



Louisa Gagliardi
“Reasonable Doubt”
29.09-29.10.2022

Dawid Radziszewski Gallery

Tuesday to Saturday, 12–6 PM
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List of works:

1. Louisa Gagliardi, *Years of Rain*, 2022, ink and gel medium on PVC, 170 x 300 cm
2. Louisa Gagliardi, *The Eye of the Storm*, 2022, ink, nail polish and gel medium on PVC, 180 x 130 cm
3. Louisa Gagliardi, *Low Key*, 2022, ink, nail polish and gel medium on PVC, 170 × 300 cm
4. Louisa Gagliardi, *A Whole Nother*, 2022, ink on PVC, 140 x 210 cm
5. Louisa Gagliardi, *Luncheon on the Grass*, 2022, ink and gel medium on PVC, 180 x 130 cm
6. Louisa Gagliardi, *Resting in Peace*, 2022, ink, nail polish and gel medium on PVC, 200 x 200 cm

Photos A through F;

Louisa Gagliardi, “Reasonable Doubt” exhibition view, Dawid Radziszewski Gallery

Louisa Gagliardi in conversation with Karolina Plinta

Karolina Plinta: Your newest exhibition at Dawid Radziszewski’s gallery consists of six canvases. I have the impression that they have nothing in common.



Louisa Gagliardi: At first glance, it may seem that way. Although each piece plays with interior and exterior, perspective and perception. I chose these works as a way of highlighting moments of intimacy and contemplation, in relation to settings that feel both familiar and mysterious. There is a play with the notions of potentiality and aftermath. The images frequently oscillate between something that has just happened or something that is about to happen. Whether the connotations are positive or negative is up to the viewer.

In your earlier works, there were very clear references to a contemporary culture defined by the digital realm. The characters of your works were “users”, avatars suspended between digital and physical reality. Your work often featured the theme of hands holding a smartphone. Now it’s different, I have the impression that the topic of digital is not so important anymore, isn’t it?

There has actually only been two paintings with devices. But as the subjects seem like they are lit by unseen screens, it might feel like there are very present in the work. These elements are still part of what I do, but less on the surface level these days. Rather than focusing on a specific gesture of a subject, the current work deals with the situation/ context of the subject(s) in the paintings. These scenes can feel like something that one may come across in film or social media, so in that way, the digital realm is still influential to my practice.

Who are the heroes of your latest works?

I think the ‘heroes’ (or antiheroes) are quite similar to the ‘users’ of the previous works. We’re just seeing more of their environments and what they do away from their devices. I would also like to say that characters never portray actual people and they differ from before in that they are more lifelike. The refinement of the forms makes their surreality more convincing.

I have the impression that the most important topic for you is a human being. Even the cow’s patches are shaped like human silhouettes; in the painting *Low Key* people’s silhouettes are on the car’s body. These are such “genre scenes in genre scenes”. I’m curious about their meaning.

They can be understood however the viewer prefers. I’m curious about the connections they’ll make within the exhibition on their own. With that said, I don’t think of the human being as the most important topic for me. I believe it’s the feelings generated by the relationship of these fabricated figures within the world I’m creating. And there’s never a set emotion I have in mind to merely illustrate to the audience.



My aim is for each image to evoke a variety of emotions, perhaps the experience evolves the more time one spends with a piece.

What role do non-human objects and figures play in your art?

Since I don't necessarily consider the human being (or figure) the most important element of the work, I feel that animals or inanimate objects play as crucial a role as the figures or the spaces these entities occupy. For me, the human or non-human entities and their surroundings are sort of like puzzle pieces. In every painting I try to find the most captivating way to put the puzzle together, to get the puzzle pieces to harmonize. You will also notice that only the secondary figures (in the scratches of the car or in the spots of the cows) are making actual contact with one another. Even in *The Eye of the Storm*, the hands are separated by a glass panel.

Much is said today about human responsibility towards the environment and non-human creatures. Meanwhile, you paint the cows in the meadow and title this painting "Luncheon on the grass". Is this a mockery of environmentalists?

Not at all. The title is inspired by Edouard Manet's *Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe*. His painting has figures in a landscape, having a picnic. In my work, the cows are the ones having a picnic. In a sense, the figures are still having a picnic too, since they comprise the cows spots. Additionally, Manet's influence shows up again in another painting in the show, the key scratches on the car in *Low Key*.

Do you like driving cars? What is this object for you – the interior of the car and it's exterior?

I like the idea of driving. I just got my driver's license during the pandemic, but my partner does 95% of the driving when we use a car. Sadly, I don't feel very comfortable driving yet. Being the navigator is usually as much as I get involved in terms of the activity. In Switzerland, public transport is quite good, so there's no need to hassle with parking, maintenance, insurance, etc. that comes with owning a car. While it may not be the most ecological mode of transportation, there's something nice about having your own private space between point A and point B, which differs a lot from being on a train, bike, or plane. The fantasy of doing road trips was what motivated me to get my license, the freedom of going wherever, whenever in your own little bubble, in which you are able to decide when you want to interact with anyone or not. In *Low Key*, the car in the image is my dad's. He has had the dream of owning one as long as I can remember, and with all of us kids out of the house, he finally got to make it a reality.



It seems to me that landscape plays an important role in your new paintings – what do you want to tell through it?

I like to use the landscape to help express the sensations I'm seeking for the individual image. This often means that the landscape will be influenced by real characteristics (a tree or sand from a beach), yet I manipulate them in order to complement the inhabitants of the environments. Similar to the figures, the landscapes don't really represent particular places. I hope to have the landscapes feel like they could be encountered in a dream. There's a believability which is subverted by the details or circumstances within them.

You started out as a graphic designer and illustrator. What in your opinion is the difference between an illustration and a picture?

The difference is that illustration has a very specific message to communicate, while a painting is less specific in conveying its intent, more open to what the audience brings to the work, while operating on multiple levels.

What kind of art do you like?

I like a lot of art and from different periods. Doesn't matter if it's installation, sculpture, video, or performance. If it's good, I'm interested. What makes something 'good' is another topic though. I'm a big fan of many painters, from Caravaggio to Claude Monet to Francis Bacon. Recently, I've been quite into Pierre Bonnard. And I also enjoy the work of contemporary painters like Jana Euler, Jill Mulleady and Allison Katz, among many others.

So what is good art for you?

Clearly 'good' is a matter of personal taste. There are things that I'll gravitate towards due to my own preferences, but I think there are some good things that I don't necessarily adore. When I don't enjoy an exhibition or artwork, it can still be 'good' when there's a sense of risk-taking, ambition. A spectacular failure is more engaging than a lazy, too-cool-for-school effort. Ideally, subject matter and form come together within the context in a way that teeters between making absolute sense and making no sense at all.