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Gagosian to Present Julie Curtiss's First Exhibition in New York with the Gallery

***UNREAL* Opens on November 10 at 541 West 24th Street**



Julie Curtiss, *Makeover*, 2026, oil and acrylic on canvas, 48 × 60 inches (121.9 × 152.4 cm) © Julie Curtiss. Photo: Lance Brewer

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NEW YORK, October 8, 2026—Gagosian is pleased to present *UNREAL*, an exhibition of new paintings by Julie Curtiss. Opening on November 10 at 541 West 24th Street, this is the gallery's first presentation of Curtiss's work in New York.

Curtiss's stylized figures are positioned so their faces remain obscured, while the paintings' cropped compositions of isolated body parts construct an overarching narrative of humanistic observation and sly humor. Set in a metropolitan fever dream of intimate apartment interiors, laundromats, bodegas, and a fortune teller's window, this body of work examines life in New York City, reflecting on identity, gender, and aging with a pervasive feeling of unreality. "Nothing feels real right now," Curtiss observes. "It's not even surreal, just the feeling that nothing can be trusted. We are bombarded with fake everything, AI everything, infiltrating our lives and our sense of reality."

In *Makeover* (2026), two women on the street become symbols of luxury clad in fur coats, sunglasses, and postoperative compression face masks. Shown from behind, their identities are concealed by indications of age and class, injecting the scene with an air of mystery. Curtiss devotes careful

attention to the patterns and textures of her subjects' hair, coats, and accessories, mimicking the way women with means exhibit autonomy through grooming and self-care rituals.

Throughout her practice, Curtiss creates uncanny connections between humanity and nature. In *Shoots* (2026), she depicts a seated seminude woman in profile, lit from below in the shallow space between a houseplant and a wall. Leaning forward with her head down, her fingers comb her hair as both figure and foreground merge to cast a fantastical shadow of downward posture and upward growth upon a lush green gradient. Elsewhere in the exhibition, Curtiss pays homage to Impressionist traditions, rendering a woman with a parasol in *Before the Storm* (2026). She filters this art historical reference through a contemporary lens with subtly conflicting perspectives, introducing levity by inverting the umbrella with a gust of wind.

The tightly cropped *Dirty Laundry* (2026) stages an exchange between a man and woman before a row of washing machines. By limiting our glimpse of the couple, Curtiss guides the viewer to glean the inherent tension of this encounter, strategically emphasizing the two opposing sets of formal shoes standing on a checkerboard floor that are framed within a three-stage progression of the wash. In *Kitchen Appendages* (2026), the geometry of tiles and appliances in a tightly designed kitchen contrasts with layered appeals to the senses via pressure-cooker steam, the wafting scents from the open oven and a pie on a windowsill, slightly parted pink curtains, and a partially visible aproned figure. Positioning the viewer before these private moments, these paintings call into question the roles of the observer and observed.

The only beings with unobscured faces are the animals that populate *UNREAL*, each functioning as an enigmatic symbol and projection of a psychological state. In *Grand Street* (2026), Curtiss pictures aquarium tanks of fish, mussels, and a crab deftly bathed in varied qualities of colorful light in a restaurant kitchen. This nocturnal view illuminates the fate of these creatures further reinforced by roasted ducks hung in the window, each crowded tank recalling densely stacked units of residential high-rises.

Other animals enact imagined scenes that combine the familiar with the preternatural, conjuring the experience of coming across unexpected vignettes in rapid succession as one rounds a corner or glances into a window. In the starkly flattened composition of *Bodega* (2026), the hindquarters of an elephant appear inside a shop door, with an exterior covered by ads for baked goods and deli sandwiches, a surprising juxtaposition of the sort that becomes commonplace in the city and a reflection of human activity in the urban jungle. Inspired by a diorama at the American Museum of Natural History that represents a scene no human has ever actually observed, *Squid and Whale* (2026) relocates a struggle between two formidable predators from the ocean depths to a bedroom, the shift in setting transforming the scene's implications. Charged by their bizarrely unexpected conjunctions of subjects, Curtiss's paintings offer comically disarming views of life as experienced and imagined.

For Julie Curtiss's biographical information and exhibition history, please visit gagosian.com.

JULIE CURTISS
UNREAL
Opening reception: Tuesday, November 10, 6–8pm
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541 West 24th Street, New York

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