



Dora Jeridi. *Keep Talking*, 2024. Oil and oil stick on canvas. 98 7/16 x 82 11/16 inches. Photographer: Guillaume Ziccarelli. ©Dora Jeridi / ADAGP, Paris & ARS, New York 2024. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.



Dora Jeridi. *Lonely Child*, 2024. Oil, oil stick, and charcoal on canvas. 98 1/2 x 78 3/4 inch. Photographer: Guillaume Ziccarelli. ©Dora Jeridi / ADAGP, Paris & ARS, New York 2024. Courtesy of the artist and Perrotin.

DORA JERIDI *HUMANITY*

January 11 – February 19, 2025

Perrotin New York is pleased to present *Humanity*, an exhibition of new paintings by Dora Jeridi, marking her first solo exhibition with the gallery. Jeridi's figures are simultaneously universal and deeply personal. In this new body of work, the artist captures an ambiguity between vulnerability and strength, between a febrile state and the expression of power, inviting us to consider what makes our humanity. Without providing answers, Jeridi encourages us to dwell in uncertainty, to explore the spaces where meaning remains both elusive and profound.

"A word silent yet eager for expression."
— Jean-François Lyotard [*Translation provided by Dora Jeridi*]

"What condition must be created so that this or that mute phenomenon may begin to speak, to recount the pain and the accidents of, and the withdrawal into, its inaccessibility—which is to say, our pain at our inability to reach it?"
—Nicholas Abraham, *Rhythms* [*De l'oeuvre, de la traduction, et de la psychanalyse*], 1985

Dora Jeridi finds words troubling. Reflective less of ineptitude than of the frustrations with language, she is a painter who is

suspicious of how words can be used to pin down and harden meaning. Paintings may not utter words, but they, too, can speak; like dreams, they can break into parts and contradict the will of the painter and of its own objecthood. In this exhibition, titled *Humanity*, fragmented bodies and distorted limbs emerge from a sea of expressive brushwork, the detailed renderings contrasting with the bold emergency of Jeridi's gestures.

Paintings make jokes, as Jeridi's do—in her work, the line between the operatic and comic is, as in life, thin. The outline of a disembodied bobblehead dominates the painterly composition of *Lonely Child* (all works 2024), contrasting with the twee patterning on the figure's pants that recall a schoolchild's bored doodling. The pathos of the figure in *Silent* is similarly punctuated by a floating Reebok sneaker rendered in oil stick while a cartoon foot screeches out of *Howling Horses*, inlaid within an apocalyptic implosion of form and graffiti, like a doozey Looney Toons rendering of *Guernica*. In spite of their muteness, the careful listener might hear the speech of a painting that is blocked, helpless, and repetitive, demanding a freedom it can't yet have. Paintings can scream or cry, dazzled and horrified, and make you laugh while you stumble and trip in the space between understanding.

Jeridi knows that the calcification of language can lead to the calcification of relations, and as such she chooses to relinquish control, letting her visual speech pour out in ways that get lost in detail and digression. Jeridi references the music of Coltrane, jazz, and improvisation to describe her artistic process—errancy, contradiction, and the fluid logic of intuition and uncertainty dominate over the rationale of sequencing and plotting. Originally trained as a political historian, Jeridi arrived at painting as a refuge from the world of discourse, concerned with the difference between word and image. She began her art training with a Spanish painter who spoke in a translated French; from him, she learned to harness the shadows and suggestive power of earthy browns in the classical lineage of Velázquez, Titian, and el Greco. For this show, she began with the tonalities of color rather than of form, and the resulting palette—buoyant, pop, and rendered in a symphony of spray paint, charcoal, ballpoint, oil stick, and acrylic—now atonally brighten and balance the broken limbs that populate her pictures, and mark her departure from the shades she learned from the Old Masters.

In Hungarian psychoanalyst Nicolas Abraham's 1985 book *Rhythms: On the Work, Translation, and Psychoanalysis*, he brings together the areas of phenomenological poetics with a theory of translation; for him, translation is always a self-referential fiction that never fully reveals or exhausts itself. Language is what distinguishes humanity from other forms of life, an invention-discovery intended to settle the irresolvable condition of human lack and excess; we are constituted by language, yet it is made invisible to us by its very ubiquity. Jeridi's personal idiom is one of devouring human rhythms and variations, pushing, playing, and dissolving, like the syncopations of breath and the pulsions of the body. Hers is a creative process of forming continuities at points of discontinuity, where the geographic lines between languages themselves are unstable and constantly in flux. The work stands back, puns, circles, and fizzles, while taking on a life of its own. Jeridi dreams of creating new grammatical structures, a new alphabet, committed to the pleasures and freedoms of misunderstandings, and translation and distortion in service not of truth, but rather of desire and possibility.

- Hiji Nam