



LET ME HEAR YOUR BODY TALK

**JOEY FAUERSO
GYAN SHROSBREE**

The Wrong Gallery
Marfa, Texas
February 8-May 8, 2022

*Left: Joey Fauerso, Take It Easy, 126" x 72", acrylic on canvas, 2021
Right: Gyan Shrosbree, Smile and Waive, 84" x 60", acrylic on canvas, 2021*

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Four male nudes recline, one over the other, each superimposed over landscapes. Objects including heads, potted plants and picture frames float throughout this mash-up of formal painting genres. The amalgamation teases the mind like so many puzzle pieces scattered on a table, awakening the urge to place them together, yet the disparate elements of this large black and white painting refuse to cohere into a single narrative meaning.

WENDY ATWELL A female figure, stylized into abstract color blocks, reclines amidst a scene filled with cats, shoes, plants and phones.

Hand-painted on a large canvas banner, the images shout their presence with playful curves and bright and neon colors. They resemble their referents only in contour and even these waver as if trying to call forth a distant memory. Through abstraction these signs and symbols mimic real world objects not just once removed but twice or thrice.

In this joint exhibition, artists Joey Fauerso and Gyan Shrobbree shuffle and re-shuffle their imagery. Their recurring subjects promenade through the frames and gallery space, a non-hierarchical display of combinations and permutations, shifting imagery paired and juxtaposed like the rolling of dice or the pulling of a slot machine.

The artists' processes blend intuition with repetition, rituals resulting in accidental new inventions. Repetition allows for these surprises, intuitive leaps within the bounds, similar to the contrast between improv acting versus following a script. Fauerso manipulates acrylic paint with a squeegee or rubber spatula, the application being instantaneous and unchangeable, a technique she calls "subtractive painting." Shrobbree's paintings elicit emotions and reflection within the interactions

of color. Embracing the plasticity of her medium, also acrylic, Shrobbree fills the entire surface of her canvases so that the shapes become embedded in the field. Their large-scale format recalls sign painting, but the evidence of the artist's hand lends them an endearing intimacy devoid in the commercial world.

Both artists disrupt traditional and Modernist painting methods in terms of how they use space, how they frame their work and how the body is represented. In what she calls her "steel sculpture/paintings," Fauerso brings the frame out into three dimensions so that the art's boundaries continually change, depending on the viewer's position in the gallery. Fauerso's *Marginalia* (2021), a still life framed by figures crawling around within the frame, plays with painterly space. Shrobbree's female figures offer a feminist shout out to Milton Avery—her abstract color blocks conform to one another with the smooth ease of colorful bean bags piled together. Her reclining female nudes have legs that bend like Gumby, impossibly curving the calves and ankles upwards, sideways and around, signaling to the viewer that this is play. There's a girlfriend vibe to Shrobbree's art both through titles and style, a jaunt confidence, as if the paintings themselves are posing for us, vogueing on the dance floor. The surrounding imagery matches their spunk, iconic symbols that are the corollaries of girl life and young women adulating—cats, plants, shoes and telephones. The phones hover around the compositions looking like slices of pink toast—the shapes suggesting only the most vague memory of these now arcane objects from the era predating the smartphone, the ones with cords that plugged into the wall, tethering the talker to one site.

Instead of representing distinct narrative moments, Fauerso and Shrobbree create tableau-inspired settings for their respective subjects. "Tableau" is "used to describe a painting or photograph in which characters are arranged for picturesque or dramatic effect and appear absorbed or completely unaware of the existence of the

in the same "folded or intergenerational time" that Nelson speaks of when she writes, "I admit to feeling it most often when I look at my son, and behold all the selves and ages he has passed through folded atop one another." These moments form powerful antidotes amidst the rapidity and sheer inundation of imagery we're exposed to on not just a daily but hourly basis; and the sense of urgency felt by climate change's threat of forces compounding upon one another to result in a drastic, apocalyptic changing of our world.

viewer," a concept first articulated by French philosopher Denis Diderot. Historically, the tableau had the "effect of walling off the viewer from the drama taking place, transfixing the viewer like never before."

The tableau performs a ritual-like service of referencing moments that transcend daily life so that the exhibition's sense of time pulls back from the immediate to enter time on a grander scale, what Maggie Nelson refers to as "thick time," first articulated by feminist scholars Astrida Neimanis and Rachel Loewen as a "'transcorporeal stretching between present, future and past.'" Fauerso's magical *Under the Table* (2021) pairs an ornate black and white still life with a colorful, dreamlike scene beneath. A boy crouches, female figures appear to move through yoga asanas and a black cat sits both right side up and upside down. What kind of time occurs in this space, where the woman and the cat could possibly be the same ones depicted at different moments? Fauerso juxtaposes not just body/objects but also time. *The still life (or nature morte)* represents the external world while the vivid scene beneath comes from the mind. The mysterious nature of human consciousness thrives beneath what historically, served as a reminder of mortality.

One wonders, when looking at the many bodies in the black and white realms of Fauerso's paintings, who are they and what are they doing? Crawling, bending, folding, lying, they exist in a narrative space not specific to one personal story but to the story of being human, like the countless anonymous nudes throughout the entirety of art history. Yet in the monoprint *Brendan in Iceland* (2021), Fauerso portrays her son, scraping him into existence in the space of a few moments, from an exchange in which she sees him, perhaps

Shrobbree's use of brilliant color floods her work with ebullience. It's the same rush of hope from playing a game of loteria or bingo, the colors and images electrified with wishful thinking of being graced by good luck. The fashion industry plays on similar fantasies, but unlike the fashion industry's airbrushed, perfected illusions, Shrobbree renders and processes her fashion dreams into hand-painted imagery, a powerful contrast to the glossy perfection through which fashion dreams normally get delivered.

https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/t/tableau ²https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/t/tableau ³Maggie Nelson, On Freedom: Four Songs of Care and Constraint (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2021), 209. ⁴Ibid. ⁵https://www.ego-mainimag.com/single-post/gyanshrobbree ⁶Nelson, 208.

These paintings reflect a similar awareness. Shrobbree's featureless reclining females and Fauerso's mysterious male nudes, set in thick time, dilute the ego. They alert us to our own places in the universe. Like saying a word over until it loses its meaning, or viewing an abstracted shoe repeated until it no longer reads as a shoe, it is a revelation.

...if we live long enough, we begin to feel in visceral fashion what we've always known intellectually to be true: our life spans will not allow us to take in the whole story. Indeed, there may be no whole story. Maybe there's no story at all. Our brains may be hardwired to produce story as a means of organizing space and time, but that doesn't mean that story is the only mode available to us in experiencing our lives.

connection with others' experiences that makes them relevant.

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