

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

NEW YORK | ASPEN

SUBLIME SPIRIT

OPENING RECEPTION: THURSDAY, JUNE 20 | 6–8 PM

ON VIEW: JUNE 20 – JULY 26, 2024

507 West 24th Street, New York, NY



Luiza Gottschalk, *Summer*, 2023. Mixed media on canvas, 67 x 56 1/8 inches, 170.2 x 142.6 cm

*Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting -
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.*

– Mary Oliver

NEW YORK, NY – Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Sublime Spirit*, a summer group exhibition organized by Marianne Boesky. Featuring work by 12 artists from around the world, *Sublime Spirit* explores the animal urge to give oneself over to nature, to retreat from society and return to an arcadia of one's own imagining.

Featuring new work—all made within the past three years—by Nicola Bailey, Kim Booker, Mirela Cabral, Hadi Falapishi, Luiza Gottschalk, Thalita Hamaoui, Jay Heikes, Oliver Hemsley, Dora Jeridi, Nathalie Khayat, Antonio Ballester Moreno, and Mari Ra, *Sublime Spirit* examines the innately human desire to escape the world we have made. Drawing on the awe of 18th-century Romanticism and the reverence of 19th-century Transcendentalism, these 12 artists imagine the viscerality of the wild in contemporary terms. In these landscapes—conjured from memory or imagination, rendered in dynamic, expressionistic gestures or careful,

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considered geometries—the natural world perpetuates itself, overtaking any lingering traces of the man-made, calling to the fore the awesome power of the wild.

Rendering abstracted landscapes in simplified, geometric terms, **Antonio Ballester Moreno** (b. 1977; Madrid, Spain) and **Mari Ra** (b. 1996; São Paulo, Brazil) allude to the inherent, innate logic of nature. Borrowing the visual language of Geometric Abstraction, Ballester Moreno captures the rising—or perhaps setting—sun against gradations of color moving along multiple horizon lines. With a small-scale sculpture, Ballester Moreno brings his celestial geometry into the round, but the flat-plate forms—suns and moons—remain starkly two-dimensional. Building landscapes out of simplified, undefinable shapes, Ra gives dimension to negative space, alluding to the unseen, inner workings of the natural world.

Expressionistic in their approach to the natural world, **Luiza Gottschalk** (b. 1984; São Paulo, Brazil), **Mirela Cabral** (b. 1992; Salvador, Brazil), **Thalita Hamaoui** (b. 1981; São Paulo, Brazil), and **Nathalie Khayat** (b. 1966; Beirut, Lebanon) deploy rich colors and dynamic gestures in immersive landscapes and organic forms. In a suite of paintings tied to the seasons—*Spring*, *Summer*, *Fall*, and *Winter*—Gottschalk captures the constant, perpetual reinvention in the elements as the seasons progress. In the work of Cabral and Hamaoui, otherworldly plant matters form strange jungles that overtake any last traces of the human world. With the undulating, organic forms of her porcelain vessels, Khayat evokes the dualities of nature—violence and calm, growth and decay, life and death.

Kim Booker (b. 1983; United Kingdom), **Dora Jeridi** (b. 1988; Paris, France), and **Jay Heikes** (b. 1975; Princeton, NJ) imbue their landscapes with a palpable, existential anxiety. In Booker's monumental paintings, sketchy female figures melt into the underbrush—as if they desire to return to the earth. Through her vivid use of color and nearly violent use of line, Jeridi's paintings reflect an overwhelming, uncontained anxiety—about both society and the planet—manifesting as a desire to return to nature. Expressing a visceral unease about the future of the planet, Heikes allows familiar nature elements to morph into one another—desert vegetation becomes a coral reef becomes a dramatic mountain range, all underneath a strange, gaseous sun—in a new painting, Heikes's anodized aluminum lily pads seem to decay before our very eyes.

In the work of **Nicola Bailey** (b. 1965; Durban, South Africa), **Hadi Falapishi** (b. 1987; Tehran, Iran), and **Oliver Hemsley** (b. 1987; Ely, Cambridgeshire, England), the sublime manifests in the tender bonds between humans and animals. In both paintings and bronze sculptures, Bailey captures sleeping dogs with unspeakable tenderness. The expressive—nearly childlike—animals in Falapishi's canvases and ceramic vessels speak to the unaffected awe with which young people experience nature. From Hemsley's richly textured near-abstractions, tender moments emerge—a dog carefully holding a fish in its mouth, a human hand delicately caressing a dog's paw—speaking to the unbreakable bonds between the realm of animal and that of human.

"Wherever we look," poet Maxine Kumin once wrote of the late poet Mary Oliver, "we find Oliver reaching for the unattainable while grateful for its unattainability. She stands quite comfortably on the margins of things, on the line between earth and sky, the thin membrane that separates human from what we loosely call animal." The artists of *Sublime Spirit* do much the same in their longing for a connection to the wild—perhaps even hearkening back to some distant shared memory of when we were all one. Ultimately, *Sublime Spirit* reminds us that humans, too, belong to the natural world, that this wilderness we long for also longs for us—calling to us, as Oliver writes, like the wild geese.

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