

Hannah Greely

9/26/16 — 10/31/16

Consider the photograph of astronauts leaving their ship in outer space. How unsuited is the body for infinity, how helpless it becomes, showing its absurdity with every movement, bereft of the saving limits, and justifying resistance of ground, walls, ceiling. It is no accident that the astronaut assumes the position of a fetus in the womb, bowing the head, bending the knees, keeping the arms close to the body; it is no accident that the tether connecting him to the ship resembles an umbilical cord. We are buoyant, energetic, full of direction and purpose only in the prison of gravity; it is in gravity's thrall only that our body finds its sense, and every joint and nerve has use and therefore beauty. Natural purpose, inevitability, the feeling that we are in the presence of the only possible solution to a problem—this is what every great work of art evokes. The Lord God of Michelangelo, with thick curly beard, folds of robe, and bare feet with veins showing, did not come from the free play of the artist's mind. The painter had to work in obedience to the literature of absolute dictates going back to Genesis. A Michelangelo of today—his soul made irresolute by skepticism, that great stink of knowledge—at every step encounters paradoxes, dilemmas, absurdities, of which the Renaissance master never dreamed. The toenails of the Lord God are short. If He has a body like man's, those nails should grow. And since He endures eternally, they should have grown into snaking horns that go from naked toes to all the galaxies, filling the sky with sweeping spirals of keratin. Could one, should one paint such a thing? And if not, we are faced with the problem of the Divine pedicure. The nails are short either by cutting or miracle—surely one who can stop the sun in its path can stop the growth of a toenail. Both solutions are unacceptable: the first smacks of barbershop, the second of blasphemy. No, the toenails must be short without disquisition or analysis.

Excerpt from "Highcastle" by Stanislaw Lem, 1975

Cleopatra's is pleased to present a solo exhibition by Los Angeles based artist, Hannah Greely. The exhibition will include a series of paintings, watercolor on paper, from 2014 to present day. Like the text above illustrates, the works in the exhibition come from Greely's own encounters with paradoxes, dilemmas and absurdities. How did Michelangelo decide to portray the Lord God's toenails short, and not snaking horns that go from naked toes to all the galaxies?

Hannah Greely lives and works in Los Angeles, California. She has recently received her MFA from UC Riverside. Solo exhibitions include: Bob Van Orsouw Gallery, Zurich; Andrea Rosen Gallery, NY; Bernier/ Eliads, Athens; Dryad Gallery, LA, amongst others. Group shows include: 2010

Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum, NY; Sculpture from the Hammer Museum Contemporary Collection, curated by Connie Butler with Emily Felix-Jarrett; Los Angeles - A Fiction, Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo, curated by Gunnar Kvaran, Thierry Raspail, and Nicolas Garait.

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