

## YoYo Lander - *A Big Romance*

23 March - 13 May 2023



*Keni*, 2022, Stained, washed and collaged watercolor paper on watercolor paper, 167.6 x 106.7 cm (66 x 42 in)

Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery is pleased to present *A Big Romance* by YoYo Lander and *Still Tuning a Current* by Nate Lewis, the duo show featuring the artists' continued explorations of color, form, process and the body, in Paris from 23 March until 13 May.

Lander's process is one of intense looking. The women depicted in *A Big Romance* are inimitable, magnetic. She desires to catch them in their most natural and honest states. Each collage work is a coalescence of multiple still photographs captured by the artist. An arched back from this one. A shoulder rounded just so from that one. Every element of Lander's collages is meticulously approached. With watercolor paint she mixes and blends countless slivers of watercolor paper to reconstruct the figures of her sitters. She seamlessly recalls and renders dozens of browns, grays, pinks, purples, and yellows in the undertones in each subject's skin. The colors by themselves almost feel muted. With incredible attention to detail, Lander carefully reconstructs her sitters. Despite the fact that Lander has perfected this technique over a number of years, the quality of it still manages to read as alchemical. Together the strips of watercolor paper take on a fantastically dynamic energy through their kaleidoscopic range. Though she rends paper, Lander's gestures are a means toward a kind of radical wholeness. Her small gestures and sculptural tears make evident every sinew, the electrical impulses in every muscle, the ease and tension in the fascia cradling them. She renders

their eyes expertly, gently; somehow translating what feels like all the light in the world with each piece of hand-dyed paper into the figures' eyes.

It is particularly well-evidenced in *Morgan* (2023). *Morgan's* eyes are piercing. In spherical arcs, shadows and shades of brown, green, and gray, Lander manages to make the subject's eyes prismatic. They recall hyper naturalistic details of the Renaissance era seen in the work of painters like Michelangelo, Leonardo Da Vinci, Jan Van Eyck, and others. Considering that those works are almost exclusively made with oil paint, the artist achieves something with watercolor that is thoroughly uncommon and thus revelatory. Perhaps there are slight glimpses of it in British painter Elizabeth Murphy's 19th century Romantic period watercolors, and in American painter John Singer Sergeant watercolor period at the turn of the 20th century; but nothing quite like where Lander takes her technique. Because she desires to depict her sitters' equanimity and self-love, that sole soft focus of her tableaux allows her to get there. You cannot teach this kind of transmutation. It is found through experimentation and a quest to find the magical inside of both one's self and the subject.

*Texts written by Niama Safia Sandy, Visiting Assistant Professor at Pratt Institute.*

## **Biography**

YoYo Lander was born in Sumter, SC. She is an autodidact painter living and working in Los Angeles, CA. Her work has been exhibited in New York, Los Angeles, Stockholm, and Atlanta. Lander has also received numerous commissions, including ones for Beth Rudin DeWoody's Bunker Art Space; Kaiser Permanente Medical Center in Los Angeles; and Kamala Harris's Washington, D.C. office in 2017. She is part of many collections including The Petrucci Family Foundation – collection of African-American Art; Up Next Art Museum collection; Hill Harper Art Foundation. YoYo Lander is currently exposing at Zeitz MOCAA, as part of the group exhibition *When We See Us: A Century of Black Figuration in Painting*, with artists of the calibre of Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Zandile Tshabalala, Lynette Yiadom-Boaky, Amy Sherald.