

# GAGOSIAN

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Louise Bonnet to Exhibit New Paintings at Gagosian in New York

30 *Ghosts* Opens November 8, 2023

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Louise Bonnet, *Figure Holding an Orange*, 2023, oil on linen, 60 × 72 inches (152.4 × 182.9 cm) © Louise Bonnet

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**NEW YORK, September 26, 2023**—Gagosian is pleased to announce *30 Ghosts*, an exhibition of ten new paintings by Louise Bonnet opening on November 8, 2023, at 541 West 24th Street in New York. This is the Los Angeles–based artist’s first exhibition with the gallery in New York since *The Hours* at Park & 75 in 2020.

“Behind every man now alive stand thirty ghosts, for that is the ratio by which the dead outnumber the living.” Bonnet cites the opening lines of Arthur C. Clarke’s sci-fi classic *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) as an inspiration for her new exhibition’s title and theme.

In *30 Ghosts* she is concerned with the lives that precede and follow our own—each the center of its own personal universe, like connected chain links—and with ideas of continuity and the future. The works on view in New York also confront the specter of death through structural and emblematic references to seventeenth-century Dutch still-life painting, contrasting the vanitas symbols of flowers, fruit, and rich drapery with the artist’s more familiar bound and bloated human bodies. Some of these new compositions also incorporate renderings of short lengths of wood into their images of distorted nudes. The interpolation of these blunt objects into Bonnet’s unique *mise-en-scènes* alludes to movie and television actors’ use of “marks” to record their positions between takes for the sake of continuity, and to photographic models’ use of supports when spending extended periods in single poses.

While Bonnet's representations of gender and bodily function exhibit a dreamlike exaggeration, they also reveal an awareness of how established artistic themes and iconographies are rendered more complex—and more troubling—by present-day associations. The flower in her painting *Red Spider Lily* (all works 2023), for example, functions as a symbol of separation, loss, and death, but also (as it does in China, Korea, and Nepal) of reincarnation and the afterlife. The hand in *Enchanter's Nightshade*, meanwhile, connotes witchcraft and sorcery by making the “fig sign”—a gesture in which the thumb is wedged between the first two fingers—to ward off the evil eye.

Hands and (dirty) feet recur prominently throughout *30 Ghosts* as metaphors for hard labor and animal urges, the foot in particular acting as a reminder that while ghosts, gods, and saints have historically been depicted as unmoored from gravity, our bodies remain firmly tethered to the earthly plane. In *Lemon and Foot*, the appendage is accompanied by a signifier of wealth that also offers protection from scurvy. As occurs elsewhere in Bonnet's recent work, the legs and other parts of her figures—Pinocchio-esque extended noses included—are sheathed in pantyhose. This tight covering tints the subjects' flesh in a way that, in conjunction with the wood blocks, emphasizes its changeable, vulnerable physicality.

The paintings in *30 Ghosts* follow on from two canvases that Bonnet exhibited earlier this year in a joint intervention with her husband, ceramicist Adam Silverman, at Hollyhock House, Frank Lloyd Wright's first major architectural project in California and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In *30 Ghosts*, she again imagines a future haunted by lingering, corporeal remnants of the past.

The artist will be in conversation with Stefanie Hessler, director of Swiss Institute, New York, at the gallery on November 15 at 6:30pm. For more information, please contact [programs@gagosian.com](mailto:programs@gagosian.com).

**Louise Bonnet** was born in 1970 in Geneva, and lives and works in Los Angeles. Collections include Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Brunswick, Maine; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Museum Brandhorst, Munich; Long Museum, Shanghai; Longlati Foundation, Shanghai; Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai; and Yuz Foundation, Shanghai. Exhibitions include *Entanglements: Louise Bonnet and Adam Silverman at Hollyhock House*, Hollyhock House, Los Angeles (2023). Bonnet's painting *Pisser Triptych* (2022) was included in *The Milk of Dreams*, curated by Cecilia Alemani at the 59th Biennale di Venezia (2022).

#LouiseBonnet

## **LOUISE BONNET**

*30 Ghosts*

Opening reception: Wednesday, November 8, 6–8pm

November 8–December 22, 2023

541 West 24th Street, New York

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