

Lisa Jo: *Heritage and Debt*

David Lewis

57 Walker Street

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David Lewis is proud to announce the representation of California-born, Berlin-based painter Lisa Jo and her debut solo exhibition at David Lewis in Tribeca. The exhibition will feature new paintings continuing her ongoing negotiation of abstraction, figuration, and contemporary image making.

Jo's paintings begin with a glimpse (de Kooning: "content is a glimpse") of the female body, rendered from the French 1970s erotic comics *L'Écho des savanes*: an arm here, a leg there, different renderings of eyes, a glimpse of a hip or a leg, graphic cutouts of long flowing hair... the suggestion of a nude. *L'Écho des savanes*, founded in 1972, is a Franco-Belgian comics magazine which featured work by a rotating group of artists, including Moebius, Alejandro Jodorowsky, Robert Crumb, Guido Crepax, and Art Spiegelman.

These initial images create access points—a way to enter the paintings visually, and then get lost in the fray. Once inside the painted image—the experience in front of each painting—the eye is constantly moving around. There is never anything static, never anywhere visually to rest. It's as if everything is thrown up into the air in order to get that one beautiful shot before they all fall to the ground. Jo recalls, with precision, her inability to recall what her favorite paintings look like, and instead prioritizes the malleable nature of somatic recollection (Picabia: "I see again in memory..."). Synapses that cannot be located but are firing nonetheless: tinges of familiarity, a state of visual longing, flickering... always chasing the moment before each image falls apart.

Like the films of Douglas Sirk, whose initial melodrama always dissolve, over time, into simultaneous silliness and desperate complexity (Roger Ebert: "To appreciate a film like *Written on the Wind* probably takes more sophistication than to understand one of Ingmar Bergman's masterpieces, because Bergman's themes are visible and underlined, while with Sirk the style conceals the message"), Jo's paintings—and their titles reinforce this—are always shimmering between memory and possibility, between what has been lost and what is forever about to be found. The style in Jo's painting also conceals the message. And maybe it is worth imagining that this inherent aesthetic precarity might have something, deeply, to do with a personal and familial exile, and migration. The elisions in Jo's world are also a form of somatic speaking, or coded song, even memorial, encrypted longing for impossible recollection. The cryptography of painting, its heritage—what has been lost, and its debt—what can one day be found.

Lisa Jo was born in Los Angeles in 1983 and attended New York University, receiving her BFA in 2005 and continuing to live and work between LA and New York until her move to Berlin in 2019. Jo's work has been shown at galleries and institutions in New York, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, London, Paris, Berlin, Cologne, and Zürich. David Lewis hosted a solo show of Jo's work titled *Send me no Flowers* at the gallery's former 12th Street location. Lisa Jo will be exhibiting new work at the Kunsthalle Zurich in October 2023.