

Bradley Ertaskiran

Stall

Alexa Hawksworth
May 4 to June 17, 2023

Bradley Ertaskiran is excited to present *Stall*, a solo exhibition by Alexa Hawksworth. The exhibition showcases a departure from Hawksworth's past paintings, which emphasized velocity and movement, to a new body of work that plays with the reverse: stasis, the inability to move, whether desired or not, captured through the recurring motif of a stand-still car.

Three 10-foot-long tableaus anchor the exhibition, lively scenes rich with colorful stimuli, featuring each a different car model. *Obsidian Green Pathfinder* (2023) centers on a green-washed SUV, with young urbanites sporting peak athleisure, while *Performance Red Integra* (2023) shows a nuclear family piling into a boxy red Sedan. Each car, in their formal and aspirational attributes, sets the tone for its scene, whether representing success, progress, or, consistent with Hawksworth's trademark absurdism, domestic dystopia. For the artist, the stalled car serves as a means of exploring constraint and restriction, which she employs as a formal tool, a means of boxing in.

As with Hawksworth's larger body of surrealist paintings, the longer you look, the more playful and bizarre sub-plots emerge. A Starbucks barista makes an appearance in one painting, while in another, Lady Godiva rides naked on horseback, not far away from a cool-kid crowd of Y2K models who pout and pose. Hawksworth's personas verge on caricatures, wherein features are exaggerated but deftly illustrated in almost Hieronymus Bosch-esque precision and peculiarity. Some figures are fully rendered, others gestural, but all drawn from a variety of cultural references—film, history, pop culture—often as stand-ins for desire, status, coolness, or the artist's own humour or imaginings.

Many of Hawksworth's scenes are dominated by crowds, a whirl of colour and shape in line with her unique style of too much, all at once. Whether crammed into the back of a blue Amazon delivery truck, or marching in celebration of the Winter Solstice, Hawksworth's gatherings are made of creepy, funny, somewhat familiar characters and objects, a sort of market stall of human oddities. Wherein Hawksworth's past work prioritized the introspective, highlighting the psychologies of her individuals, *Stall* showcases a distinctly tangible outer world. And yet, despite the overwhelming visual chaos that envelopes them, Hawksworth's myriad actors seem blatantly oblivious to their surroundings, like crash-test dummies propped up in a situation they do not fully comprehend.

The exhibition's title reiterates this collective feeling of being stuck in place, further shown through the lateral and static presentation of each scene, in which people, creatures, and props are stacked one atop the other rather than shown in the round. This cross-section of human life fuses together into a single scene, where time is layered and unable to move forward, a traffic jam.

Alexa Hawksworth (b. 1994; Hamilton) is a painter and illustrator based in Montreal, Canada. Hawksworth received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Concordia University in 2020. Her work has been shown in solo exhibitions at Theta (New York) and Pangée (Montreal), and recent group and duo exhibitions include Franz Kaka (Toronto), NADA Miami with Bradley Ertaskiran, Sibling Gallery (Toronto), Projet Casa (Montreal), and Afternoon Projects (Vancouver).

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