

In the Belly of the Valley

Susana Guerrero | Christine Nguyen | Lily Prince | Danielle Riede

March 14 - April 13, 2024

Chelsea, New York: 532 Gallery presents *In the Belly of the Valley*, a group exhibition featuring works by Susana Guerrero, Christine Nguyen, Lily Prince, and Danielle Riede. *In the Belly of the Valley* will open on March 14th and run through April 13, 2024.

Cutting across the works of the four artists on view is a singular take on nature which verges on the mythopoetic. Susana Guerrero, Christine Nguyen, Lily Prince and Danielle Riede, all take as their starting point observable, tangible realities—landscapes, floral growths, the physicality of bodies, patterned traces of organic evolution—only to transmogrify them by way of the inner reflectiveness of the creative imagination. What emerges from this attitude is less sublimation than a way of preserving what is most unique, precious, and enduring about nature, and the morphologies that extend from it. *In the Belly of the Valley* could be considered a liminal archive, a taxonomy of etheric data, where natural history elides into poetry.

Lily Prince's landscape paintings are imbued with a spectral meaning not only through her otherworldly palette, but in the way she abstracts from illusionistic space, preserving only the universal characteristics of a landscape. Mountains, crags, bushes, stones—all the essential ingredients of a natural vista announce their singularity in shared agreement with the others. Desert Candy, for example, pops with different emotional registers—each differentiated aspect of the landscape having its own corresponding color scheme. The purple hues used across the canvas radiate a suggestiveness that pervades everything in the scene: an all but devotional energy which doesn't make her work any less observationally astute; rather, it enriches the tradition of *en plein air* painting to incorporate dreamlike elements.

Christine Nguyen materials—mylar, salt crystals, silver leaf—recreate nature less as a unified entity than as a consortium of parts. Her recreations have the fluency of hieroglyphs; they communicate something in their bodily presence that feels

gestural. The way nature becomes fixed in the amber of an image highlights how technology and media, both old and new, continually alter how we relate to organic growth. What was once lived directly is now only experienced through representations; but this mediated relationship allows for new perspectives on the inner meaning of natural development.

Danielle Riede's layered works show how paint and canvas can sediment to resemble the organicity of natural growth. The work *Glide*, for instance, with its serpentine rhythm and mineral use of color, evokes a landscape as much as an organism. In a similar vein, *Like a Phoenix*, *Like a River*, with its open-ended, dynamic surface, occupies a crepuscular realm between realism and abstraction. This oil on canvas work represents shockwaves of movement caught in an agon of colors, lines, and textures. The color schemes Riede puts into play lend her paintings a numinous aura, as though they were keepsakes of experiences that fall ahead of language.

Often commenting on motherhood, Susana Guerrero's wiry intimations of figures often seem to be carrying, or holding, restive and alert. The domestic familiarity of the materials she uses offers the image of an arrested natural process, which then becomes porous and analyzable. Guerrero's sculptures not only underscore how we relate to motherhood, a role both biological and socially constructed, but to sexuality itself. Creating structural gestalts coddled in textiles, her work calls attention to that blurred boundary where our subjective identity stops, and the world around us starts.

Reimagining growth and development, the works on view offer subtle instances of memory mixing with desire; of naturalistic forms, objects, and entities, safeguarded less as copies of reality than as symbols earmarked by human subjectivity. These keepsakes, as they might be called, stave back a world where entire species can fall prey to miniscule changes in climate. In the wake of what might no longer be visible to future generations, these works are storied artifacts conserving vibrantly flourishing textures and morphologie.

For further information, please contact 532 Gallery Thomas Jaeckel by e-mail at info@532gallery.com.