

Ted Gahl

Lydia Enriquez

Opening Saturday, Sept 14th from 6-8p

On view September 14 - October 12, 2024

Ted Gahl and Lydia Enriquez Discuss Their First Collaborative Show in Los Angeles

Queens, New York, 9:54 PM, September 7th

Ted: Lydia, how have things been in the studio? Maybe you could talk about these scagliola ("scal-yo-lah") wraps you've been making. It's been wonderful to see them coming along.

Lydia: Thanks! The scagliola pieces have been a really fun challenge. It's an ancient decorative technique that involves mixing calcium sulfate dehydrate or gypsum, pigments and hide glue to create surfaces that mimic natural stones. Its primary application was architectural elements such as columns, fireplaces, altars and table tops. I've been researching old recipes and developing my own mixes. The process is very visceral and involves getting the timing just right to allow the raw materials to transform. It's strangely quite similar to cooking.

Ted: I feel like these are pieces of ruins, something found deep in the ground from another time. How do you think about them?

Lydia: Whenever I'm making work in any medium I always seek to remove my hand as much as possible from the work. It's always a goal of mine for the works to feel ambiguous in their time and place. With the scagliola pieces in particular I was hoping to evoke the feeling of architectural fragments or pottery shards. I love when paintings and objects can be open-ended in their associations. I feel like that's an important throughline in both our works.

Ted: I really enjoyed making the collaborative piece we did together. I've always kind of shied away from gold, but I feel like our painting works. I'm very envious of how you use these kinds of materials, these palettes.

Lydia: I thought the collaborative piece came out wonderfully. Because I've watched you paint so much, I started to notice a pattern in how you typically make a painting. I was curious how the work would turn out if I intervened with a different type of material than you might usually gravitate towards. I think you have a tendency to rely on the softness of canvas and the subtlety of dry brushed paint. It was so interesting to see how differently the painting came out with the solidity and slickness of a gold leaf as a substrate. I was really touched by the imagery as well, you painted a particularly sentimental landscape related to us. In my favorite memory of Bee Brook, the sun was like gold on the river, so the leafing on the background seems extra appropriate.

Lydia: Ted, I'm struck by how much your paintings evolve as you paint. Can you speak about how your paintings unfold?

Ted: I always tell other people how jealous I am of artists that kind of have a system, like a very mapped out, predetermined route to an image and then a tightly controlled mode of making it come to fruition. I think a lot of my better work comes from failing, and covering a lot of previous paintings. I add, and then sometimes, a lot of imagery comes out of subtracting and pulling images through layers. I think when it works, I feel like the paintings display a patina indicating some time, a struggle to get there. Of course, this way of making work is awful for deadlines (laughs). But, I think you are who you are, and this is just the way most of these paintings end up being for me.

Lydia: Many of your works in the show are figurative. How do you see the role of the figure in your work?

Ted: I love abstract painting, and I make fully abstract paintings, but I think that for me personally, figures and bodies in situations elicit the most emotion. I don't think it's coincidental that a vast

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majority of the most recognizable paintings in history depict humans and the human condition. I was told by an advisor a few years back that my figurative work was “too sad,” and that their client was going to pass on my work. I was strangely really flattered by that response, that my painting of a person could make someone feel that way. So I see the role of figures in my work as an important one.

Lydia: It's interesting how something as simple as the gesture of a figure can create such an emotional response. Your figures are often ambiguously in repose but could also be interpreted as falling. Why does this gesture come up so frequently?

Ted: A lot of the figurative work in the past few years has been inspired by the death of a family friend who fell from a great height into water. I've also reached some limitations and dealt with recent injuries as I've gotten older. So, I'm thinking about the body bending and contorting as this fragile vessel, whether in air or in water or in between. Thinking about these places in space that the body inhabits.

Ted: I feel like we both talk a lot about color, and we both use specific palettes in our work a lot. How do you come to the palettes you arrive at?

Lydia: In some ways I feel like my palettes are an intrinsic part of my personality, as much as I try to get away from deep greens, earth tones and gold I always find myself returning to familiar territory. It has to do with a longing for nature, and a desire to capture the fleeting moments we encounter. I think that color can also be a vehicle to encapsulate and transmit taste, which I certainly think we both have strong opinions about.

Lydia: What about you?

Ted: I can very much identify with that. I think that nature was such a big part of both of our upbringings, and it's really evident in the color we use. I actually find it hard to sway from the greens and ochres I use, I have to force myself sometimes to branch out. I'm really sensitive to the color I employ in paintings, and the colors I surround myself with in my life outside of the studio. I feel like color makes noise, and I like things a bit quieter.

Ted: Lydia, it's been a few years since you've dedicated this much time to your studio practice, as you've been busy with your business. How has your professional life, and the projects you've worked on, influenced the works and ideas you are presenting in Los Angeles?

Lydia: I'm finding a lot more overlaps than I would have expected previously. In my business we delve deeply into process and technique with each different type of material application, and spend a lot of time workshopping exactly how

to best approach each finish. This level of rigor and criticality in material handling has definitely been an asset in developing the scagliola pieces. I also think my professional life has given me a great sensitivity to materials and understanding on where boundaries can be pushed, but also where traditional processes should be adhered to.

Ted: What is it about the brutally analog that we are so enamored with?

Lydia: For me, analog modes of working represent a slowing down of time and an access to a more mindful state. I think that we both really relish the opportunity to get lost in the connection we form with the work. Attention is such a scarce commodity these days, so it's quite special that our work allows us access to this.

Lydia: It's been really wonderful sharing space with you to make this show. I feel like you've helped me push my work forward by encouraging me to allow the work to be more open and less constrained by my predetermined notions. Are there any final take-aways from working together that you'd like to share?

Ted: It's been great working side by side with you. I really like the feedback we give each other, just really transparent. My take-away is I hope that this is the start of many more collaborations. Looking forward to being with you in Los Angeles, love you.

Ted Gahl and Lydia Enriquez met while Gahl was pursuing a graduate degree, and Enriquez her undergraduate degree, from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2010. They reconnected in 2021, married a year later, and share a studio in Brooklyn, New York. This is their first collaborative exhibition.

Ted Gahl (b.1983) received his BFA from Pratt Institute in 2006 and his MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2010. Gahl has exhibited paintings widely in the United States, Europe, and Asia. Recent exhibitions include MAMOTH, London, UK; Harkawik, Los Angeles and New York; Analog Diary, Beacon, NY; Lindon & Co, London, UK; Alexander Berggruen, New York, NY; Matthew Brown, Los Angeles, CA; Halsey McKay, East Hampton, NY and Freddy, Harris, NY. Gahl is a 2022 recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant.

Lydia Enriquez (b.1989) received her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2011 and her MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2018. In addition to her fine art practice, Lydia is the owner of Studio Lydia Enriquez, a decorative painting firm specializing in bespoke surface finishes for high end commercial and residential interiors.





Shangri-La (In Reverse), 2024

Ted Gahl

Acrylic, graphite, colored pencil on canvas in artist's frame

30 x 40 inches



Sodalite Wrap, 2024

Lydia Enriquez

Plaster of Paris, natural pigments and hide glue on artist plinth

10 x 13 x 9 inches



Figure in Hole, 2024

Ted Gahl

Acrylic, graphite, colored pencil on canvas in artist's frame

30 x 40 inches



Rojo Alicante Wrap No.2, 2024

Lydia Enriquez

Plaster of Paris, natural pigments and hide glue on artist plinth

10 x 13 x 10 inches



Into the Thicket, 2024

Lydia Enriquez

Laser cut watercolor paper, latex paint, mica pigments

80 x 44 inches



Long House, 2024

Ted Gahl

Acrylic, graphite, colored pencil on canvas in artist's frame

40 x 30 inches



After the Island, 2024

Lydia Enriquez

Cotton Twine, gesso, glue, and gold leaf

12' x 23 inches





Kismet, 2024

Ted Gahl

Acrylic, graphite, colored pencil on canvas in artist's frame

30 x 40 inches



Venice Doll, 2024

Ted Gahl

Acrylic, graphite, colored pencil on canvas in artist's frame

30 x 40 inches





Vertigo, 2024

Ted Gahl

Acrylic, graphite, colored pencil on canvas in artist's frame

36 x 48 inches



Bee Brook, 7/24/22, 2024

Ted Gahl/Lydia Enriquez

Acrylic, graphite, 24 karat white gold leaf on panel
24 x 18 inches





Rojo Alicante Wrap No. 1, 2024

Lydia Enriquez

Plaster of Paris, natural pigments and hide glue on artist plinth

10 x 13 x 9 inches



Balanced Wraps, 2024

Lydia Enriquez

Plaster of Paris, natural pigments and hide glue on artist plinth

16 x 13 x 11 inches



Amethyst Wrap, 2024

Lydia Enriquez

Natural pigments and hide glue on artist plinth

11 x 13 x 11 inches



Accrual, 2024

Lydia Enriquez

Plaster, pigment, resin and 24 karat gold leaf on panel

16 x 12 inches



Body as Avenue (Study), 2024

Ted Gahl

Acrylic, graphite, colored pencil, charcoal
on canvas in artist's frame

8 x 10 in / 9.5 x 11.5 in



Sinker, 2024

Ted Gahl

Acrylic, graphite, colored pencil on canvas

10 x 8 inches



Mantra, 2024
Ted Gahl
Acrylic, graphite on canvas
10 x 8 inches



Figure Stuck in Sweater, 2024

Ted Gahl

Acrylic, graphite, colored pencil on canvas

10 x 8 inches



Diver, 2024

Ted Gahl

Acrylic, graphite, colored pencil on canvas

10 x 8 inches



Peponi Dive, 2024

Ted Gahl

Acrylic, graphite, colored pencil on canvas

10 x 8 inches