

VENUS OVER MANHATTAN

Press Release

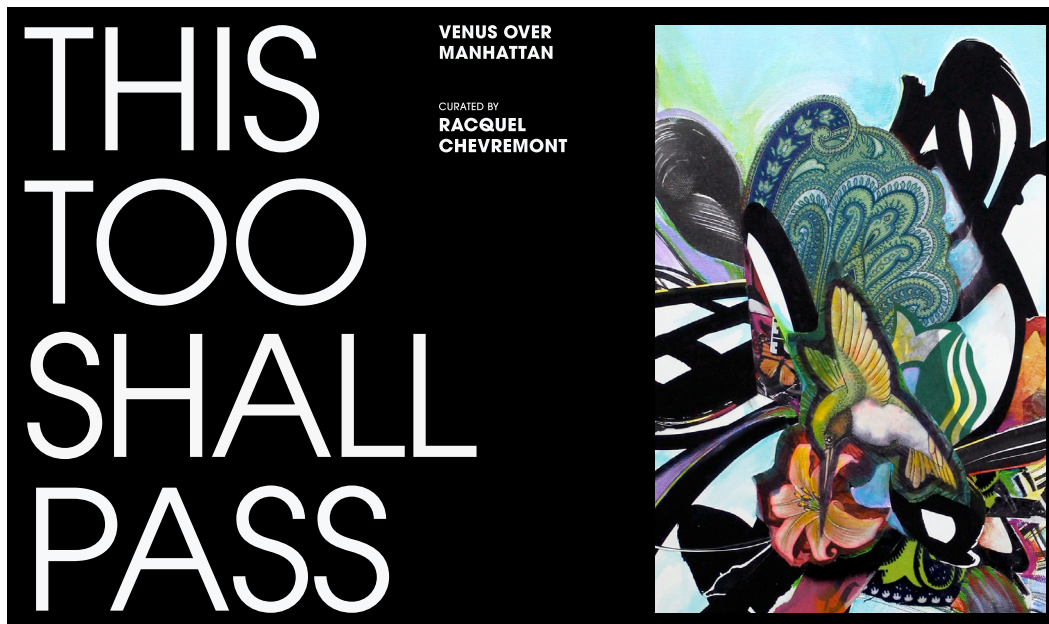
THIS TOO SHALL PASS

Curated by Racquel Chevremont

Featuring: Alex Anderson, Leilah Babirye, Coady Brown, Marc Dennis, Melissa Joseph, Natia Lemay, Diana Sofia Lozano, Maia Cruz Palileo, Charles Mason III, Ferrari Sheppard, Shinique Smith

Venus Over Manhattan
55 Great Jones Street
New York, NY 10012

July 11 – August 4, 2023
Opening: Tuesday, July 11
6:00 – 8:00 PM



(New York, NY) – **Venus Over Manhattan** is delighted to present **This Too Shall Pass**, a group exhibition curated by **Racquel Chevremont**. Taking its title from a time-honored adage, the presentation explores concepts of impermanence, transience, personal memory, and ongoing change. Assembling work in diverse media by both young and established artists, the exhibition gathers painting, drawing, and sculpture by eleven artists who incorporate figurative and abstract representations of flowers in their work. Carefully selected for their explorations of multi-layered themes surrounding floral imagery, the works on view feature flowers and botanical elements to convey the essence of impermanence and embody the strength that lies within their fragility. "This Too Shall Pass" will be on view at 55 Great Jones Street from July 11 through August 4, 2023.

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Speaking about the exhibition, curator **Racquel Chevremont** states:

“This exhibition brings together a diverse group of artists whose works beautifully capture the transient, fleeting nature of existence through the captivating aesthetic of flowers. Despite their ephemeral presence, flowers hold profound expressions of human emotions, eternally resonating even after their physical forms fade away. Each flower possesses a unique essence, embodying the individuality that lies within each of us. The exhibition takes its title, ‘This Too Shall Pass,’ from an ancient Persian adage, evoking the essence of impermanence and the ever-changing nature of life itself.”

This exhibition offers unique perspectives on impermanence and the evocative power of flora. **Alex Anderson’s** acclaimed ceramic wall works delve into multifaceted aspects of identity, culture, and memory, serving as poignant expressions of lived experience and historical inheritance. **Shinique Smith’s** calligraphic abstractions incorporate gesture and collage, exploring the interplay between personal and social scales, while **Ferrari Shepard’s** monumental painting blurs the lines between abstraction and figuration to evoke beauty and nostalgia. Painting features prominently in the exhibition, including sharp and striking depictions of flower arrangements by **Coady Brown**; hyper-realistic renderings by **Marc Dennis**; new felted work by **Melissa Joseph**; a suite of paintings with heavy impasto by **Natia Lemay**, whose well-known all-black works reflect upon personal and intergenerational experience; recent works in flashe by **Maia Cruz Palileo**; and a range of gestural flowers on paper by **Charles Mason III**. Recent work in wood and ceramic by **Leilah Babirye** explores her widening approach to natural materials, and a new wall work by **Diana Sofia Lozano**, whose botanical sculptures and paintings engage ideas of identity, geopolitics, and history, incorporates a mirrored panel and protrusions that recall organic forms. Together, the works on view in “This Too Shall Pass” establish a vision of contemplation and introspection upon the transitory and the evanescent.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Alex Anderson (b. 1990, Seattle, WA) is an acclaimed ceramic artist known for his ability to probe the intersections of race, cultural representation, and the sublime experiences of both the natural and man-made worlds. Anderson weaves his understanding of identity politics into his multifaceted, whimsical sculptures, with elements of baroque, Japanese pop art, and references to camp aesthetics. His work, deeply engaged with multiple histories of ceramics, gives voice to both his lived experience and historical inheritance. Anderson’s work has featured in exhibitions at the Museum of Arts and Design, Sargent’s Daughters, Gavlak Gallery, and Jeffrey Deitch.

Leilah Babirye (b. 1985; Kampala, Uganda) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Her diverse practice in ceramic, metal, and wood involves transforming everyday materials into sculptures that explore identity, sexuality, and human rights, often incorporating tra-

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ditional African masks and vibrant portraits of her community members. She studied art at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, and participated in the Fire Island Artist Residency in 2015. With assistance from the African Services Committee and the NYC Anti-Violence Project, she was granted asylum in the United States in 2018. Babirye's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Gordon Robichaux, Stephen Friedman Gallery, and Rebecca Camacho Presents. Her work is held in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Hammer Museum, the Hessel Museum of Art, the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, the Columbus Museum of Art, and the RISD Museum.

Coady Brown (b. 1990, Baltimore, MD) delicately navigates vulnerability and self-preservation in paintings that capture the balance between personal freedom and the complexities of public and private lives. With a focus on flowers, the drama of nightlife, and feminized bodies, her work has been the subject of solo presentations at Shulamit Nazarian in Los Angeles, Stems Gallery in Brussels, and 1969 Gallery in New York, among others. Brown's work has featured in group presentations at the Green Family Art Foundation, François Ghebaly, and the Columbus Museum of Art. Her work is in the permanent collections of public institutions including the ICA Miami, the Columbus Museum of Art, and the X Museum, Beijing.

Marc Dennis (b. 1971, Danvers, MA) is known for his striking hyper-realistic paintings that focus on intricate natural forms, particularly flowers. With a seamless blend of technical prowess and a deep understanding of art history, Dennis creates complex compositions that challenge societal norms of beauty, pleasure, and identity. Inspired by seventeenth-century Baroque artists and Northern European still-life masters, his meticulously detailed paintings reveal the beauty in ordinary subjects, blurring the line between reality and illusion. Dennis's works have garnered global recognition, exhibited in numerous solo and group shows, and collected by prestigious institutions worldwide.

Melissa Joseph (b. 1980, Saint Marys, PA) is a multidisciplinary artist based in New York, whose work explores the themes of memory, family history, and diasporic life. Drawing from her Indian/American upbringing in Pennsylvania, Joseph merges her background as a textile designer with her artistic practice, often using family photographs, craft materials, and found objects. A graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Rhode Island School of Design, the Fashion Institute of Technology, and New York University, she has exhibited her work in recent exhibitions at REGULARNORMAL, Swarthmore College, and Jeffrey Deitch.

Natia Lemay (b. 1985, Toronto, ON) is an Afroindigenous artist and curator with Black, Mi'kmaw, and Settler heritage. Lemay received her MFA from the Yale School of Art in 2023, and through her practice, she delves into themes of identity, orientation, hyper-visibility, invisibility, and consciousness, using various mediums and installations to challenge the conditions that have sought to diminish the humanity of racialized, indigenous, and gendered individuals. Her work was the subject of a recent solo presentation at Yossi Milo, and recent exhibitions include shows with Green Hall Gallery, Yale School of Art; Mayten's Gallery, Toronto; and Artscape, Toronto.

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Diana Sofia Lozano (b. 1992, Cali, Colombia) is a Brooklyn-based artist whose work revolves around botanical hybrids, encompassing the natural, genetically modified, and imagined. Her sculptures, often featuring large-scale floral compositions, challenge the traditional boundaries of gender, sexuality, and race, using biomimicry as metaphors for identity construction. Lozano's critical examination of botanical taxonomic failures aims to redefine colonial identification practices and geopolitical borders. Her work has been featured in exhibitions at Company Gallery, Wave Hill Gardens, Deli Gallery, Rachel Uffner Gallery, and Proxycy Gallery in New York City, among others, as well as internationally. Lozano received her MFA from Yale University in 2021, and her artistic practice is deeply influenced by her upbringing in Colombia as the daughter of botanists.

Charles Mason III (b. 1990, Baltimore, MD) is an artist based in Baltimore, Maryland, known for his thought-provoking and abstract works that explore themes of labor, love, grief, poetics, and material. He obtained his BFA in Graphic Design from the University of Maryland Baltimore County in 2014 and his MFA from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 2019. Mason's work has been the subject of solo presentations at Goya Contemporary Gallery in Baltimore and Anna Zorina Gallery in Los Angeles and has featured in group exhibitions at the Baltimore Museum of Art, Saint Louis Art Museum, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and Urban Institute for Contemporary Art, among others. Mason's artwork is held in the public collections of Baltimore Museum of Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Hammer Museum Grunwald Center Collection.

Maia Cruz Palileo (b. 1979, Chicago, IL), a Brooklyn-based multidisciplinary artist, explores migration, home, and the interplay of memory and imagination. Influenced by familial oral histories and the colonial relationship between the Philippines and the United States, Palileo's works blur the line between fact and fiction. They seek to reclaim figures from the exploitative gaze of ethnographic images and evoke a hybrid sense of place. Palileo has been recognized with grants and awards such as the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant and the Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist Grant. Their works have been exhibited widely, including presentations at Monique Meloche, CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, Pioneer Works, and the National Portrait Gallery. Palileo's works are held in the public collections of the San Jose Museum of Art, the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, and The Fredriksen Collection at the National Museum of Oslo, Norway.

Ferrari Sheppard (b. 1983, Brooklyn, NY) is a Los Angeles-based artist who has worked across diverse media. With a keen ability to blur the boundaries between abstraction and figuration, Sheppard's work exudes a captivating aura of nostalgia, drawing inspiration from memories, dreams, and lived encounters. Employing a unique visual language, he combines acrylic, charcoal, and 24k gold on canvas, employing bold brushstrokes and a deliberate color palette to convey movement and evoke raw emotions. His work has been the subject of recent solo presentations at Massimo De Carlo and UTA Artist Space. In addition to his visual artwork, Sheppard is one half of the hip-hop group Dec 99th with Yasiin Bey.

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Shinique Smith (b. 1972, Baltimore, MD) is renowned for her monumental fabric sculptures and abstract paintings integrating calligraphy and collage. Her work explores consumption and the resonance of objects on personal and social scales. Combining personal histories and belongings, Smith creates layered works ranging from bundled microcosms to chaotic paintings. She has received awards from renowned institutions like Joan Mitchell and the Tiffany Foundation. Smith's art has been exhibited internationally, including biennials, and is in many prestigious collections worldwide. Notable public works include a mosaic mural for the MLK Jr Crenshaw station in Los Angeles. Through her art, Smith captures the power of human expression, resilience, and connections across space, time, race, gender, and place, suggesting new possibilities. Her work has featured in solo and group exhibitions at David Castillo Gallery, the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, among many other galleries and institutions.

ABOUT RACQUEL CHEVREMONT

Born and raised in New York City, **Racquel Chevremont** is a highly regarded figure in the art world. Her expertise and experience as an art consultant have made her sought-after by institutions, corporations, collectors, and artists alike. Chevremont's career in the arts began with lending works from her personal collection to museum exhibitions. In 2003, she joined the acquisition committees of the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. She also co-founded the State Street Salon, a Brooklyn-based hub for artists, curators, and collectors. Throughout her career, Chevremont has curated exhibitions for well-known television productions and galleries, including *Law and Order: Organized Crime*, *And Just Like That...*, *Empire*, *First Wives Club*, and *Mining the Archive* (2021) with Yancey Richardson Gallery. Additionally, Chevremont has had long and successful career as a model spanning over 20 years, working with Elite Model Management and Wilhelmina Models.

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GALLERY HOURS

Monday – Friday
10:00 am – 6:00 pm

IMAGE CREDITS

Detail of Shinique Smith, *Above the Flower Bed*, 2013. Acrylic, fabric, and collage on canvas; 28 x 22 in (71.1 x 55.9 cm). Courtesy the artist, David Castillo Gallery, Miami, and Venus Over Manhattan, New York.

PRESS CONTACT

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For additional information about the exhibition and availability, please contact the gallery at info@venusovermanhattan.com