

## **JULIA GARCIA**

*SLOW BURN*

MARCH 29 - MAY 4, 2024

GAA GALLERY NEW YORK

Gaa Gallery is pleased to present *Slow Burn*, a solo exhibition of new works by Julia Garcia. The exhibition features a series of paintings and works on paper that examine the power structures of nostalgia and desire. The exhibition opens on Friday, March 29 with a reception from 6 to 8 pm. *Slow Burn* is Garcia's first solo show with the gallery and in New York City.

In this suite of paintings by Julia Garcia, the American Dream seems to be wavering in and out of focus. The images hum with a peculiar familiarity, invoking the ubiquitous stock photography of advertisements which underpin idyllic traditional interactions and values—a girl is fitted for shoes in a store, a group of students gather with text books around a globe. The photographic source material is drawn from ads, stock photos, magazine clippings, and thrifted family photo albums. Garcia offers them up for questioning on the canvas, and the effect is one of subjects that seem to be lodged in time, moments that feel recognized if not personally experienced. There is something ulterior emerging from the paintings however, as questions of power and authority arise from the dynamics between figures, and from the motivations of these constructed fantasies. In *Slow Burn*, Garcia embraces the gradual reveal and opacity of time, evoking the many layers of meaning contained within visual ephemera.

Each painting starts with an image. Using ink, dye, and acrylic paint on canvas, the medium's fluidity is accentuated with controlled bleeds, chance happenings, saturated swaths, and blurred boundaries between forms. The process in the beginning is nearly collage-like as the canvas is marked off with tape, forming blocks of shapes and negative space. Water-soluble crayon is then drawn onto the taped lines to further map out the composition. In an act of incision, areas of the tape are cut out and removed, further defining each form. The absence of the line and boundaries between forms produces tension. There is a give and take of saturation and dissolve, fuzzy edges, and hard lines.

Garcia's work engages the material properties of painting as well as the history of the medium. The psychological impetus of painting, with its directness and legacies of story-telling, together with the medium's ongoing developments alongside other novel technologies is chronicled in Garcia's work. Influenced by painters such as Luc Tuymans and Marlene Dumas, Garcia employs photography not to do the job of a photograph but as an act of witness. Through this process, nostalgic images are reanimated while remaining true to their past, ideals, hopes, aspirations, failures, and deceptions.

The images in *Slow Burn* feel simultaneously of and distinctly not of this time. The past lingers within the universality of Garcia's images, offering the guise of another time. This ambiguous moment in time offers an escape to a simpler era seemingly outside of ours, and it's also a trap. Garcia's work bears witness to the past and its intersections with contemporary life by reworking and making contact with images mediated through both the individual in the form of domestic snapshots as well as larger entities and power structures of advertising, entertainment, and consumerism. Garcia's work prompts a novel framework where a new system of meanings is applied to familiar images, offering a second look at idealism, tradition, and systems of value.

**Julia Garcia** (b. 1992, Born in Pompano Beach, FL, USA) received her BFA from the School of Visual Art in 2014 and her MFA in 2016 from the Hoffberger School of Painting at Maryland Institute College of Art. Garcia had her first institutional solo exhibition in 2023 at NW9 in Cologne, Germany. Other solo exhibitions have been held at Night Club Gallery, St. Paul, MN; King Abdullah University of Science and Technology, Thuwal, Saudi Arabia; Lazarus Center, Baltimore, MD; Galerie Fran Reus, Palma de Mallorca, Spain; and Gaa Gallery, New York, NY. Garcia has been included in recent group exhibitions at Hair + Nails, Minneapolis, MN; Gaa Gallery, New York, NY; Night Club Gallery, Minneapolis, MN; and O'Flaherty's, New York, NY.