

Bradley Ertaskiran

Sara Anstis

A Great Relief

September 3 to October 30, 2021

Bradley Ertaskiran is thrilled to present *A Great Relief*, Sara Anstis' first solo exhibition with the gallery and in Canada.

Ask Sara Anstis about a particular figure from the suite of eight paintings that form this new solo exhibition, *A Great Relief*, and she will smile, acknowledge your question but refuse to be drawn. Who is the friend and who is the foe of the woman in the red swimsuit in *Red Swimsuit* (which at two metres in height is the largest of the works here)? The muscular, auburn-haired individual who grasps the swimmer's wrist, or the ghostly green companion who puts a semi-transparent hand around her waist? In *Seven*, is the slippery black creature which, along with its babies, wraps itself around the naked body of a slim female to be feared or tame? In *Thirsty*, are the lashes being administered to the naked buttocks of one woman by another, the second's anachronistic garb prim and severe, consensual or otherwise?

Though Anstis's work will commonly be labelled figurative, it might be better termed 'figurative interaction': the relations between her strange cast of characters, be they human or animal, prosaic or mythical, are the central subject, and these can only be read subjectively. The painter does not answer, because they are not her answers to give.

Left to read the room (or the landscape, these interactions commonly happen outside), the viewer becomes reflective of their own role within these strange scenes: how do we interpret the nakedness? How to view the physical contact present in every work? What is the relationship between human and non-human? The relationship between people and place, populace and environment? Anstis draws out profound questions concerning society, on power and the individual, and on our role within the collective. She does so with dexterity and a playfulness undercut with anxiety: a painter's hand following the mind of the storyteller.

- Oliver Basciano

Sara Anstis (b. 1991, Stockholm) was raised on a small island off the Canadian west coast. She received her BFA in Studio Art and Sociology at Concordia University (Montreal, CA) in 2013 and her MFA in Fine Art from Valand Academy (Gothenburg, SE) in 2016. In 2018, she completed the Drawing Year Postgraduate Programme at the Royal Drawing School (London, UK). Anstis has exhibited her work in numerous venues, including Fabian Lang Gallery (Zurich Switzerland), NEVVEN (Gothenburg, Sweden), 650mAh (Hove/Brighton, UK), HARPY Gallery (Rutherford, NJ, USA), Mana Contemporary (New Jersey, USA) and at the Royal Palace – Gustav III's Museum of Antiquities (Stockholm, Sweden).

Bradley Ertaskiran would like to thank Galerie Fabian Lang, Zurich for their collaboration.

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