

Jo Messer

Table Wear

April 10 - May 25, 2024

Morán Morán is pleased to announce Jo Messer's solo exhibition, *Table Wear*, marking the artist's first show with the gallery and first time showing in Mexico City. This exhibition presents a new series of over 20 paintings, all oil on panel or canvas, ranging in size from large to small-scale, which illustrate classical subjects of female figuration and still-life. Through her visual style of melding realism with abstraction, and using various techniques of paint application and coloration, Messer delivers images that shift in perception.

The artist's largest paintings in the exhibition depict female forms with exaggerated body parts, notably oversized legs, knees, and feet. The figures all share the same hairstyle of a top knot bun and together they are perched on tables within interior spaces. In one fuschia-hued piece, titled *Ascorbic Heat (2024)*, the women occupy table space with plates of cherries and pomegranates. Overall, it is unclear if these paintings represent a singular woman captured in time lapse, or if these are multiple women grouped together in similarity. In previous works, Messer used the edge of the canvas as an imposed boundary for her subjects, but in this new series she presents them within a different container, a compositional tool that is open but still confining.

Messer's paintings make use of layered paint, and in most cases a limited value range, leaning toward monochromatic. Her technique of building the medium results in a sense of delicacy and transparency, and the limited value range adds depth to the compositions by emphasizing contrast. This approach amplifies the mood and fragility of the paintings by evoking a sense of mystery or obfuscation, and her use of highlights and shadows brings dimensionality and life to her subjects, even though they exist in such murky realms.

In the exhibition's smallest scale works, Messer presents a dozen jewel-like paintings that work through further abstracted figure studies, alongside expressionist still-lives. Here, her method turns romantic, the colors full spectrum, and in several works the surfaces feel lavish and opaque. Influenced by the vibrancy of Mexico City, these intricate paintings reveal the range of Messer's visual acuity and her continued encouragement of conceptual reinterpretation. Her spin on meaning and symbolism, sometimes provocative and at other times humorous, refresh themes of beauty and tradition.

Jo Messer (b. 1991 in Los Angeles, CA) received her BFA from the Cooper Union in 2014, and her MFA from Yale University in 2017. She had a recent solo exhibition at the Rubell Museum, Miami, FL (2022), and has been included in exhibitions at Venus over Manhattan, New York, NY; Sprüth Magers, Berlin, Germany; 56 Henry, New York, NY; and Galerie Hussenot, Paris, France. Her work is included in permanent collections at the Rubell Museum, Miami, FL; The Hill Foundation, New York, NY; The Zabudowicz Collection, London, UK; and The Bunker, Palm Beach, FL.