

Press Release

GROUNDING: Anouk Lamm Anouk & Denise Rudolf Frank

Exhibition dates: September 7 through October 13, 2023

Pablo's Birthday is pleased to present *GROUNDING*, featuring the works of Anouk Lamm Anouk (b. Austria) and Denise Rudolf Frank (b. 1993, Vienna, Austria). The duo exhibition explores the visual expression of feeling and emotional exchange one has with the canvas. Whether it be during the painterly process or the ensuing viewer's interaction with its contents, the artist's canvas has the power to break emotional barriers, find calm in anxiety, indulge in elation, or conjure anger and sorrow— perhaps all at once. What Anouk and Denise put into and onto the canvas can be felt rather than simply seen; grounding the viewer with a safe and open space for emotionality.

The striking visual dichotomy presents a spectrum of feeling; on one side Anouk's minimal, muted canvases imprint a calm and focused— perhaps melancholic serenity and on the other and the juxtaposition of Frank's turbulent colors and thick, chaotic impasto which put forth an awesome vibrancy and exuberance. The exhibition invites participation from the audience's deepest emotions and offers a space of insightful contemplation. Opposite one another, they ask, if not force, the viewer to confront one's inner truths. While Denise Rudolf Frank has collaborated with Pablo's Birthday since 2021, this will be Anouk Lamm Anouk's first exhibition with the gallery and first exhibition in the United States.

Anouk Lamm Anouk's practice revolves around the mere beginnings of a raw linen canvas. The minimal canvas, which comes through in all of their paintings, and limited color palette of earthly tones, produce a visual dialogue founded upon their manifesto, "no age, no gender, no origin." The practice is embedded with their principles, "emptiness is the foundation of fullness, that nothing is everything; emptiness as the basis of the fullness/richness of being, the void as the ultimate non-space." These non-spaces in Anouk's practice, are— in Anouk's words— *portals into something else and should ground and help viewers dwell in the moment, anchored to the here and now, leaving behind the digital and its distractions to create worlds of images that invite viewers to linger*. Anouk's motifs aim to conjure peaceful spaces for contemplation with a strong undercurrent of desire. The sparsity and graceful arrangements on the canvas offer a space of meditation for themselves and the ultimate viewer.

Two of Anouk's series are presented here; "Lesbian Jazz" and "post/pre". Both employ the raw linen canvas as foundations anchored in these "non-spaces." *Lesbian Jazz* transfers jazz into abstract painting rendering scenes of lesbian visibility. The works are created intuitively and directly on the canvas; a spontaneity and intuition that is also attributed to jazz. The bodies are often female*, genderless/androgynous, and nearly anonymous. The works allow viewers to interrogate deeper into themes of sexuality, sensuality, and self; an intimate exchange with the canvas before them.

For Frank, the opposite is true; bright colors, with an excess of paint and vibrancy and the thickness of the impasto technique are testament to her inner emotions. Frank loads her work with energy by applying her paint directly onto the canvas with her hands. Like an explosion, the chaos of color and charged physicality in her work, ground for emotionality for the viewer and their experiences. Strangely toeing the line between abstraction and figuration, Frank's colorful compositions reflect fantastical explorations of inner emotional dialogue fed by the inner workings of her own mind and body.

Frank's roots of her practice are tied to art therapy origins. Since she was three years old, Frank has explored the interconnectedness of art and therapy. In this way, her paintings act as a visual

diary. Frank's paintings combine imaginary colors and figures as an introspective translation of her state of mind. While she sees her practice as a personal outlet— combining imaginary colors and figures as a way of interpreting innermost emotions and working through feelings and sensations— she also asks viewers to participate in her work. Rather than understanding Frank's work, it should be *felt*. The vibrancy and intensity of Frank's paintings are meant to encourage reflection, both externally and internally for the viewer.

Balancing on a similar edge of abstraction and figuration Anouk and Frank take us to our innermost being. The balance of contrasting visuals and complimentary concepts and themes allows the exhibition to unfold human feeling, the complexity of human emotion, imagination, and interpretation. From calm to chaos, from serenity to jubilation, Anouk and Frank explore their own minds on the canvas as well as make room for viewers to interrogate their inner minds and feelings. Opposite one another, the works presented in *GROUNDING* encourage interpretation, evoke emotional, and invite visceral reaction.

Anouk Lamm Anouk's (b. Austria) artistic practice includes the breadth of paintings, drawings, sculpture, installation, and writing. Anouk identifies as trans-non-binary and by virtue of this and living as a Person with autism, it is crucial to them to rid themselves of the external attributions and labels that come from normative society in order both to see and encounter others without the violence of classification and anticipation, to be truly open. Working at the intersection of abstraction, minimalism, and figuration, Anouk's circular forms abound through the use of a makeshift compass that soaks attention toward the center of most of the paintings, which operate according to the assumption that emptiness is the foundation of fullness, that nothing is everything; emptiness as the basis of the fullness/richness of being, the void as the ultimate non-space. These "non-spaces" are portals into something else and should ground and help viewers dwell in the moment, anchored to the here and now, leaving behind the digital and its distractions to create worlds of images that invite viewers to linger.

Anouk graduated from Universität der Künste Berlin (UdK) and the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. The artist has shown internationally throughout Europe and Asia including presentations at König Gallery, "Different Visions of Temples" (2023); Fundacja Stefana Gierowskiego, Warsaw (2022); "Lesbian Jazz: Meditating in the Alps", Gstaad, Switzerland (2022); "The new Normality" curated by Lucija Šutej, Austrian Cultural Forum, London (2020); and Belvedere21 Museum, Vienna (2014). In 2021, Anouk was awarded with the Main Prize of the Strabag Art Award International. Currently, Anouk is exhibiting over 40 works at The Women's Museum Wiesbaden in Wiesbaden, Germany. They live and work in Vienna, Austria.

Denise Rudolf Frank (b. 1993, Vienna) started art therapy at three years old, opening up the way of expressing feelings through painting. She kept and created her work process through integrating it in her everyday routine, moreover like writing a diary. It functions as a reflection of her experiences and the process of painting mimics the emotional explosiveness of her paintings. Her art is a passionate plea to enjoy life, a call to action to act. In her practice, she becomes an energy center that seeks friction with personal and social conventions, rules, and established structures – with temperament and artistic depth, she dreams her own, very personal, view of the world.

Frank studied Fine Art at Central St. Martin's College in London and the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Frank has been exhibiting nationally and internationally in cities such as Tokyo, Seoul, London, Salzburg, and Vienna, since the age of 23. Recent exhibitions include CFHILL Gallery, Stockholm (2023), Droste Gallery, Paris (2022) and The Cabin: Danny First, LA (2022) following her month-long residency. Notably, Frank has exhibited in various spaces internationally such as Kunstverein Mistelbach (2020), Museumsquartier, Vienna, as well as in Miami, Seoul, and Berlin. She lives and works in Vienna, Austria.