

# Gaa

## **TRICKSTERS**

**KATJA FARIN**

MARCH 21 - MAY 3, 2025

GAA NEW YORK

Gaa is delighted to present *Tricksters*, a solo exhibition of new works by Katja Farin. Composed of a kaleidoscopic combination of new paintings and ceramic objects, *Tricksters* further communicates Farin's reflection upon and theorization of humanity and human connection, centering cleverly layered narratives which exist somewhere between tangible and intangible realities. *Tricksters* marks Farin's inaugural solo exhibition with Gaa.

Central to recent developments within Farin's conceptual framework, archetypes such as the 'trickster' or the 'troubadour' serve as metaphorical proxies for the ambiguity of perceived versus lived truths inherent in the human experience. Often understood within the hermeneutic context as characters who challenge the status-quo through dextrous combinations of humor, mischief, and cunning, the trickster is heralded as an instigator of disruption and a bringer of change. Farin fittingly employs the trickster as a visual tool in their exploration of social binaries such as gender, sexuality, race, and class, questioning the relevance of specific restrictive methodologies of understanding in provocative defense of a recontextualization of that crucial space in-between.

Farin's choice of color, scale, and iconography plays a critical role in the construction of this third space. Somewhat forlorn figures exhibiting exaggerated bodies, limbs, and extremities exist across all areas of the composition, defying traditional notions or techniques of perspective. Working within a visual schema parallel to that of Proto-Renaissance painters such as Giotto or Duccio, as well as the acclaimed Northern Renaissance painter and 'grandfather' of Surrealism Hieronymus Bosch, Farin's tactful use of registers within the picture plane emphasizes this skewed, distorted perspective and creates vignettes which allude to ideas of fictional and philosophical ideas of time-travel. A vibrant and intentionally non-naturalistic color palette further distracts from the monotony of the mundane, introducing an air of levity and excitement to these almost-familiar scenes.

The consistent inclusion of universally identifiable motifs accentuates the near-reality of the world in which Farin works. Dice and playing cards refer to the ubiquity of chance, ambiguity, and luck, while the paper doll chain communicates the desire for connection and belonging and their inherent association with fragility and vulnerability. The Morning Star quilt pattern recalls the ascribed astral associations between the heavens and the earth, believed to create pathways across space and time. Such connections are underscored by the presence of Farin's ceramic objects. Adorned with spikes and thorns and meant to be encountered both in the round and on the wall, these pieces poke and prod to reveal psychological blind spots as their glazed and mirrored surfaces reflect not only the surrounding paintings, but also the viewer themselves.

The resulting environment is one that is grounded in a semblance of reality, but suggests something otherworldly. Farin places the audience in a world of their own making, their paintings functioning as portals which provide transportation out of the realm of the real and into a parallel place – a place where one might hide in plain sight and become a trickster in their own right.

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**Katja Farin** (b. 1996, Los Angeles, CA) works in figurative painting depicting the interactions between the subconscious and reality. The relationship between figures is uncertain; the everyday life of sitting at coffee shops, wandering in backyard gardens, answering boring phone calls becomes the backdrop for the internal dialogue with the self that contemplates traumas, coping mechanisms, dreams and distortions. The works are dream spaces that allow the viewer to peek into the interior worlds of the figures, their relationships with the self and others. Bright colors, glowing hands and distorted bodies create the dreamlike dysphoric space that these androgynous figures embody.

Farin received a BA in Fine Art from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2018 and is a candidate for an MFA degree from the Slade School of Fine Art in London. Selected solo exhibitions have been held at Gaa, New York; Friends Indeed, San Francisco; Era Gallery, Milan; Lubov, New York; and in lieu, Los Angeles. Their art has been included in group exhibitions at Pace Gallery, Hong Kong; Alexander Berggruen, New York; Beers, London; Wilding Cran, Los Angeles; and Nicodim, Los Angeles. The artist lives and works in London, UK.