

dépendance

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ALLISON KATZ
CODEPENDENCE
23 April - 31 May, 2025

Press Release

Codependence navigates emotional entanglements, historical echoes, and the weight of context. From personal history to art history, from Magritte's long shadow over Brussels to the gallery's own architecture and name, every element will become a metaphor for enmeshment. The exhibition considers unseen forces that bind, revealing how images, spaces, and relationships mutually shape and reflect one another. With humor and tension, the works bring hidden dynamics to the surface, questioning where autonomy ends and influence begins.

The name of the gallery, *dépendance*, emerged from the founders' aversion to the old-fashioned tone of Callies-Jaax Gallery and a desire to reject the myth of artistic independence—especially within a commercial context. The term also hinted at a network of interconnected spaces around the world, challenging the notion of singularity or autonomy. Building on these ideas, the works in *Codependence* explore the dynamics of relational tension through formal disruptions and symbolic motifs, articulating a constant negotiation between visibility and concealment, intimacy and distance. Whether through the quiet resistance of a turned nude, the architecture of a lift, or the cyclical return of the pig and sprout, Katz investigates how meaning is shaped by repetition, distortion, and emotional complexity. Here, painting becomes more than image-making—it becomes a site of psychological inquiry.

The exhibition opens with the pressed faces of a baby latching in *First Attachment (Left)* and *First Attachment (Right)*. Parental bonds lay the foundation for future codependent patterns, tender yet inescapable. Katz considers these early childhood memories (whether remembered or not) as the first source material.

The primal theme continues in *Wild Pig (First Painting)*, which references a 45,000-year-old cave painting, which has recently been identified as the earliest known example of figurative art. It nods to the gallery's address on Rue du Marché aux Porcs ('pig market'). The pig, intelligent and enduring, becomes a totem of both historical persistence and economic entanglement.

In *Co-Creation*, Katz reimagines art historical representations of the nude, notably Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus* and Manet's *Olympia*. Two large black ovals interrupt the composition, acting as eyes or portals, and the figure, seen from the back, eludes the viewer's gaze. This act of withholding resists objectification, transforming the painting into a site of quiet refusal.

With *Deadline*, Katz confronts the pressures of creation, depicting the act of painting as an urgent release. The painting is framed by a series of disembodied eyes, borrowed from a Picabia painting and adorned with blue eyeshadow—the gaze of another painter, another era, reanimated through Katz's hand. The use of initials A K points to the artist's 'signature' as both a mark of identity and a graphic design, collapsing authorship into ornament.

A 1:1 scale depiction of the lift inside the residential entrance that bisects the gallery space, *Elevator IV (dépendance)* turns a communal space into a solitary experience. Installed virtually back to back with the actual elevator, the work alludes to painting itself—layered, transitional, and contingent on context. The addendum '*Depends on...*' is a reproduction of the elevator's mirror. As a portrait of gallerist and artist, it highlights how their relationship operates through reliance and exchange; while playfully infringing on the self-reflective motif of the artist's self-portrait in a mirror.

Spring break disrupts the cock motif Katz has been experimenting with for over a decade, depicting a hen for the first time. She playfully challenges the codependence on motifs for which an artist becomes known, twisting recognisability into new possibilities. Inside the belly of the bird, Katz uses anamorphosis to distort a figure from her previous paintings, an avatar of the artist which was inspired by one of the adolescent boys in Degas' *Young Spartans Exercising*. The title *Spring break* points to multiple temporalities at once: the current change in season, a sudden movement forward, a rupture in form or a return to the source from where things originate.

The End of Analysis pits a parsnip against the Shard, one of Europe's tallest skyscrapers, juxtaposing nature and artifice; what remains buried with what attempts to touch the sky. It reflects Katz's interest in how we build worlds, both literally and metaphorically—and plays on the idea of the "roots" of civilization and its discontents.

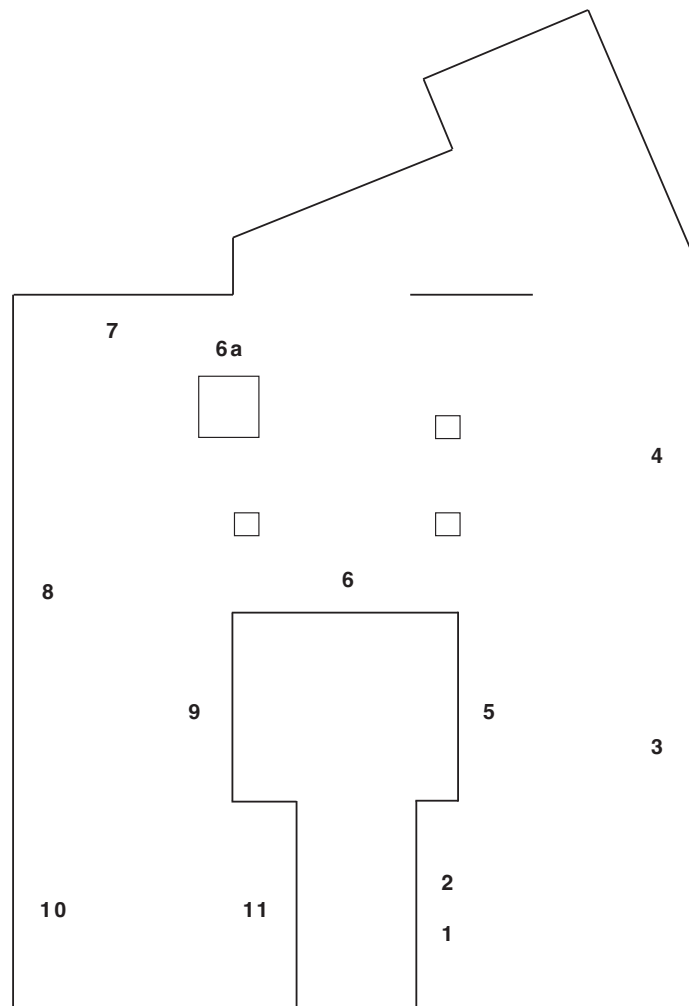
A new series *Brussels sprout (and Philip)* combines the humble vegetable with a silhouetted profile, transforming a still-life into a portrait. This pairing challenges traditional notions of portraiture and identity, suggesting that even the most mundane objects can carry profound personal significance. The Brussels sprout, native to this city, introduces a layer of site-specificity, reinforcing Katz's interest in the interplay between place, language, and meaning—echoing Magritte's strategies of unexpected surrealism.

The Great Below is a painting of the gallery's basement, evoking unseen structures—emotional, institutional, architectural. The painting sets up an abstract orientation that contradicts the horizon by looking up, and through or beyond the frame.

Together the works in *Codependence* resist resolution with symbols that continue to expand. Across works that shift between humor and gravity, Katz invites us to consider the limits of independence and the profound, often uneasy but crucial power of connection.

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|--|---|
| 1 <i>First Attachment (Left)</i>
2025
gouache on paper
35.7 x 28.2 x 3 cm (framed)
14 x 11 1/8 x 1 1/8 in (framed) | 6a <i>'Depends on...'</i>
2025
acrylic on linen
40 x 15.5 x 2.5 cm
15 3/4 x 6 1/8 x 1 in |
| 2 <i>First Attachment (Right)</i>
2025
gouache on paper
35.7 x 28.2 x 3 cm (framed)
14 x 11 1/8 x 1 1/8 in (framed) | 7 <i>Spring break</i>
2025
acrylic and sand on linen
150 x 140 x 4 cm
59 x 55 1/8 x 1 5/8 in |
| 3 <i>Wild Pig (First Painting)</i>
2025
acrylic on linen
51 x 71 x 2.2 cm
20 1/8 x 28 x 7/8 in | 8 <i>The End of Analysis</i>
2025
oil on linen
250 x 55 x 4 cm
98 3/8 x 21 5/8 x 1 5/8 in |
| 4 <i>Co-Creation</i>
2025
oil and sand on canvas
90 x 180 x 4 cm
35 3/8 x 70 7/8 x 1 5/8 in | 9 <i>Brussels sprout (and Philip) No. 2</i>
2025
oil on linen
41 x 35.5 x 2.2 cm
16 1/8 x 14 x 7/8 in |
| 5 <i>Deadline</i>
2025
oil and sand on canvas
47.5 x 190 x 4 cm
18 3/4 x 74 3/4 x 1 5/8 in | 10 <i>Brussels sprout (and Philip) No. 4</i>
2025
oil on linen
42.5 x 41 x 2.2 cm
16 3/4 x 16 1/8 x 7/8 in |
| 6 <i>Elevator IV (dépendance)</i>
2025
acrylic on linen
210 x 100 x 4 cm
82 5/8 x 39 3/8 x 1 5/8 in | 11 <i>The Great Below</i>
2025
oil on canvas
150 x 140 x 4 cm
59 x 55 1/8 x 1 5/8 in |