

Artist: Kelly Wall

Exhibition title: Fool's Paradise

Venue: New Low, Los Angeles, CA

Date: 9 September–21 October, 2023

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Text:

New Low is pleased to present *Fool's Paradise*, an exhibition of new works by Kelly Wall.

Fool's Paradise picks up where Wall's last show, *Vitrified Values*, left off, at least in place. Los Angeles informs the work again, but now, it's the famous light, from sunsets to the lime variety, and in tandem their contorting shadows that take surface. For her second exhibition in the space, Wall presents us with two new significant glass sculptures. Steeped in a play of words and materials, these works nod to the contradictory dualities of existence, the clunkiness of being human and the insecurities of trying to be seen in a high visibility culture.

On the wall, *Hanging Over Me* takes the form of an awning, a structure made to provide decorative shade. At first glance, the awning appears to be an advertisement of success. Embossed stars and text decorate the exterior proclaiming "Baby I'm a STAR", as the yellow "STAR" font beams onto the wall below, a nod to Hollywood. However, with a shift of perspective, as the viewer moves from the outside to the sheltered position below the awning, what was once a statement of pride reverses to read "RATS". Previously hidden double-entended text illuminates the awning's underside like speckled sunlight, using the language of light and shade along with turn of phrase adages and misspelled words to point to the artist's insecurities. The sayings shine down in an array of cutesy fonts ranging from wood-carved aesthetic to the eat-pray-love style, almost mockingly contradicting the tone of their content. Baby I'm a star or maybe just stardust.

In the center of the gallery this dissonance is carried into the new chaise longue chair sculpture, *Beside Myself*. A platform for basking in the sun, here, becomes weighted by a black physical phantom mass as the structure's shadow has been built into the work. In this self portrait of sorts, the splitting of a chair from its "shadow part" can be seen along with the color change from head to toe. Glass parts jut out awkwardly meeting their counterparts in an unsettling nature. By making the shadow solid, Wall alludes to some of her other interests: the weight of light, the aesthetics of commercialism vs. the results of capitalism, and the full embracement of symbols.

All this amounts to a cacophony of signs, shadows, text, and textures. *Fool's Paradise* is a play of language and forms, and at its root are the STAR/RATS relationship, two sides to the same

coin of existence. Ever humorous, the work pokes at the male-dominated, California-based, twentieth century Light and Space movement. Wall has lightened, personalized and injected with pop some principles of the oft self serious and symbol-less L&S. And these works, in their familiarity, welcome viewers' own shaded experiences to read between the silver lining and see into a Fool's Paradise.

Kelly Wall (b. 1990, Los Angeles) earned a BFA from Otis and MFA from CalArts. She is Taurus sun, Scorpio moon, and Capricorn rising. She lives and works in Los Angeles, California, USA.

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1. File name: 01_New Low_Fools Paradise_2478.jpeg
Kelly Wall, *Fool's Paradise*, 2023, installation view
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Kelly Wall, *Fool's Paradise*, 2023, installation view
3. File name: 03_New Low_Fools Paradise_2262.jpeg
Kelly Wall, *Beside Myself*, 2023, Glass, lead, aluminum double chaise longue, 36" x 30" x 72"
4. File name: 04_New Low_Fools Paradise_2272.jpeg
Kelly Wall, *Beside Myself* (detail), 2023, Glass, lead, aluminum double chaise longue, 36" x 30" x 72"
5. File name: 05_New Low_Fools Paradise_2281.jpeg
Kelly Wall, *Beside Myself* (detail), 2023, Glass, lead, aluminum double chaise longue, 36" x 30" x 72"
6. File name: 06_New Low_Fools Paradise_2286.jpeg
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7. File name: 07_New Low_Fools Paradise_2310.jpeg
Kelly Wall, *Hanging Over Me*, 2023, Glass, lead, steel, 24" x 30" x 56"
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Kelly Wall, *Hanging Over Me* (detail), 2023, Glass, lead, steel, 24" x 30" x 56"