

PRESS RELEASE

Louisa Gagliardi

Whereabouts

October 24 – December 21, 2024

Opening on Wednesday, October 23, 6 – 9 pm

Artist talk with Louisa Gagliardi and Joshua Amissah, 6.30 pm

Lichtenfelsgasse 5, A-1010 Vienna

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present *Whereabouts*, the gallery's third exhibition with the Swiss artist Louisa Gagliardi. It is her first solo exhibition in Austria.

Neither here nor there. In her most recent endeavor, Louisa Gagliardi continues her exploration of liminality, delving into transitional spaces that define our existence in both the physical post-internet world and the psychological landscapes we navigate daily. While addressing the eerie, surreal, and sometimes petrifying nature of in-between spaces—staircases, tunnels, and doorways—where the boundaries between presence and absence blur, this collection of work simultaneously seeks to dissect contemporary culture as it relates to identity and collective consciousness, exploring how these forces shape societal norms and individual behaviorism.

Gagliardi reveals perception itself as an intrinsic element of the creative process, both intentional and subjective. By presenting a multiplicity of cinematographic perspectives, her work invites us to critically reassess our relationship with the digitally composed layers of ink on PVC. She deftly engages with themes of alienation, existentialism, conformity, voyeurism, and a sense of melodramatic sentimentality, subtly prompting the observer to reconsider the nature and direction of their own gaze. This delicate intimacy permeates her oeuvre, yet the noticeably open spaces within works like *Jackpot* or *Leave of Absence* offer room for viewers to inhabit, inviting them to fill or fit themselves into these voids.

Amidst these tunnels of serenity, and in refined contrast to more caged scenarios surrounded by magpies, we find ourselves suspended between claustrophobia and an innate longing for freedom and self-expression. Similarly, the paintings *Gatekeeper (Open)* and *Gatekeeper (Closed)* serve as direct references to the classical era, with their colossal figures not only reminiscent of ancient empires but also representing the personified form of architecture itself. These draped figures break the fourth wall by returning our gaze and evoke a subtle sense of discomfort and separation. In contrast to much of her earlier work, Gagliardi introduces newfangled dimensions into her artistic practice by exploring a gesture collectively internalized since the advent of human-machine interfaces, such as the touch screen: the act of zooming out on a luminous iPhone. This solo exhibition seems to take a step back, zooming out from moments of domesticity and intimacy to focus more closely on the public sphere, which a broader audience might relate to.

The figures, suspended between familiarity and estrangement, seem to inhabit a disrupted ecosystem of strangers within a monocultural landscape, evoking both unease and intrigue. In this ecology, Gagliardi's subjects appear caught in a delicate rite of passage, inviting us to acknowledge that conventional social structures can be temporarily suspended, leaving the continuity of tradition in flux and casting doubt on once-certain futures. As Gagliardi poignantly observes, "Aging to me is understanding that the outcomes once taken for granted may be thrown into doubt." It is perhaps within this dissolution of doubt, where we find ourselves immersed in the bittersweet nectar of a contemporary neurosis, after emerging from the fountain of youth filled with ink, gel medium, and perhaps a splash of nail polish.

Joshua Amissah

Louisa Gagliardi was born in 1989 in Sion, Switzerland, and lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland. In 2024, Gagliardi was the subject of solo exhibitions at Galerie Eva Presenhuber x TAXA, Seoul, KR, and at Cultuurcentrum Strombeek, Grimbergen, BE. In recent years she has been the subject of shows at Edition VFO, Kunsthalle Zürich,

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Zurich, CH (2023); Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich, CH (2023); National Gallery, Prague, CZ (2022); Swiss Art Awards, Basel, CH (2021); Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, CH (2021); Antenna Space, Shanghai, CN (2020); McNamara Art Projects, Hong Kong, HK (2019); MOSTYN, Wales, UK (2019); and Openforum, Berlin, DE (2018). In 2022, she presented a large-scale work, *Tête-à-tête*, at Art Basel Unlimited in Basel. Gagliardi's work has been featured in group exhibitions such as Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich, CH (2023; 2022); National Gallery Prague, CZ (2021); Wallriss, Fribourg, CH (2019); UN Art Center, Shanghai, CN (2019); Plymouth Rock, Zurich, CH (2018); Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau, CH (2018); Kunsthalle Sankt Gallen, St. Gallen, CH (2018); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, DK (2017); and Museum Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich, CH (2017).

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