

Exene Karros

Born 1995

Lives and works in Philadelphia, PA

The ubiquity and ambivalence of corporate iconography, the banality of violence and pleasure, the vacancy of identity articulated through narrow registers, and the thrill of transgressive appropriation linger in the compact, demonstrative, and unexpectedly lovely paintings of Exene Karros. Chief among her fixations is a quintessentially American urban experience, one suffused with late capitalist malaise, and remarkably circumspect in the cultivation of a semiotic toolkit. Like a Virgin Mary winking from a piece of moldy Wonder Bread, her pictures chart a strained but rigorous attempt to make meaning from the most vacant forms, identifying joy and pleasure in debasement. Karros' work confounds the current apparatus of representational painting by foregrounding its demonstrative form. Her paintings are tools, and her personal symbology forms the basis for a series of cryptic flow charts on flat gray grounds of gunmetal, cement, putty, Coffee Mate-taupe. Her imagery is immediately iconic and mundane: Abraham Lincoln, Statue of Liberty, The Cross, Dove, Toy Soldiers, Livery Vehicles, Mr. Peanut. Her symbols are rendered with a labored precision that is both humorous, melancholy, and inflected with a desire for a kind of divine encounter, looking to these things as idols, as tokens of some sign of a future. The biggest thing lurking in Karros' blunt and punchy paintings is ultimately, surprisingly, hope.

Education

2018 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI

Solo & Two Person

2022 God strike me down or at least pay attention Harkawik, New York

2021 Life On Earth Whaam! Gallery, New York, NY
Exene Karros & Ed Paschke Airfield Art, Kingston, NY

Group

2022 Film Noir The Bunker Art Space, Miami, FL

2021 Hell March, curated by Colin Ross Eyes Never Sleep, New York, NY
All Roads Lead to More Roads The Bunker Art Space, Miami, FL

A New Museum's Triennial Fall River Museum of Contemporary Art, MA
The Symbolists: Les Fleurs Du Mal Hesse Flatow, New York, NY

2020 White Lillies Thierry Goldberg Gallery, Online
Untitled Exhibition Sinkhole Project, curated by Joe Speier, Baltimore, MD

2019 More Than A Feeling Whaam! Gallery, Miami, FL

There Are A Range Of Things That Can Bring
You Joy

Mery Gates Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

2018 Senior Painting Exhibition

Woods-Gerry Gallery, RISD, Providence, RI

2017 Cars and Trees
Late Night Pundit

Benson Hall Gallery, RISD, Providence, RI
Friendly Gallery, Providence, RI