

New York Exhibition

BAMBOU GILI

THE NONEXISTENT NIGHT

Sept 10 - Oct 30, 2021



Bambou Gili, Blue Kitchen, 2021, Oil on linen, 64h x 79w in.

Arsenal Contemporary Art New York is delighted to present the debut solo exhibition of Brooklyn-based artist **Bambou Gili**. Through eighteen tableaux presented as if they were taking place over the course of a single night, Gili transports the viewer into real or imaginary settings where fantastical elements are intertwined with bursts of humor but also with moments of solitude, grief and longing.

Borrowing from a wide range of contemporary and historical references including folklore, 18th century art, animated film, TV, music, and literature, *The Nonexistent Night* is exemplary of Gili's rich indexical imagination. The exhibition draws its title from the allegorical novel by the Italian author Italo Calvino, *Il cavaliere inesistente*. Calvino's main character, Agilulf, is a brave, virtuous and loyal medieval knight who in fact exists as an empty suit of armor. Gili questions whether we are tricked into performing subjectivity and interrogates what is beyond mere appearances.

While encountering Gili's collection of short stories, one is projected into a non-linear timeline populated by diverse interconnected characters, all unaware of each other's existence. However, there are recurring motifs in the paintings that act as subtle emissaries between the stories. Bodies of water act as mirrors, refuges, or watering holes, while trees connect stories across distinct epochs.

The artist has developed a singular way of painting the human figure that is characterized by an alluring spectral aura. Even the pieces devoid of figures retain an ethereal, at times

even haunting quality. Gili paints arrestingly beautiful surfaces that prioritize an array of Boreal colors: rich purples, deep blues and vibrant greens. Her paintings seem to be suspended in time, emerging from a subliminal indigo-tinted dream.

Bambou Gili (b. 1996 in New York, lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.) received her BA in Psychology and Studio Art from NYU, New York in 2018. Her work has been shown at Arsenal Contemporary, New York; Cassina Projects, Milan; Y2K Projects, New York; Monya Rowe Gallery, New York.

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