

Bradley Ertaskiran

Janet Werner

There There

April 30 to June 13, 2021

Bradley Ertaskiran is thrilled to present Janet Werner's solo exhibition, *There There*. In this most recent body of work, the female figure is largely present yet increasingly bisected by sharp cuts and folds. She is found in and around an explosive palette with which the artist continues to pursue her focus on *mise en abyme* with renewed energy and vivacity. In *There There*, the figures vie for their place among detailed landscapes, still lifes, parlours, bedrooms, beaches and broken forms, often becoming another surface for painterly intervention. In works such as *Suite*, the figure is copied and rotated, cut and partially pasted onto another layer. Her shoe, her knee, her arm, in deep crimson red are doubled, a small portrait in the upper left corner gazes upon the scene. *There There* is a house of mirrors.

No matter the complexity of the images, the scene, the cuts, the rendering, the doubling or the tripling, Werner can't shake the seduction. Her figures take on every possible dimension, yet they still hold that inescapable allure. It is inevitably so, as Werner's source material has not changed, she continues to cull her imagery from fashion and advertising – obsessively, relentlessly – and while over the course of the past two and half decades Werner has exaggerated, elongated, cut in pieces, flipped, folded, occluded, and nearly entirely removed the figure in her work, she now returns her back in maximalist form. The figure is ever the muse and generator, ready and waiting, with a potential for expression that is endlessly charged.

The paintings in this body of work are constructed from collage sketches in which two or more pictures from different sources are "spliced" together – a there and a there – to form one image. The title references Gertrude Stein, a personal heroine whose unconventional writing employs repetition to create emotional emphasis and multiple nuanced meanings. "There is no there there" is a quote from Stein's *Everybody's Autobiography* (Random House 1937), in which she reflects upon a trip back to her childhood home, a farm in Oakland California. When she arrived at the place, she found that the farm was no longer there, having been replaced by a city street. In the paintings the idea of slippage between locations and the sense of sudden change or shifting ground echoes the state of limbo we are in at this moment, with the pandemic similarly leading to reflections on a world that has gone missing and the sense of being between two worlds. "There, there" is also an expression in English, no longer in common parlance, used to offer comfort or soothing, an attempt to provide calming reassurance.

- Janet Werner

Janet Werner (b. 1959, Winnipeg, Manitoba) lives and works in Montreal, Quebec. She received her MFA from Yale University (New Haven). Solo exhibitions include the Musée d'art contemporain de Montreal (Montreal), Art Gallery of Guelph (Guelph), Anat Ebgi (Los Angeles), Whatiftheworld Gallery (Cape Town) and Plug In ICA (Winnipeg). Group exhibitions include AXENEO7 (Gatineau), MASS MoCA (North Adams) and Arsenal contemporary (New York). A solo survey exhibition organized by the Kenderdine Art Gallery, University of Saskatchewan, toured to five locations in Canada from 2013-2015, including the Esker Foundation (Calgary) and Galerie de l'UQAM (Montreal). Werner's work is in the collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Musée d'art contemporain de Montreal, The Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto), the Canadian Embassy in Berlin, University of Lethbridge (Alberta), Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Mendel Art Gallery and numerous private and corporate collections.

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