



PRESS RELEASE

ALEXANDRA VALENTI

Early Riser, Late Bloomer

JUNE 1 - JUNE 22, 2024

OPENING RECEPTION ON SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 6 - 9 PM

WITH PLANT GARDEN INSTALLATION DESIGNED BY
VIRIDIAN PLANTSCAPES & @YUNG.FLORIST WITH THANKS TO TILLERY STREET PLANT CO.

These are fictional women who live their lives in an idealized and often absurd landscapes, unwilling to adhere to societal norms, but instead they are committed to their inner world, the scaffolding upon which is their creativity and freedom. There are repeating motifs of roots and threads weaving and connecting onto and through, imperfect bodies, biospheric shapes, misshapen breasts, crumbling architecture, and plant(giving) life. All of which serves as a mediation on metaphysical exploration, creative expression and wonderment. Ultimately, the work reflects a longing to connect, a way to metabolize grief, a nostalgia for the freedom and rich creativity much like the lives of my artist predecessors and historical mentors.

- Alexandra Valenti

McLennon Pen Co. Gallery is thrilled to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Austin-based artist Alexandra Valenti.

The exhibition comprises nine paintings on canvas, blending acrylic and oil mediums, hung across three rooms. Stepping into the main gallery, visitors encounter not only Valenti's arresting large-scale paintings but also an enchanting installation of lush vegetation, including banana palms and fiddle leaf fig trees. Each painting stands out individually with its vibrant portrayal of female figures against vivid landscape backdrops.

The portraits featured within the paintings depict women, either singly or as seemingly twin images, characterized by simplified forms. Their bodies possess a streamlined and curvaceous elegance reminiscent of Matisse's female figures, with elongated limbs and a sculptural flatness that lends them a cut-out appearance. The faces, akin to Brancusi's sculptural style or Modigliani's drawings, exhibit long, angular noses and large almond-shaped eyes, with the nose lines seamlessly connecting to the brows.

In several paintings the dual figures engage with each other, their gazes and postures suggestive of a profound connection, though it remains ambiguous to the viewer whether they are actually twins, or two parts of one human. This interplay of symmetry, from the mirrored figures to the alignment of brows, adds an intriguing depth to the compositions.

Set against outdoor scenes of imagined magical landscapes of forests, valleys, flower gardens, many of the paintings exhibit a Fauvist color palette. While the paintings predominantly feature darker solemn tones, there are also bursts of vivid colors in unexpected areas that seem to pulse with energy, such as bright pink rolling landscapes or vibrant red undulating bodies.

The influences Valenti cites span a wide spectrum of artists, from Henri Matisse and Serge Poliakoff to Leonora Carrington, Remedios Varo, Le Corbusier, Roberto Burle Marx, and Salvatore Fiume. Viewers can sense in Valenti's paintings a timeless essence, a quality that may originate from her assuredness of hand evident in the fluid lines of the bodies. These lines evoke the mastery of artists she has admired from diverse movements, including Impressionism, Fauvism, and Surrealism. The figures in each painting evoke a sense of antiquity and timelessness within the artist's imagined realm, transporting viewers into scenes that seem to exist beyond the confines of contemporary reality.

Valenti's unique style combines elegance with freedom, capturing a nostalgic beauty that transcends temporal boundaries. While influenced by various art movements, her work possesses a distinctiveness that sets it apart, offering viewers a glimpse into a timeless world awakened by internal dialogue.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Alexandra Valenti lives and works in Austin, Texas. Born in Washington, D.C., she received her BA in Art History from UC Berkeley. She was a commercial photographer for over 15 years shooting for fashion and sports brands, TV, and Music, including shooting for brands such as Nike, Adidas, Nordstrom, Outdoor Voices, The Cut, Samsung, Harper's Bazaar Australia, Shon magazine, Portlandia, and celebrities such as Minnie Driver, Jenna Lyons, Sam Rockwell, Carrie Brownstein, Fred Armisen, Justin Timberlake, Michael Dell, Mandy Moore. During the pandemic, in June of 2020, Valenti turned to painting, and never stopped, giving up her photography career to become a full time artist. Recent projects include a solo exhibition titled, *Future Finally*, in 2022 at Preacher Gallery in Austin, TX, and work featured in a group presentation with New American Paintings, Issue #156, a Southwest Edition in 2022.