

GLADSTONE

Brook Hsu

The Oklahoma Nature Theater

November 8 – December 20, 2024

Opening Reception: November 8, 6pm – 8pm

130 East 64th Street

New York, NY 10065

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by American artist Brook Hsu. The 14 works in this show reflect an artist in transition. She nostalgically revisits past motifs while finding joy in experimenting with new ones. The leap from piece to piece is a nod to the exquisite corpse of narratives and the agency of stories.

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"Who tells whose story?" she asked.

"What do you mean?" he replied. They were sitting high up on a ridge, overlooking the valley below to the West. It was early in the morning and the world was saturated with dew, vapor rising up breathily from the boggy areas surrounding the sharp bends in the river below. As if she hadn't heard his reply, she continued, "Sometimes I wonder, how did I get here?"

"Well you're here on this mountain with me," he reassured her, turning her chin to look her in the eyes, "and there's no where else in the world I'd rather be."

She was happy, and also in love, but ostensibly adrift. She had the habit of wandering the cul de sacs of her memories, unable –at times– to discern between her own and those that belong to history. The skeletons of her past were alive and well. She observed the brown, shrubby valley below. The chirp of the frogs oscillated from a fuzzy murmur to a choral uproar as the breeze shifted directions, as it was prone to do at this altitude. A moment passed. She responded, tenderly yet detached, "No, I mean, how did I get here as a painter. As an artist? All of these hundreds of years of history and painting, culminating upon me, and I find myself painting the image of a sexy frog in a cowboy hat, over and over, on repeat. What does this have anything to do with Titian or Poussin, Holbein or Cole? Where is the throughline from Mannerism to Romanticism? I feel a deep connection to everything from the myths of Ovid to Buffalo Bill's Wild West Shows, from Tsai Ming-liang's watermelon sex to *Silence of the Lambs*. I'm desperately seeking to situate my paintings in the referential supermarket of taste." She sighed.

At ease, he wrapped his rugged, sun-tanned arm around her frame and chuckled –as if accustomed to these rants– "I don't know babe. I love you for what you are, not what you paint." (Little did he know how insulting that can sound to a painter) He kissed her temple, which she accepted.

"I read books, and I travel and I research, and I have this mental map that connects everything from Murakami, Klossowski, Oklahoma, Polke, Kafka, Kippenberger, Kawara... each cover I close I'm drawn to open a new one. I feel I'm in a labyrinth." She paused, eyes wide open, staring at a darter that sat a perch a sturdy blade of sawgrass, wobbling slightly underneath the insect's weight. Then, like a knee jerk reaction (or even like vomiting), she guffawed. It was a gaggle, not just a giggle. She was pleased at how her body could surprise her. As her uproar calmed into a giggle, he joined in, picked up the grey-green suede cowboy hat from her side and placed it atop her head, where it fit perfectly.

As they looked out on the landscape, the fog was rising along with the sharp angle of the first rays of sun, distorting the perspective of everything in front of them. It was at that moment that she realized that the colors in her paintings of this place were just an emotional projection, not based in reality. She realized that figure and ground could just be a theory; it didn't have to be a fact. She thought about how the act of painting had been a cathartic action throughout all of her

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life. All along it was more in the body than in the mind. For a fleeting moment, she achieved the peace of those who are incomplete, but who belong.

—Amanda Schmitt

Brook Hsu (b.1987) lives and works in New York and Wyoming. Hsu received her BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in 2010 and her MFA from Yale University in 2016. Recent solo exhibitions include: Kiang Malingue, Hong Kong (2022); Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin (2021); Manual Arts, Los Angeles (2021); Bortolami Gallery, New York (2019). Hsu has presented in group exhibitions at Oriole, Hamburg (2024); Et al. Gallery, San Francisco (2024); New York (2024); 14th Shanghai Biennale (2023); K11 Shanghai (2023); Zürich Biennial, Kunsthalle Zürich (2023); Paul Soto, Los Angeles (2023); Adler Beatty, New York (2022); Derosia Gallery, New York (2022); Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles (2022); kaufmann repetto, New York and Milan (2021); TANK, Shanghai (2020); CLEARING, New York (2020); Jan Kaps, Cologne (2020); Insect Gallery, Los Angeles (2019-2020); Château Shatto, Los Angeles (2019); in lieu, Los Angeles (2019); and The Renaissance Society, Chicago (2018-2019). Hsu's work is part of the collections of X Museum, Beijing; the Long Museum, Shanghai; and Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris.

For further information, please contact press@gladstonegallery.com