

Sascha Braunig

Lay Figure

March 16 - April 16, 2022



François Ghebaly and Magenta Plains are proud to present *Lay Figure*, a joint gallery exhibition of new paintings and works on paper by Sascha Braunig. This is Braunig's first New York exhibition in five years, spanning both gallery spaces on the Lower East Side. There will be a shared opening reception on Wednesday, March 16 from 5–8 pm. The exhibition will remain on view at Magenta Plains through Thursday, April 21 and at François Ghebaly through Saturday, April 16.

Braunig's paintings resist aesthetic categorization while simultaneously building on a fraught system of historical lineages. She uses Magrittean space as a stage to undertake a feminist inquiry into paintings' patriarchal history, while deftly referencing Chicago Imagists such as Christina Ramberg and Suellen Rocca, Thomas Bayrle's use of pattern and repetition, and Kiki Kogelnik's fragmentary, skeletal flattening of the figure. The exhibition title, *Lay Figure*, refers to a jointed doll, not quite to scale, that 19th century painters used as stand-ins for a live model in the studio. Mining the history of the artist's doll—epitomized by Hans Bellmer's *La Poupée*—her works uncannily explore the body: figures in jaunty colors hover at the border between legibility and opacity. Silhouettes and patterned outline meet their brightly colored counterparts in a variety of circumstances: emerging through pleated drapes, wrestling with gowns and dresses, and sometimes enveloped in a world of multi-colored cloth.

In these paintings the dialogue between figure and fabric is equal parts curiosity, attraction, and repulsion. In *The Fitting*, a thorny outline of a figure delicately holds the straps of a garment by thumb and forefinger. Made of licorice-red string, the garment is a poor fit, and the thorns imply a probable shredding. Braunig visualizes perceived boundaries as physical, setting up a situation of questioning and experimentation along them. In *Study for Clutches 1*, the overlapped layering of the image centers around the cinching of draped material, figure and fabric intertwining in an almost erotic relationship. In the painting *Lay Figure*, an A-line skirt is cut out of semi-transparent yellow fluted curtains, framing a recognizably feminine silhouette outlined in blue neon tubing. Confounding interior and exterior boundaries, each painting is a psychological puzzle studded with spikes and frills.

As the critic Barry Schwabsky noted, Braunig's paintings call to mind the work of Tishan Hsu, exploiting the connection between body and society to produce a potentially suggestive visuality. However, while Hsu explores the increasing hybridization of body and technology, the metaphor at work in Braunig's imagery points to the embedded nature of gendered "training" that defines and enforces ideas of feminine presentation. At the same time, her figures exert their own agency over the restraining space of the canvas, taking ownership of the aesthetic conditions imposed upon them. Braunig's paintings reflect this struggle back at the viewer, making explicit the desire, fury, and friction inherent to this immaterial circumstance.

Sascha Braunig (b. Qualicum Beach, BC, Canada, 1983) lives and maintains a studio in Portland, ME. She holds a BFA from The Cooper Union and an MFA in painting from Yale University. Braunig was awarded a studio residency from the Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program in 2016–2017, a Pollock-Krasner Foundation award in 2016, and a Macdowell Fellowship in 2013. Selected solo exhibitions include "The Crease," Office Baroque, Brussels, BE (2018); "Bad Latch," Atlanta Contemporary, GA (2017); "Free Peel," Foxy Production, New York, NY (2017); "Shivers," MoMA PS1, New York, NY (2016); and "Torsion," Kunsthall Stavanger, NO (2015). Institutional group exhibitions include: "Manif d'Art" - Quebec City Biennial, CA (2022); "An Assembly of Shapes," Oakville Galleries, Ontario, CA; PMA Biennial, Portland Museum of Art, ME (2018); "Dreamers Awake," White Cube, London, UK (2017); NGV Triennial, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, AU (2017); "The Trick Brain," Aishti Foundation, Beirut, LB (2017); "Stranger," Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, OH (2016); and "Surround Audience": New Museum Triennial, New York, NY (2015). Her forthcoming solo museum exhibition, "Lay Figure," will be held at Oakville Galleries, Ontario, CA.