

# WINTER STREET GALLERY

## ***Ravens and Crows***

Pardiss Amerian, Hamish Chapman, Chelsea Culprit, Julie Curtiss, Elizabeth Glaessner, Leo Nataf, Rebecca Purdum, Robin F. Williams, Leah Ke Yi Zheng

November 9 - December 9, 2023  
14 Rue des Coutures Saint-Gervais, Paris

Opening reception:  
Thursday, November 9, 6-8 pm

Winter Street Gallery and Brigitte Mulholland are delighted to present *Ravens and Crows*, their first exhibition in Paris. The exhibition runs from November 9 through December 9, showcasing the works by Pardiss Amerian, Hamish Chapman, Chelsea Culprit, Julie Curtiss, Elizabeth Glaessner, Leo Nataf, Rebecca Purdum, Robin F. Williams, and Leah Ke Yi Zheng. Centered around themes of mythology, mysticism, and history, the exhibition brings together nine artists who offer distinctive interpretations of their respective cultures, artistic methodologies, and inner lives.

Several works in the exhibition delve into contemplations of contemporary life, with reflections on gender, culture, and religion serving as catalysts for the multifaceted artistic expressions. Signs and symbols exist to be deciphered in the materials and imagery on view, whether in an illustrious painting by Pardiss Amerian, drawing inspiration from 13th-century Persian miniatures, or the ethereal silk surfaces of Leah Ke Yi Zheng, influenced by traditional Chinese painting. Leo Nataf's sculptures revisit the ancient form of sphinxes, and are adorned with motifs that evoke tales from his childhood, as narrated by his Tunisian grandmother. These cultural references are not merely didactic; their artistic resonance transcends personal identity and into the realm of process, material, and their inherent enigmatic qualities.

When examining the work of Zheng and Rebecca Purdum, techniques familiar from postwar abstraction are employed to convey a sense of veiling and translucency via a process of layering. These works deny figural allusions, instead prompting contemplation of the possibilities of paint and surface – urging us not merely to look at them but to see through them. Hamish Chapman's paintings explore a stylized dimensionality, scrutinizing specific boundaries associated with gender expressions, particularly within the realm of sports, notably tennis, with a humorous perspective.

The dynamics of body and gender are further pushed in the work of Chelsea Culprit, where colorful limbs sway and swoop in the manner of tree branches reaching the tipping point of geometric abstraction. Culprit's interest in and dismantling of female archetypes is likewise found in Robin F. Williams' painting *Afterglow (Ripley)* (2023). Here, the artist explodes the technicolor palette of a horror-film still that serves as her subject, casting eerie shadows on the female figure, illuminated by an unsettling external light source. The unconventional color palette mirrors Williams' questioning of female tropes and her determination to challenge both the conventions of painting and the stereotypes of "femininity."

Elizabeth Glaessner's disquietingly verdant scene of a bather similarly upends conventional painting norms. The foregrounded figure nearly merges with an abstracted green pool of water, visually converging with the emerald-green background, creating an ambiguous space devoid of narrative, confines, or boundaries. Julie Curtiss eschews color, save for a sinister and poignant punch of red in her drawing *The Gift* (2023), deepening the sense of mystery found throughout the exhibition. In her dreamlike black and white image, the female figure's face is mostly obscured by her jet-black hair, with a mysterious raven or crow-like bird perched on top. The question arises: who is giving and who is receiving this red "gift"? Curtiss' work embraces these explorations of uncertainty and the mysterious ways of nature. Ravens and crows, often found in legends and folklore, are both ominous symbols and creatures known to befriend and embrace humans, exchanging gifts and forming improbable, symbiotic friendships. Together, the compositions in the exhibition collectively evoke a surreal quality, weaving birds, tennis balls, limbs, color, and lines into a vibrant aura of feeling, memories, and mysterious echoes that bridge the boundaries of our world and perhaps another.