

Press release

Lena Christakis: Flat Lands

Exhibition Dates: January 17 through February 28, 2025

Pablo's Birthday is pleased to present *Flat Lands*, the first solo exhibition by **Lena Christakis** (b. 1997). Christakis's practice concerns itself with the poetic and theoretical implications of image-making, examining the human need to transform phenomena into symbols that recreate our perception of "the real thing." When it comes to subject matter, Christakis engages themes ranging from the memory trove of childhood to reflections on aging and transformation, all while maintaining a sense of humor about the absurd parts of our world and a sincere sense of awe towards its magic.

In *Flat Lands*, Christakis deploys an alphabet of symbols related to one another in an invisible flow chart of free associations, governed by playful, circular logic. Different versions of the same imagery recur throughout, shifting between real, imagined, and digital realms. This tension between artifice and reality contains some of the central paradoxes of her practice; funny and serious, childlike and adult, the thing itself and the idea of the thing, and a slyness stemming from the irony that both polarities, compressed into flat images on her surfaces, are equally illusory.

The flattening in her works comes from the malleability of digital objects, which stack and float on top of each other as if dragged across the panels by a computer mouse. In the painting, *Blue screen error*, Christakis memorializes the photo shoot of the prop window that would become the ubiquitous Windows logo. *The Curio Shop* depicts a glittering diamond transforming into Candy Crush style cartoon currency. *Memory palace* riffs on the psychological phenomenon known by the same name. Drawing from stock imagery, children's games, digital paint programs, and unreal landscapes, Christakis intertwines the virtual and natural worlds in bewitching, surprising ways.

Brooklyn-based, New England-raised artist, **Lena Christakis**, (b. 1997) graduated with a B.A. in Art from Yale University. Christakis's works, which *Observer* called "surreal minimalist jewels," have been featured in exhibitions nationally and internationally, including at Steve Turner Gallery, Los Angeles; Palo Gallery, New York; Golsa Gallery, Oslo; Smoke the Moon, Santa Fe; Badr El Jundi Gallery, Madrid; and Fundación Maceta, Mexico City. This is her first solo exhibition.