *Manuel Mathieu: Survivance*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montréal, Canada; *The Other Side of Now: Foresight in Contemporary Caribbean Art*, Pérez Art Museum Miami, FL, USA; *Over My Black Body*, curated by Eunice Bélidor and Anaïs Castro, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada; *Manuel Mathieu: Nobody Is Watching*, Kavi Gupta, Chicago, IL, USA; and *Manuel Mathieu: Wu Ji*, HdM Gallery, Beijing, China. Mathieu has been invited to the artist residency at the Art House in Sonoma, CA, in 2021.

Cassi Namoda (b. 1988 Maputo, Mozambique) is a painter and performance artist who explores the intricacies of social dynamics through vivid scenes that intermingle the heartfelt with the absurd, the quotidian with the cosmic, the joyous with the macabre. Born in Maputo to a Mozambican mother and American father, Namoda uses her work to negotiate the intricacies of mixed cultural heritage, intricacies that reflect the wider cultural dynamics of a formerly colonized nation in an increasingly globalized world. Recent solo exhibitions include Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo; Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg; Pippi Houldsworth, London; Nina Johnson Gallery, Miami; and François Ghebaly, Los Angeles. Namoda’s work has been included in exhibitions at Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, New York; Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts, New York; CFHILL, Stockholm; and Library Street Collective, Detroit. She lives and works in New York.

Thenjiwe Niki Nkosi’s (b. 1980, New York) practice spans multiple mediums including film, installation, painting and performance. In her paintings, clean, geometric blocks depict scenes of people and architecture in the artists’ signature color palette of calming pastel tones. Nkosi uses oil on canvas, carefully layering her compositions over time in a process she likens to meditation. In contrast to the tranquil aesthetic of her work, Nkosi’s practice confronts complex and often chaotic notions of identity, race, power, memory, migration, and athleticism. Nkosi’s Gymnasium series emerged from a multilevel fascination with the gymnastics arena, a highly charged interior zone where human dramas are enacted under intense scrutiny. Recent figurative paintings in the series zoom in on relationships inside the arena, which are often forged as protection against its attendant pressures.

In 2020, Nkosi had a solo exhibition at Stevenson, Johannesburg. Group and collaborative exhibitions include *Mixed Company* at the Norval Foundation, Cape Town, South Africa, 2021, *FIVE* at We Buy Gold, Brooklyn, *Don’t Ask Me Where I’m From*, Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, 2020, *NIEPODLEGŁE, Women, Independence and National Discourse*, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, 2018, *Moving Stills – Affective Archives*, Mumok Cinema, Vienna, 2018, *Art/Afrique, le nouvel atelier*, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, 2017, *Kabbo ka Muwala, The Girl’s Basket*, National Gallery of Zimbabwe, Harare, 2016.

Antonio Obá (b.1983 in Ceilândia, Brazil) investigates the influence and contradictions within the cultural construction of Brazil, giving rise to an act of resistance and reflection on the idea of national identity. Obá utilizes icons present in Brazilian culture as allusions to racial and political identity; these iconic historical and sometimes religious subjects are explored within his sculpture, painting, installations, and performance. Obá’s own

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body is central to his research, questioning the eroticization of the black male body and construction of his own identity. His works have been included in exhibitions such as *Carolina Maria de Jesus, um Brasil para os brasileiros*, IMS Paulista (2021); *Enciclopédia Negra*, Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo (2021); *TUYMANS – CAHN – OBA*, Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection, Paris (2021); *Possédé·e·s*, MO.CO, Montpellier (2020); *36º Panorama da Arte Brasileira*, MAM, São Paulo (2019); *Histórias Afro-Atlânticas*, MASP / Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo (2018); *Arte Democracia Utopia - quem não luta tá morto*, MAR, Rio de Janeiro (2018); *Pele de Dentro*, Mendes Wood DM, New York (2018); *Pipa Prize 2017*, Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro (2017); *entre*, Casa da América Latina, Brasília (2016); *My body is a cage*, Galeria Luciana Caravello, Rio de Janeiro (2016); *ONDEANDAAONDA*, Museu Nacional da República, Brasília (2015); *OCUPAÇÃO*, Elefante Centro Cultural, Brasília (2014).

Elle Pérez (b. 1989, Bronx, New York) centers their own personal connections to individuals, community, and place in their work, creating a palpable sense of familiarity in their photographs. Rather than stand outside looking in as other photographers might, Pérez works through their creative process as a friend, a lover, an intimate participant. “Intimacy intrigues me with its mysteries,” the artist has said. “The ties between my gender identity, kink, sexuality, pleasure, and pain are all interwoven. Instead of attempting to untangle them, I work within these complexities.” Pérez lives and works in New York City. Recent solo exhibitions include: Forum 84, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, 2021, *Host*, Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles, 2021, *from sun to sun*, Public Art Fund, New York, 2019, *Diablo*, MoMA PS1, New York, 2018. and *In Bloom*, 47 Canal, New York, 2018. Pérez’s work has been included in group exhibitions at the Renaissance Society, Chicago; Barbican Centre, London; Brooklyn Museum, New York; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

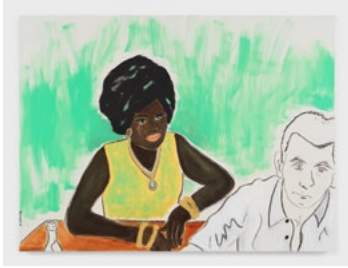
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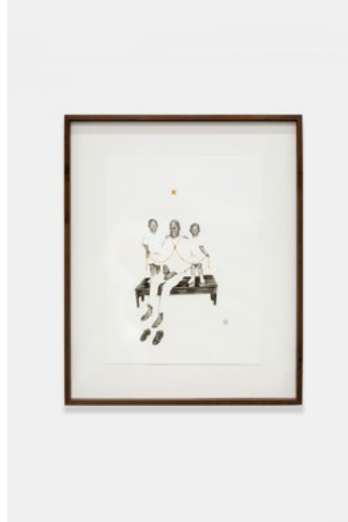
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MAIN GALLERY



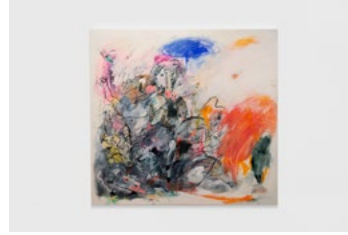
CASSI NAMODA
Green with Envy, 2021

Charcoal and oil on linen
36 x 48 inches (91.4 x 121.9
cm.)
(CAN21-001)



ANTONIO OBÁ
Ibejis - exaltação, 2021

Graphite and golden ink
14 1/8 x 18 7/8 inches (36 x
48 cm.); framed: 26 1/4 x 21
1/2 inches (66.7 x 54.6 cm.)
(ANO21-001)



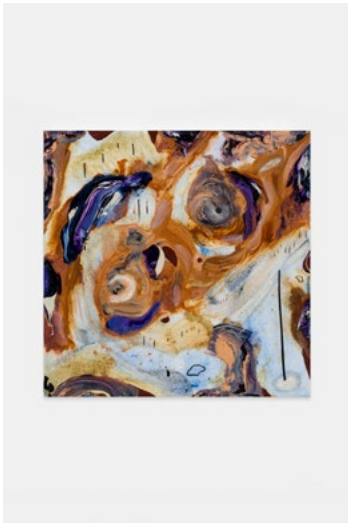
SARA ISSAKHARIAN
Lollipop Parade, 2021

Acrylic, oil, and pastel on linen
78 x 83 inches (198.1 x 210.8
cm.)
(SI21-001)



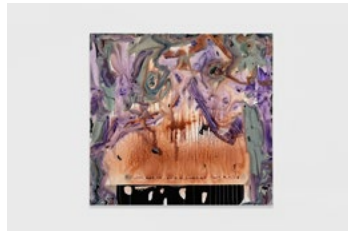
ELLE PÉREZ
a self portrait for you,
2016/2018

Silver gelatin print
40 x 26 5/8 inches (101.60 x
67.63 cm.); framed: 44 3/8 x
31 x 2 inches (112.71 x 78.74
x 5.08 cm.)
Edition of 5
(ELP21-003)



MANUEL MATHIEU
Study on a brown figure, 2021

Acrylic, chalk, charcoal, and
masking tape on canvas
18 x 18 inches (45.7 x 45.7
cm.)
(MAM21-001)



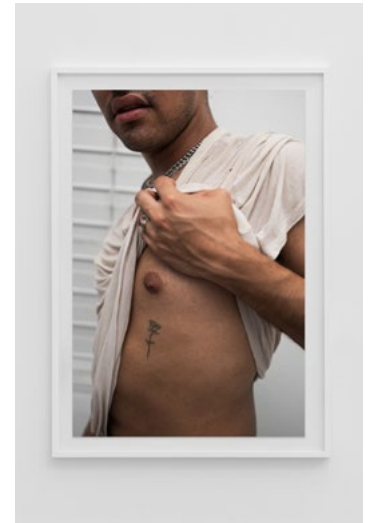
MANUEL MATHIEU
Opening up, 2021

Acrylic, chalk, charcoal, and
masking tape on canvas
67 x 71 inches (170.2 x 180.3
cm.)
(MAM21-002)



ELLE PÉREZ
untitled, 2019

Digital silver gelatin print
30 x 22 1/2 inches (76.20 x
57.15 cm.); framed: 34 x 26
1/2 x 1 3/4 inches (86.36 x
67.31 x 4.45 cm.)
Edition of 5
(ELP21-001)



ELLE PÉREZ
Bloom, 2019

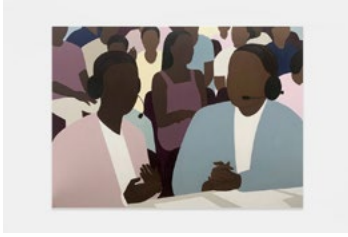
Archival pigment print
55 x 38 3/8 inches (139.70
x 97.47 cm.); framed: 56 1/2
x 39 7/8 inches (143.51 x
101.28 cm.)
Edition of 5
(ELP21-002)

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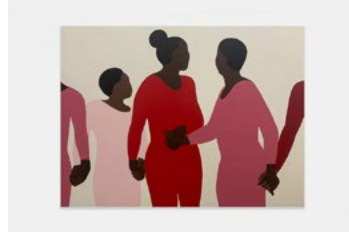
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THENJIWE NIKI NKOSI
Commentators, 2021

Oil on canvas
42 1/2 x 59 1/8 x 2 inches
(108 x 150.2 x 5.1 cm.)
(TN21-001)



THENJIWE NIKI NKOSI
All Around, 2021

Oil on canvas
42 1/2 x 57 1/8 x 2 inches
(108 x 145.1 x 5.1 cm.)
(TN21-002)



MANUEL MATHIEU
Transfiguration, 2021

Chalk, charcoal water color,
pencil, black gesso, color
pencil on paper
20 x 20 1/2 inches (50.8 x 52.1
cm.); framed: 25 3/4 x 24 1/2
inches (65.4 x 62.2 cm.)
(MAM21-003)