

Is this a press release. I think not. It is an existence. The artist tells me they were born in 1984, an auspicious year, in New York, a commotional place and it is their first solo show. Currently they are living most of the year in Frankfurt because they are studying painting at the Staedelschule school and will complete that in 2017. Though I've known this painter less than ten years but more than five I've always been aware of Eliza Douglas as a tall androgynous American female with a quietly radiant mission that's getting planned in the interior of them.

I, myself, was doing a gig at Staedelschule school last winter and since we are friends I went to Eliza Douglas's studio. They showed me a video they had made of the poet Dorothea Lasky who was reading her work and I think there may have been a trap door out of which the apparitional poet stepped out and declaimed. Maybe it is because I am a poet that I thought it but I felt that Dorothea Lasky was a devil stepping out of hell and I was very aware that Eliza Douglas had created the bright doorway through which the devil might come. And go. In Eliza's studio I thought about bodies and how they are mysterious, vanishing, chimerical, always surprising. As I write this my own body must be here but I am as free of it as I ever am right now. I wonder if Eliza Douglas thought of herself as a super hero when they made this work.

I think of that comic-book character who elongated his arms at will, rescuing people, wrapping his stretchy limbs around a thief and making a smart remark like not so fast big guy. Comic super heroes are always both funny & noir, an American tone. Eliza's humble fantastic paintings don't strike me as particularly American work. They are as jokey like the poet springing out of the door because a painting historically is made by a hand and yet Eliza Douglas hired other painters to render the perfect Caucasian hands; perhaps a pair of frank feet also root her impossible and witty structure in the ground. The paint streak that Eliza Douglas makes next that is sprouting from the hands is genital in its muscular reach, a dumb fountain in the middle of the park portraying nothing but the ambition to spout water, passionately wondering if it is enough yet magical in its simplicity, in its enigmatic act: to be, and to deliberately appear as something human, a letter, deranged, but activated by a wish to put "hand" to paint. I can talk about one painting or all her paintings but whatever I do, they sizzle expectantly because these paintings are the youngest, coolest and the most antique. At once. What they've got is the wish to make art; unabashedly connecting this to that, employing the robotics of paint to start painting. These paintings make me want to laugh because they are all joy. They pulled it off, tricking the puppet of painting into coming alive again with so much less than you'd expect could do so much. It's good to be here. We are standing in Eliza Douglas's humble and iridescent new show. It is quest itself. It begins in the darkness of the cave and is waking up. Like the poet they are stepping out. All around the painter is day - a baby cries at the start but an adult laughs. I hear that laughter now. Yep

they s-t-r-e-tc-h and they're up. What a day!

Eileen Myles

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