

GALLERIA POGGIALI

Presenta

Veronica Fernandez - *I'll Never Close My Eyes Again*

19.01.2023 - 11.03.2023

Inaugurazione

Giovedì 19.01.2023 dalle 18:30 alle 21:00

Galleria Poggiali – Milano
Foro Bonaparte 52 – 20121 Milano

Galleria Poggiali is pleased to present in its Milan premises, in Foro Bonaparte 52, *I'll Never Close my Eyes Again*, the first solo exhibition in Italy of the American artist Veronica Fernandez (b. 1998, USA). On show is a corpus of previously unseen works that, as the title of the exhibition also suggests, delve into the limbo between conscious and subconscious memory.

Veronica Fernandez's paintings, sculptures and poems in "*I'll Never Close my Eyes Again*" evoke dreamlike images of subjects claiming their space in the face of the physical and mental transformations caused by their environment. This new body of work, created in the final months of 2022, represents a bold step forward in composition and subject matter at the end of a prolific year in her artistic practice, during which she has presented solo exhibitions, group shows and art fair presentations, all of which has solidified her as a young painter whose work is grounded in ideas of empathy and narrative.

This new body of work materialize that specific moment when, closing our eyes and in the solitude of silence or darkness, we are vulnerable and forced to come to terms with both of these dimensions of our mind and existential experience, and the scars they have left on us, on our personality as individuals, and in our subsequent perception of relationships and emotions.

Although they originate from personal stories, his scenes are ultimately imbued with this particular sense of incompleteness and unreality, which allows such emotional narratives to remain open to the viewer, who can thus identify with and make sense of such images, on a universal level. Because we all have more or less relevant traumas from the period of our growing up. And facing, forgiving and reconciling with these, and with the vicissitudes experienced in our relationship with our parents, is part of a necessary identity-building process as adults who stand alone and with their own history in the world.

Works such as '*I'll Never Close My Eyes Again*', depict moments of youthful rebellion in which figures stand firmly in the painting clutching leather belts, instruments of child discipline in some cultures. In the painting, the figures are ready to rebel against adults who have previously used accessories against them as forms of punishment. Fernandez uses colour and a keen sense of composition to heighten the viewer's awareness of the situation as each figure embodies a different level of the stages of rebellion against their parents. The central sculpture in the exhibition, '*The Dryer*', takes this idea to the physical plane, continuing the artist's use of the readymade in his solo exhibitions, here the work, a monumental sculpture of hand-sewn fabric. Here, Fernandez's sculpture acts as a kind of totem that brings back memories of his adolescence.

"Throughout the show, figures that burn red are combative or confrontational, they are consumed by an energy that is pushing them to act. There are also figures that wear that color but suggest a more submissive resistance to their environment, because they have been exhausted by carrying the heaviness of it." Says Veronica Fernández. "There are some pieces in which I paint shades of similar colors together to create a camouflage effect or to mildly hint at details I want the viewers to search for. These ideas of how to use color come emotionally because as the environment starts to come together there is more of an understanding of what kind of energy the space is inviting the viewers to be a part of."

The new paintings in the exhibition are rooted in a familiar sense of nostalgia, with their compositions recalling photographs or memories such as the artist's past work. Physical space on the pictorial plane, fighting abuse and dealing with the physical and mental changes that mark the transition from adolescence. The figures are often presented in states of inner turmoil, but in each painting the action takes on an almost metaphysical and poetic undertone.

Veronica Fernandez's work was exhibited last November at the K11 museum in Hong Kong for HOT CONCRETE: LA TO HK. Fernandez will present a new project in collaboration with Sow&Taylor at Frieze Los Angeles.