

An essay has to begin somewhere; it might as well be with the letter A. In Stephanie Ligeti's debut solo exhibition at Franz Kaka, *P is for Painting*, A isn't for Apple like it was in Kindergarten, it's for Ashtray. The included 26 paintings each depict an object that corresponds to a unique letter of the latin-alphabet. Bread. Coffee. Dog. Eggs. Flower. Like letters written across a blackboard, the order is familiar, each icon locking into place. The paintings are anchored to their name but are also their own separate entity. I write down on a scrap of paper: THE ALPHABET IS NOTHING WITHOUT WHAT IT RELATES TO.

Before viewing Ligeti's series, I admit I hadn't thought much of the alphabet recently. Yet I write daily—each sentence and word in this text is compiled of their essence. The alphabet structures written language, the familiarity of it blending into everyday life until it becomes unobtrusive. By returning to the A-Z framework to build an exhibition, Ligeti creates a cohesive set from fragments. When viewed outside of this order, Ligeti's paintings lose their abecedarian connection and instead float into the world of signs and signifieds. What is intended as a Wig could just as easily be read as Hair, and X-Ray could also be a Bone. It isn't the letter that matters but the connotations they evoke.

Counteracting this, Ligeti's palette and brushwork work to keep the series intact. The grayed background and desaturated hues keep the 26 paintings connected outside the imposed alphabetic parameters. If the school version of the alphabet is bright and cheery, Ligeti's takes on a somber tone. These formal devices ground the paintings; the premise of the P is for Painting is fun and playful, but there's also a throughline here that's dark and composed. In person, the painterly quality of Ligeti's works is obvious. Painted in a single sitting, *alla prima*, adds to the haziness of the paintings. The brushstrokes are small and purposeful.

During Ligeti's time working on the exhibition, she was in Vienna, Austria, where she moved in 2022. Surrounded by an unfamiliar language, the alphabet series was a way to ground her in the familiar while meditating on the painting process. The ashtray, she recalls, was similar to something found at her grandma's house growing up. The 2023 balloons, representing Y for Year, were from a calendar her Aunt sent her. Her colours reflect Vienna's infrastructure—old architecture and limited greenery. As the series continued, Ligeti repainted earlier works in the series—the daily act resulting in stronger paintings as Ligeti went on.

Each painting in *P is for Painting* represents a conceptual framework focussed on process, not unlike On Kawara's date paintings. The Japanese conceptual artist carefully painted the date; each painting started and finished on the same day. During his lifetime, he painted more than 3,000 date paintings. The paintings are unwavering commitments to the act of painting and representations of life as it unfolds. To a viewer, unintended meaning can be projected onto the dates. For example, I've seen hundreds of Kawara's date paintings, but never my birthday. When I come across other dates that have special meanings, I document

them with my phone.

Fragments—dates or objects—connect us. Taken from stock photography and translated into paint, the source material of Ligeti's paintings lacks context. Yet, as icons, they can absorb the projections of the audience. The signified is different for each person, a personal history layered onto them. T is for Tatum and also for Teddy Bear. I can spell my name with the icons Ligeti chose. Teddy-Ashtray-Teddy-Underwear-Milk. An essay can start each paragraph in sequence with the alphabet. The impersonal becomes personal, just as On Kawara's dates take on loaded meanings. Ligeti's paintings are activated by the viewer's associations and projections. P is for Painting. They're all paintings; and whatever else you'd like them to be—from A to Z.

- Tatum Dooley, 2024

Stephanie Ligeti (b. 1988, Toronto) is a painter currently based in Vienna. She received a BFA in Drawing and Painting from OCAD University in 2021. She has exhibited internationally at XIAN (Vienna, AT); In Lieu (Los Angeles, US); Art Mûr (Montreal, CA); the plumb & Bau-Xi (Toronto, CA). Her work has been presented by Pangée at Plural Art Fair (Montreal, CA) in 2023 and by In Lieu at NADA Miami in 2022. P is for Painting is Ligeti's debut solo exhibition.



A is for Ashtray, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-231



B is for Bread, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-232



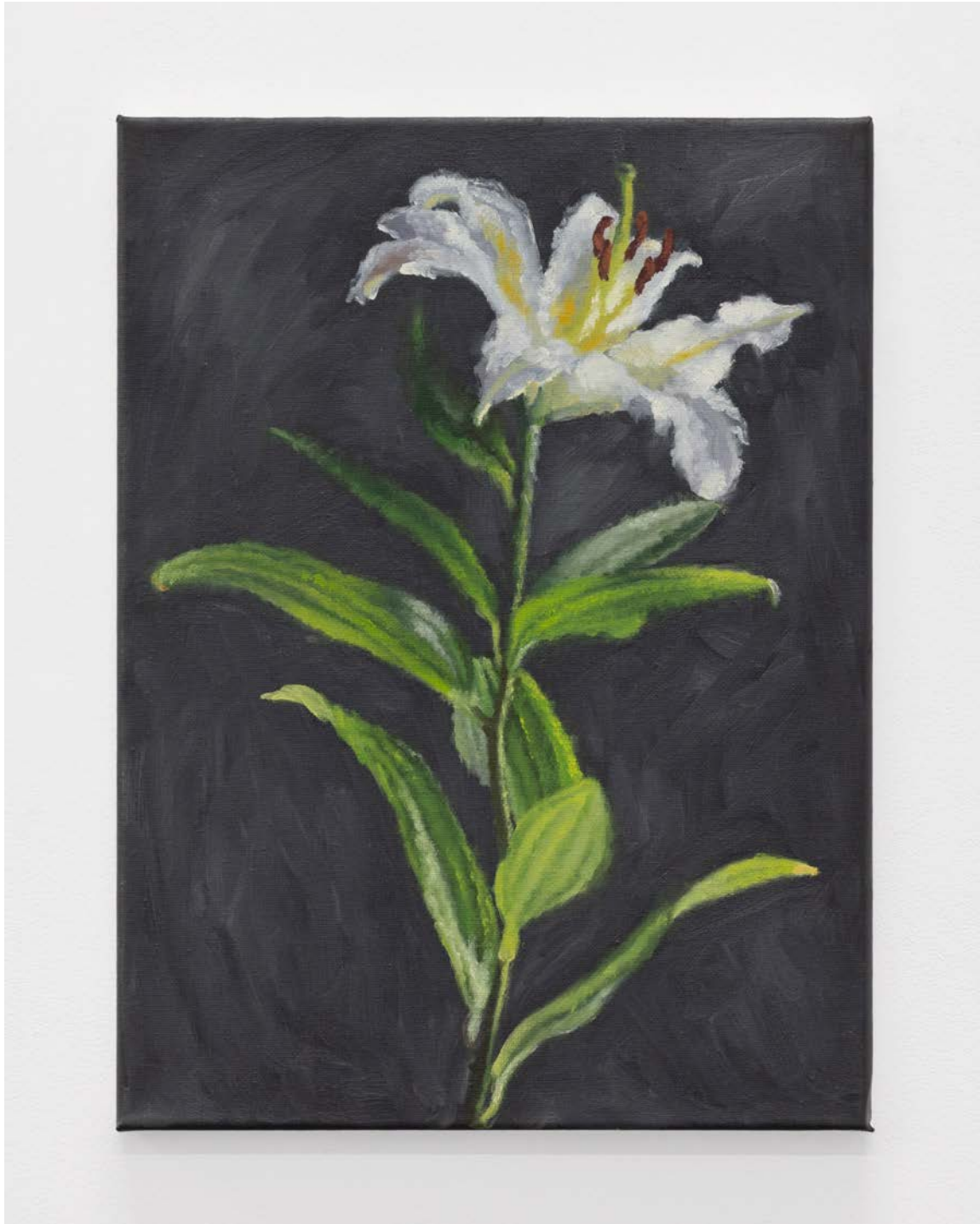
C is for Coffee, 2023
Oil on canvas
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm)
SL-233



D is for Dog, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30 x 40 cm)
SL-234



E is for Eggs, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-235



F is for Flower, 2023
Oil on canvas
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm)
SL-236



G is for Gloves, 2023
Oil on canvas
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm)
SL-237



His for Hats, 2023
Oil on canvas
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm)
SL-238



I is for Ice Cream, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-239



J is for Jokers, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-2310



K is for Key, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-2311



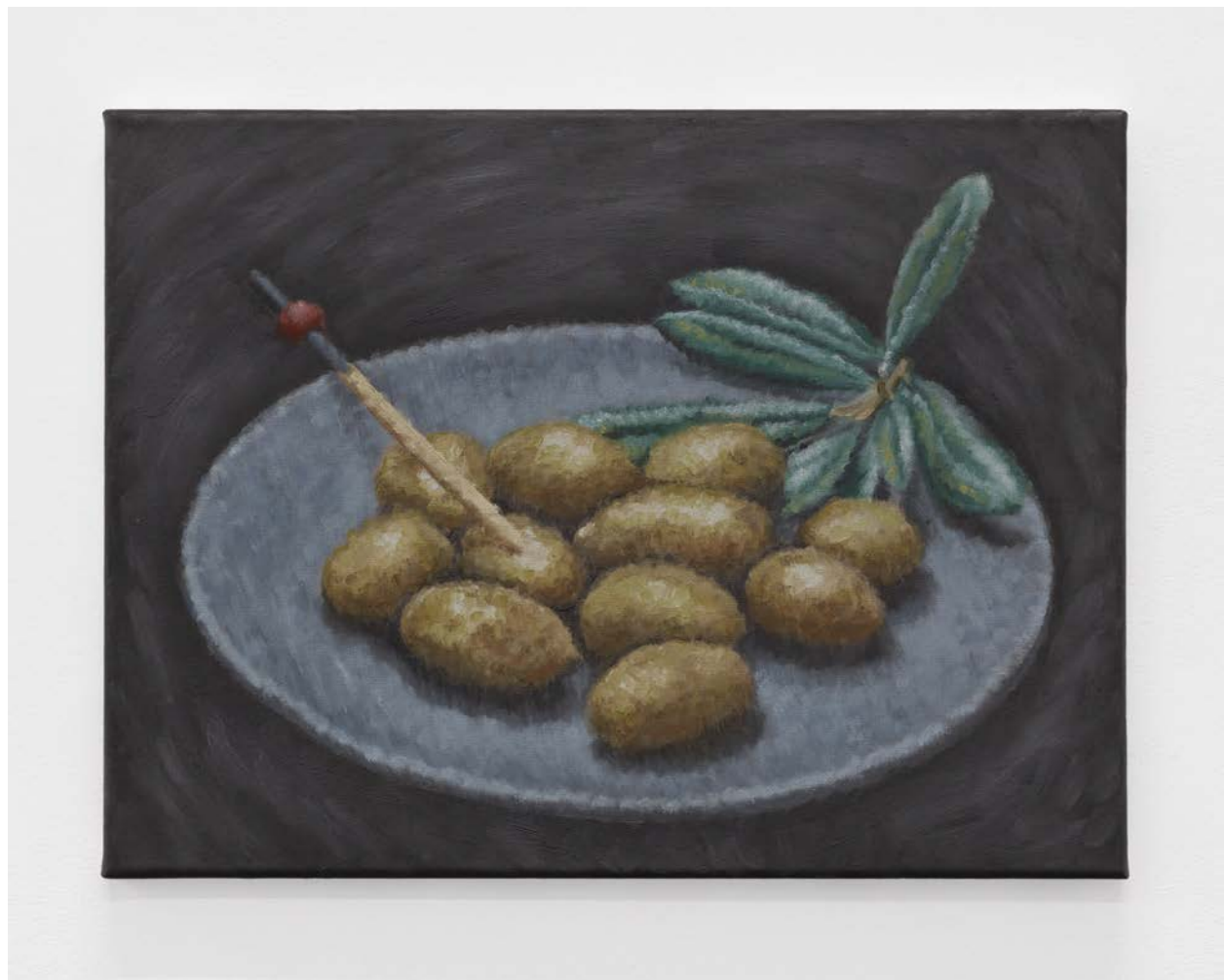
L is for Lipstick, 2023
Oil on canvas
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm)
SL-2312



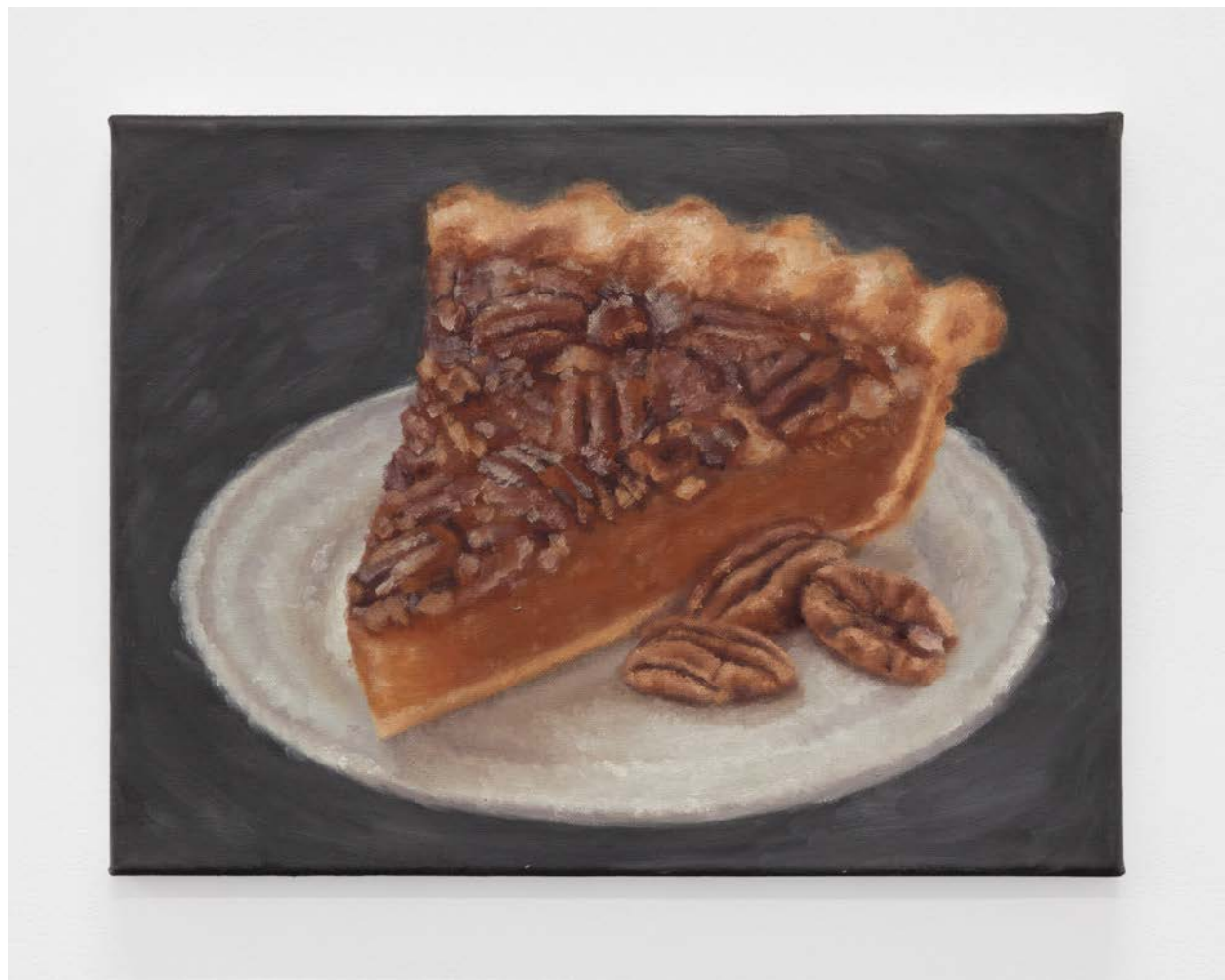
M is for Milk, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-2313



N is for Nest, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-2314



O is for Olives, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-2315



P is for Pie, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-2316



Q is for Quill, 2023
Oil on canvas
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm)
SL-2317



R is for Rabbit, 2023
Oil on canvas
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm)
SL-2318



S is for Snail, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-2319



T is for Teddy, 2023
Oil on canvas
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm)
SL-2320



U is for Underwear, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-2321



V is for Vest, 2023
Oil on canvas
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm)
SL-2322



W is for Wig, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-2323



X is for X-Ray, 2023
Oil on canvas
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm)
SL-2324



Y is for Year, 2023
Oil on canvas
12 x 16 in (30.5 x 40.6 cm)
SL-2325



Z is for Zebra Print Bag, 2023
Oil on canvas
16 x 12 in (40.6 x 30.5 cm)
SL-2326

Stephanie Ligeti
b. 1988 Toronto, CA
Lives and works in Vienna, AT

Education

2021 BFA, Drawing and Painting, OCAD University, Toronto, CA

Solo Exhibitions

2024 *P is for Painting*, Franz Kaka, Toronto, CA

Selected Group Exhibitions

2023 *Solitude*, XIAN, Vienna, AT

2023 Plural Art Fair, Pangée, Montreal, CA

2022 NADA Miami, In Lieu, Miami, US

2022 *a somewhat thin line*, In Lieu, Los Angeles, US

2021 *moveObjects On*, the plumb, Toronto, CA

2021 *Fresh Paint / New Construction*, Art Mûr, Montreal, CA

2021 *Autoethnography*, Bau-Xi Gallery, Toronto, CA

2021 *Graduate Exhibition*, OCAD University, Toronto, CA

2021 *Chaos Reigns*, Virtual thesis exhibition, Toronto, CA

2020 *Festival of the Body*, OCAD University, Toronto, CA

2018 *bio/power*, Ada Slight Gallery, Toronto, CA

Awards

2021 Mrs. W.O. Forsyth Award, OCAD University

2019 Marsh Urquhart Memorial Scholarship, OCAD University

For inquiries or to request additional information please contact fk@franzkaka.com