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**maria klabin**

liquid air

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**opening** september 7

**exhibition** sep 7 – oct 15, 2022



Maria Klabin. *Dimitri*, 2021. Oil paint on linen. 200 x 110 cm | 78.7 x 43.3 in. Photo: Flavio Freire. Courtesy of the artist and Nara Roesler.

Nara Roesler New York is pleased to present *Maria Klabin: Liquid Air*, the first solo show by Brazilian artist Maria Klabin to be held in the United States. Curated by Luis Pérez-Oramas, the show introduces the North American public to Klabin's work, an artist who has found in painting, a language for the constitution of images that can be apprehended both as imaginative, dreamlike and unusual, as well as realistic and quotidian. The exhibition is open to the public between September 7 and October 15, 2022.

The holding of Maria Klabin's first international solo show in New York is a celebration of her own trajectory. In the late 1990s, the artist moved to the city to further her studies in photography. Soon after, she joined the Art Students League of New York and followed her long term interest in painting by delving into the study of pictorial language. In 2002, Klabin completed her studies and received her master's degree from Central Saint Martins, in London, UK.

The works exhibited in *Liquid Air* reveal painting as an unfolding of the artist's practice in other fields, such as dance, which she has practiced since childhood, sculpture, developed in her youth, and photography. Exemplary, in this sense, are the large-scale landscape paintings that make up the show. Often, the artist uses an image photographed by herself as the starting point from which to develop her work on the canvas.

Klabin finds in the photos visual pretexts that lead her to creating her own image. She begins with the movements of her body, drawing, with the brush, a choreography over the surface of the canvas. The physical attraction to the material is a manifest presence in Klabin's work, modeling the paint on the canvas to create figurations through the encounter between two bodies, hers and the painting's.

Curator Luis Pérez-Oramas sees the origin of the artist's work in the body, noting that "Maria Klabin relates her decision to become a painter to her experience as a dancer. Dance – the body in movement, the body in space – is, therefore, involved in her practice, which, paradoxically, began in three-dimensional modeling."

For the artist, painting is an answer to a question that she does not yet know how to formulate. "I have the feeling that painting knows more about me than I do about it", says Maria Klabin about her creative process. It all starts with a gesture, a mark that she makes on the canvas with her brush, a call and response, as each mark proposes a challenge, a question which needs an answer, through another brushstroke and another gesture, ultimately leading to a resolution and the creation of the final, dreamlike image.

Another group of works presented in *Liquid Air* comes from research focused on observation, where the artist portrays everyday scenes on smaller canvases. During the pandemic, this production peaked as Klabin took isolation times as an opportunity to return to one of the key themes in her repertoire: portraiture. In 2017, the artist had already returned to the practice, painting people she was close to. One day, the model fell asleep during a session, which opened the way for Klabin to focus not only on the individuality of the subject, but on the relationships between them and the space, transforming the scene into a kind of domestic landscape.

In *Liquid Air*, Klabin presents a series of paintings in which she has developed these portraits of sleeping individuals in greater depth, presenting them alongside paintings of still lifes, scenes of silence, as well as those of drowsiness, in which the painting – although remaining objective – finds a sense of freedom.

Most often choosing intimate and monumental scales for her paintings, the artist establishes different relationships between matter and representation, both in their making and in their fruition. According to Oramas, "her impressive paintings are true repositories of the trace of the gesture, of the density of the oil paint, of her broad, ambitious, fluid and liquid brushstrokes, behaving as the architectural structuring of her compositions."

## maria klabin

Maria Klabin's work engages with scenes, occurrences, and landscapes that permeate everyday life and thus, have been seen and experienced exhaustively. In dealing with omnipresent elements, Klabin extracts the cadence of their recurrence, seeking to capture the formal rhythm embedded in the repetition, or banality, of their existence. The artist's process lays in constantly producing and assembling drawings, photographs, and annotations, which she draws from her immediate entourage. The accumulation of thoughts and images entwine and come to make sense as a whole, unveiling intriguing relations that form the backbone of the artist's pictorial endeavor. In her own words, Klabin develops her work 'as if writing a story, or a diary, but a diary of things that don't really happen. It's a narrative that could only be told through painting, but that touches themes that seem closer to writers than to painters.'

Maria Klabin oscillates between extremes in terms of the scale of her works, producing both very small and monumental, large scale paintings, depending on the nature of her subject. Her small canvases often serve as support for rapid streams of thought—like writing on paper, perhaps harnessing an unconscious mind—and effectively capturing the rhythm of her surroundings, while her large pieces embody more contemplative, oneiric perceptions. Most recently, Klabin has produced a series of almost mural-sized landscape paintings that depart from fragments of autobiographical elements, distilled from what she describes as an improbable and fluid patchwork of memory, that results in non-objectifiable, enticing yet daunting compositions.

Maria Klabin studied Visual Arts and Art History at Brandeis University, in Massachusetts, USA, where she was awarded the Susan May Green Award for painting. In 2002, she earned an MA from Central Saint Martins – University of the Arts London, in London, UK. Solo exhibitions include: *Liquid Air*, at Nara Roesler (2022), in New York, USA; *Paisagem com Casinha*, at Galeria Silvia Cintra (2021), in Rio de Janeiro, Brasil; *Entre Rio e Pedra*, at Galeria Silvia Cintra (2017), in Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil; *E o dia havia acabado, quando começou*, at Galeria Silvia Cintra (2014), in Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil; amongst others. Group exhibitions include: *Abrasive Paradise*, at Kunsthal KADE (2022), in Amstersfoort, The Netherlands; *Já estava assim quando eu cheguei*, at Ron Mandos (2020), in Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Festival de Arte Contemporânea, at SESC VideoBrasil (2012/13), in São Paulo, SP, Brazil; Novas Aquisições da Coleção Gilberto Chateaubriand, at Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio) (2012), in Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil; Rumos 2005/06 Paradoxos Brasil, at Itaú Cultural (2006), in São Paulo, SP, Brazil; Além da Imagem, at Paço Imperial (2006), in Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil; amongst others. Her works are also part of important institutional collections, such as Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil and Itaú Cultural, São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

## nara roesler

Nara Roesler is a leading Brazilian contemporary art gallery, representing seminal Brazilian and international artists who emerged in the 1950s as well as preeminent mid-career and emerging artists who dialogue with the currents put forth by these historical figures. Founded by Nara Roesler in 1989, the gallery has consistently fomented curatorial practice while upholding the utmost quality in art production. This has actively been put into practice through a select and rigorous exhibitions program created in close collaboration with its artists; the implementation and fostering of the Roesler Curatorial Project, a platform for curatorial projects; and continued support to artists beyond the gallery space, working with institutions and curators in offsite shows. In 2012, the gallery doubled its São Paulo exhibition space, in 2014 it expanded to Rio, and in 2015 it opened in New York City, continuing its mission to provide the best platform for its artists to show their work.

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