

# Franz Kaka

Fran Williams

*Heartbreaks*

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May 30—June 28, 2025

Franz Kaka is pleased to announce Fran Williams first solo exhibition with the gallery, *Heartbreaks*.

Fran Williams is a Montreal-based painter whose work deals with the on-canvas contestation between abstraction and figuration. In *Heartbreaks*, Williams is compelled by the expressive, and at times, destructive force of desire. The works are not thematic or narrative; they're not *about* love or heartbreak. Rather, they respond to the heart's drive to liquify itself and transform what's in its path. They are created from desire as a mode of working, relating, and feeling, and seek, in their own ways, to anchor in that same place in the viewer.

This work sprung from the artists' winter reading of *Anti-Oedipus*, and in particular on Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of desire as productive in and of itself, rather than lack or absence of the wanted object only. Desire is a force that both creates and transforms, often rather painfully, what it moves through. "I'm thinking of desiring-production as love—love as a force that can drive you to ruin your life and re-orient what you thought you wanted," Williams says.

The works in the exhibition speak to the heart in different ways. Representationally, we see hearts, the pumping engine. Metaphorically, the liquidity of the paint becomes a stand-in for blood. In her painting, Williams seeks to unleash the maximal expressive force of desire, while simultaneously tamping it down with the active editing of composition. Inspired by William Blake's figures that seem to emanate from the surface of the canvas, the works in *Heartbreaks* also have figures that reach through. The artist refers to these recurring figures as the "eternal girl." Like a Christmas tree-topper, the girl is both the salve and the counterforce that arrives toward the end, appearing through the abstraction and the undoing force of heartbreak.

— Kate Whiteway, 2025

Fran Williams (b. 1996, Châteauguay, CA) is a painter based in Montréal. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Concordia University, with a major in Painting & Drawing. Williams' work deals with the middle-space of the abstraction/figuration dichotomy. While she considers herself an abstract painter, her works often suggest letters or text, teetering on the edge of readability. Similarly, figures begin to appear but often fall short of becoming representational forms. Other times, they do become readable as figures, taking the form of ethereal girls and women. Their presence is communicated in an interrupted visual language, where the girls fall back into abstraction. Williams recently took part in a two person exhibition with Espace Maurice at Pangée in Montréal, presented a solo exhibition at an off-site venue curated by Alexa Hawksworth, and realised a two person exhibition at Espace Maurice in Montréal.