

## **BETH FREY**

### *Dither and Hum*

Collaborative presentation with Pamela Weissenberg, Mexico City

Condo, London 2024

20 January – 24 February 2024

*Her name is Carnival because she makes the liveliest noise*

watercolour on paper

76.2 x 55.9 cm / 85 x 64.5 cm, framed

2023

*Famous creatures come down to earth, salute the danc'ring day*

watercolour on paper

76.2 x 55.9 cm / 85 x 64.5 cm, framed

2023

*A blueberry for the poet, an important meal*

watercolour on paper

76.2 x 55.9 cm / 85 x 64.5 cm, framed

2023

*The Gardeners' Fault*

watercolour on paper

76.2 x 55.9 cm / 85 x 64.5 cm, framed

2023

*That was then, that is now, and all of the old is gone, For now I am a New Creature.*

watercolour on paper

76.2 x 55.9 cm / 85 x 64.5 cm, framed

2023

*We are looking through a window, through a window, through a window. The window does not exist.*

watercolour on paper

76.2 x 55.9 cm / 85 x 64.5 cm, framed

2023

*The Shadow Is Over My Is My Friend*

digital video with music by Luke Nickel

3 minutes 29 seconds

Edition of 3 + 1 AP

2024

*Down-wind of this world, they will soon be blown away.*

watercolour and coloured pencil on paper

76.2 x 55.9 cm / 85 x 64.5 cm, framed

2023

*When the colours fade away and I am left in darkness, I shall still sing for my own joys to be remembered.*

watercolour on paper

76.2 x 55.9 cm / 85 x 64.5 cm, framed

2023

*The subtext is pointless. How else would I lasso a fly?*

watercolour on paper

76.2 x 55.9 cm / 85 x 64.5 cm, framed

2023

## BETH FREY

### *Dither and Hum*

Collaborative presentation with Pamela Weissenberg, Mexico City  
Condo London 2024

20 January – 24 February 2024

*All perception—indeed, all our experience of the world is embodied. We cannot understand the world we live in, nor can we interact with each other or act on the environment around us, without our bodies. Everything we know, everything we do, and everything we are, is mediated by the body.*<sup>i</sup>

More questions than answers (such is life): Can we ever gain an understanding of our own body? *No*, would seem to be the obvious response... If every experience shapes us, we are therefore in a constant state of intangible flux, a condition of endless becoming. Wherein - the deck stacked against us from the outset - even the simplest image of ourselves, our reflection, we see in reverse. Thanks to rudimentary physics<sup>ii</sup>, this fundamental discrepancy between our self-image and how others see us, the rift between our imagined self and desired self, suggests the yearning for our bodies to exist beyond their (actual – what-so-ever-that-is) physicality. But even a willed projection of mental image is sketchy, given that 'actual' representation is undermined by the decreasing faith in veritas in our fabulous post-truth society. (The argument of "it's *my* truth" is contemporaneously given relative legal weight). We can of course digitally alter and heavily edit images of ourselves to select which self is presented as the preferred 'real' to the virtual eyes watching us (imagined/desired/paranoid?), as we can laboriously construct avatar selves that live solely, or dialectically, in a parallel digital world.

If the above is a *willing* fiction, then perhaps the closest we get to *unwilling* fact is the prevalence of video surveillance, so active that images collected in public spaces<sup>iii</sup> can construct a detailed and accurate 'portrait' of self (us). A concealed camera scanning our retina can reveal our current appearance and project a *version* of ourselves decades into the future. Which are we: our faulty perception of *our* real, or 'their' real? Does all of this indicate that we are losing any/all control over our identity? Or, with the tools and skills to manipulate versions of ourselves being more accessible than ever, are we more in control of our images? Are we, in *reality*, enhanced?

Beth Frey's work, exemplified in *Dither and Hum*, lives in all the gaps: straddling physical and virtual worlds, her figures are at home in the great big open spaces (surveilled of course) of all the unanswered questions, and bask in the patient, observant, electrical eyes. Zoom in. Born out of complex and organic processes, and loaded with the very contradictions and intangibilities attached to representations of the body and gender, Frey's figures and environments, are at once, familiar and fantastical. Using text, descriptions, rules, parameters, as a starting point, Frey engages with readily available digital technologies, treating them as both toy and tool, play and plunder. Inputting visual elements and vocal descriptions from sources that may include natural disasters, science fiction or tropes within classical painting, Beth Frey manipulates Artificial Intelligence to arrive at abstracted self-portraits that frolic in a bucolic but sinister universe. Bringing the completion of her works back to the analogue domain, Frey's hand-rendered watercolours and animations embody physicality with unshakeable digital traces, strangely like the conflicted world we inhabit.

"If there were no mirrors, would the world be easier?"<sup>iv</sup> – even hypothetically, that's an unreasonably stupid question... "...then something awful would happen. The veil of reality would be ripped away."<sup>v</sup>

---

<sup>i</sup> *Woman's Embodied Self: Feminist Perspectives on Identity and Image*, by J. C. Chrisler and I. Johnston-Robledo. Copyright © 2018 the American Psychological Association.

<sup>ii</sup> At a loose end in Auckland airport, I googled "*physics and mirrors*", and amused myself for at least fifteen minutes (flight delayed):

"Is my iPhone camera an accurate representation of what I look like? It makes my head look big, but the bathroom mirror makes my head look small!"

"Why do I look pretty in the mirror, but ugly and asymmetrical in flipped phone photos?"

"I think of myself as attractive... but when I take a photo I look BAD and different. Do I look like I do in the mirror? PLEASE."

"If I look super hot in the mirror and super ugly in selfies, WHAT AM I?"

"How do I know what other people see me like in real life?"

Etc., etc.,

<sup>iii</sup> London is often touted as one of the most surveilled cities in the world. Estimates for the number of CCTV cameras range between 627,700 and 942,500

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid ii

<sup>v</sup> Anne Enright, *The Wren, The Wren*.. Jonathan Cape 2023. Pg82.

## BETH FREY

born Calgary, Alberta  
lives and works in Mexico City

## EDUCATION

- 2015 Master in Fine Arts, Concordia University, Montréal
- 2008 Graduate Diploma, Communication Studies, Concordia University, Montréal
- 2004 Bachelor of Fine Arts *with distinction* University of Victoria, Victoria BC

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 *Dither and Hum*, collaborative presentation with Pamela Weissenberg and mother's tankstation at mother's tankstation, London for Condo
- 2022 *Meet Me at the Puppet Motel*, Pabellón Labor-AGO, Mexico City  
*Awkward Acuarelas y mi propia telenovela*, Acapulco 62, Mexico City
- 2019 *Agony Aunt*, Casa Equis, Mexico City  
*BOOM BOOM BLOOM DOOM*, Galerie POPOP, Montréal  
*5 cents to Enlightenment*, SSASS, Millersville University, Lancaster  
*Creatures of Habit* *Weird Things*, Toronto  
*Unfinished Busyness A4* Galería, Tlahuelilpan, Hidalgo
- 2017 *Mexican Lovers/Amantes Canadienses* (with Lia Sirena) Pandeo, Mexico City
- 2015 *cutis miseribilis maximus*, Concordia University MFA Gallery, Montréal
- 2014 *Pink Aisle*, Galerie Rats 9, Montréal
- 2010 *Minuscule Ethnographies*, Shopgirls, Toronto
- 2009 *Garden* Gallery 1313, Toronto
- 2007 *Bad Dreams About Good Things* Galerie Autour de la Tour, Rabat
- 2004 *To Charles, With Love*, Fifty-Fifty Art Collective, Victoria  
*Wrinkle* (with Brenda Hansen) Ministry of Casual Living, Victoria

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 *Steamed Hams*, Dowse Museum, Wellington  
*Hors Scène/Off-Stage*, Stewart Hall Gallery, Pointe-Claire  
*Pictoplasma*, Berlin  
*The Soft Touch*, Museum of Museums, Seattle
- 2022 *Stat. Sig.*, TAP Art Space, Montreal  
*SCRAPPY*, DC3 Art Projets, Edmonton  
*Vibrant formas, de los encuentros*, La Nao Gallery, Mexico City  
*Escrituras*, Museo Cabañas, Guadalajara
- 2021 *Temporary Collection*, Ed Video, Guelph
- 2020 *Coludes y rabones*, Local 1800, Guadalajara  
*Works on Paper*, Galería Karen Huber, Mexico City  
*Relamida*, Clavel Clavel, Mexico City
- 2019 *Noctámbulas*, Mashimon, Mexico City  
*Capricho infantil noventero*, Cuartelito 148, Mexico City
- 2018 *Stauraum*, De Liceiras 18, Porto  
*Tutitut*, Diorama, Mexico City  
*Té Verde*, Tulípan 132, Mexico City
- 2015 *Girl Germs* Xpace Gallery, Toronto
- 2014 *Turning to Night* Le Petit Versailles, New York  
*Sanctum* La Petite Mort, Ottawa  
*Exxxvotos* White Spider Project, Mexico City
- 2013 *Ouate the Tape* Galerie Rats 9, Montréal  
*24 Cats* La Petite Mort, Ottawa  
*Transformer* Galerie SAW Gallery, Ottawa  
*Ultramoderne* Art Mûr, Montreal
- 2012 *Sortie* Ancien école de beaux-arts, Montreal
- 2011 *ARThotel*, Hôtel Espresso, Montreal

- 2010 *Babiole.Bibolet*, Gladstone Hotel, Toronto  
*I know my weaknesses better than you*, Freud's Bathhouse and Diner, Winnipeg  
Annual Juried Drawing Show, John B. Aird Gallery, Toronto
- 2009 *JK LOL*, Studio Nine Gallery, Toronto
- 2008 *Art in the Fall*, 401 Richmond, Toronto  
*Summer Showcase*, Whippersnapper Gallery, Toronto
- 2004 *Actuations, such as an outdoor knife fight and other...*, Open Space, Victoria

#### VIDEO SCREENINGS

- 2022 *Press Play*, Moisturizer Gallery, Gainesville
- 2021 *Phthethisms*, Ada X, Montreal  
*Pat-a-Cake*, Tiempo Compartido, Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City
- 2018 *Lovesome*, Grabbealle 34, Berlin
- 2008 *Nuit Blanche projections* Case Goods, Toronto  
*THAW* Links Hall, Chicago
- 2007 *Dipping Around Les Minots*, Montreal

#### RESIDENCIES

- 2019 Guest Artist *Society for the Study of Affect Summer School*, Millersville University, Lancaster
- 2018 De Licieras 18, Porto
- 2017 Struts and Faucet Residency, Sackville
- 2014 SKOOL Artist-in-residence, Centre SKOL, Montreal
- 2013 Deskilling and Reskilling in Contemporary Art, Montreal
- 2013 Wild Bush Residency, Lac Paquin
- 2010 Sparkbox Studio, Picton

#### COLLABORATIVE AND CURATORIAL PROJECTS

- 2023 Production design, *Running with Strippers* performance festival, Singapore
- 2021 Tiempo Compartido, (with Kasha y Shirotta), Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil, Mexico City
- 2020 *Phthethisms*, collaboration with Phth experimental voice collective
- 2017 Facilitated *Jam de dibujo*, The Lab Program, Mexico City
- 2014 *SKOOL: Drawing Lab/Lab de dessin* Centre SKOL, Montréal
- 2010 Artistic Director *Forest of Light and Shadows*, Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Centre, Toronto