

# SENTIENCE

August 3 – September 3, 2024  
802 Northwest 22nd street, Miami, FL, USA



Paula Malinowska, How did Daphne Turn into a Plant, 2022, video still

Voloshyn Gallery is pleased to present Sentience, a group exhibition on view at the gallery's Miami location. Curated by Lilia Kudelia.

Sentience features works by US-based and European artists that collectively reflect on the mechanisms of optics and the crucial need for new ways of relating to the planet and acquired knowledge. An important concept in ethics, sentience is connected to moral agency where it defines one's aptitude for suffering and happiness. Manifested through the nervous system to detect and respond to stimuli, sentience precedes logics and reasoning, prioritizing self awareness and consciousness of various species - including the perceptions of humans, plants and animals, and the digital realm of artificial intelligences.

The works on display focus on sensations and emotions - as certainties. It is through these reactions that we have the ability to understand the extent of one's own agency within global systems and the opportunity to change power dynamics - through inquiring, embracing, inverting, or unmasking etc... What is interconnected in this group exhibition is a scrutiny of the power of myths and optical phenomena.

The monumental depictions of nettles by Pavlo Kerestey and snarling dogs from Carrie Bencardino's paintings appeal to the brain's alert system. What may be understood as a trigger or threat at first sight can be easily tamed through the careful analysis of the mechanisms of nervous system response and the untangling of mythology. The insight of an animal's growl and the intelligence of the plant's stinging hair redirect attention to the idea of resources being guarded. Indeed, we should think about the value of a growl in canine communication as prevention from conflict escalation. Similarly, the needles of the stinging nettle that painfully inject histamines under human's skin do so only at the moment of contact. More than anything, the depiction of this charismatic plant in Kerestey's paintings reminds the viewer of inspiring stories about trickster characters in Eastern and Western mythology - saints, ascetics and fairy-tale heroes (like the 12 wild swans) - who survived by taming the dangerous plant.

Much like writer Aaron Hill describes it: "Tender-handed, stroke a nettle, And it stings you for your pains. Grasp it like a man of mettle, And it soft as silk remains..."

Paula Malinowska's video in the exhibition meditates on the mythological story of Daphne from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The process of fusing human with non-human is a central motif in Malinowska's work, which bridges bodily sensibilities with the creative potential of technologies and the role it plays in establishing new relationships between living entities. Utilizing photogrammetry technique, Malinowska transforms physical objects into 3D space embracing the mistakes and errors of computer algorithms. Inspired by the "new weird" genre of literature, the artist rethinks the myth of Daphne from the perspective of a plant being, showing the heroine's botanical transformation as an act of resistance. The roots growing around Daphne's body are thus no longer an act of domination as presented in the original myth but a sign of resilience, particularly relevant in the contemporary context framed by rape culture and constant attempts by politicians to control bodily autonomy. Malinowska reminds us that the metaphors from mythological stories from the "cradle of the European civilization" "suspiciously remind of the patterns of discrimination present in contemporary society."

Arranged in the shape of Antinous constellation,\* Elijah Ruhala's exquisite watercolor paintings on burl veneer percolate his interest in the human relationship. The vignettes in his work are poetic meditations on safety and fear, connection and domination, separation and love, the sense of self and difference. Setting sumi ink into the unpredictable, scarcely absorbing grain of burl veneer is "a surrendering of control," says Ruhala. His work builds up through the metaphoric reading of chosen materials and the meticulous study of it through the painting process, which results in unique, unreplicable composition for each piece of the wood. Burl forms in trees as a result of a fungal infection. While pushing out the parasite, the wood grain uncontrollably grows in every direction, instead of forming traditional rings. Ruhala carefully moves the ink around these blotchy surfaces to visually tell his personal stories of childhood, friendships, and romantic relations while simultaneously allowing the viewer to sense how the tree processes exterior stress and infection: "The wood is literally weeding the damage out and repairing itself simultaneously."

In contrast to this, Joel Murray often looks at painting as a way to explore worlds or appearances existing outside of our objective reality, or, in the very least, his idea of these alternate lenses or glimpses that might appear unknowable in the moment. He imagines and then renders the illusion of a new space in a very concrete, recognizable setting – like disrupting a pre-existing landscape painting. The flowers in Murray's *Upward Garden* have mimetic souls floating from their more concrete and apparent bodies. *Upward Garden* is an imagined, delicate, and awkward transcendence; playful in color, but acerbic in texture and surface. In *Behind the Sky*, *Under the Dirt* a duck turns insane in the corner of the shifting ground, gem colored concentric circles break apart and hold together the sky, and a blurred rabbit nearly escapes the picture. There is also a small inclusion of mica adhered to the lower right corner of the painting, which the artist found on a walk in the New Mexico mountains. These details make up an inviting and unsettled landscape. Murray's *Taco Bell Pizzaro* is a composite image blending subject matter and color from Impressionist era painting with energetic design characteristics taken from Memphis architecture. The artist embraces hybridity, historical anachronisms and mixing of visual languages: "Sometimes, while I'm working, I feel like a prophetic Kool-aide Man is guiding my paintbrush, leading me to both new and established moments in art and architecture's vast history," says Murray.

The imposing history of architecture and its decorative elements is at the center of Danylo Halkin's practice. His monochrome painting in the exhibition, one from the larger series, depicts a smoke-dimmed stained glass window of a Soviet era building in the Dnipropetrovsk region in Ukraine, damaged by Russian missile attacks during the ongoing war. Centuries after their initial appearances in the church architecture, stained-glass windows adorn a variety of public buildings across the post-Soviet countries - from hospitals to fire stations and military offices - where they often still perform as vistas into Soviet propaganda reality. Resembling an enlarged black-and-white illustration from an old art history book, Halkin's work reminds about the burden of a painting to be a window-like plane through which the viewer can observe a continuation of their own space - tangible, believable, real.

Halkin's painting is in dialogue with the digitally created works by Liz Trosper whose series Let me open a window expands on the window metaphor, which invites viewers to reconsider the boundaries between the physical and virtual, the literal and the abstract. She incorporates digital techniques and mixed media into her process which samples identifiable imagery and pure abstraction in ways that mix high-fidelity scans and intensely distorted images in motion. Trosper is deeply interested in materiality and uses the chromatic aberrations in heavily distorted scans to foreground the materiality and visual tendencies of digital media. Liz Trosper's new work incorporates dye-sublimation printing on crepe-de-chine fabric, which refracts light in reflective pigment-based material conversation with the glowing luminosity of screens, where many of us routinely view paintings. The work traces its roots back to the history of early net art where glitch has been explored as both gesture and color field. Trosper's painting incorporates these ephemeral digital marks with voluminous physical free-floating paint skeins.

Artem Volokitin's painting from Afterimage series continues the exhibition narrative by immersing the viewer in moire patterns and iridescent color puddles that translate the effects of oil slick rainbows and thin layer physics. Focused on purely visual phenomena, such as blinding flares and afterimages, his work delves into deeper layers of physics, exploring the nature of light and the possibilities of its perception.

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\* Named in 132 AD by the Roman emperor Hadrian after his young lover, Antinous is now an obsolete asterism, discarded in 1922.

Opening Reception: Saturday, August 3, 2024, 6 - 8.30 PM  
August 3 – September 3, 2024  
Gallery hours: Tue - Sat, 11 AM - 5 PM and by appointment  
802 Northwest 22nd street, Miami, FL, USA, 33127

#### Artist Bios

**Carrie Bencardino** (Buenos Aires, 1993) is a graduate in Fine Arts from the Universidad Nacional de las Artes. They attended the Artist Program at Torcuato Di Tella University (2019) and the Artist Program at El Mirador Foundation (2020), among other educational spaces such as workshops led by Flavia Da Rin, Manuel Ameztoy or ABELE (Javier Villa y Carla Barbero). Solo exhibitions include "Un rayo de sol mi peor enemigo" (2023) at Now Gallery, Lima, and "Nunca voy a olvidar lo mal que la pasé" (2020) at PIEDRAS. Additionally, Bencardino has participated in group exhibitions and performances at various venues, including the Centro Cultural Kirchner, La Casa del Bicentenario, Centro Cultural Recoleta, and art fairs such as arteBA, Expo Chicago and NADA Miami. Bencardino has received awards, including a special mention at the National Salon of Visual Arts (2023) and at the Fundación Klemm Prize (2022) and the Regional Prize of the Visual Arts Contest of the Fondo Nacional de las Artes (2022). In 2023, they received the Oxenford Collection Travel Scholarship for a residency at Las Cicadas (Ibiza, Spain), and in 2024 the HITO Grant, a program of scholarships and workshops for artists.

**Danylo Halkin** (Dnipro, Ukraine, 1985) is a contemporary Ukrainian artist who works with public space using spatial installations, happenings, and subject-oriented art. He graduated from the Dnipropetrovsk Theater and Art College and the Academy of Civil Engineering and Architecture in Dnipro, Ukraine and is currently based in Paris. He has been a nominee (2011, 2015) and recipient of the Special Prize (2013) from PinchukArtCentre; a finalist for the Malevich Prize (2014) and the M17 Sculpture Prize (2020); and received the Special Prize of the Art Future Prize (2020). Recent group exhibitions include: "Optical Prostheses" at Maison de la Culture Amiens, Amiens (FR); "Kaleidoscope of (Hi)stories. Ukrainian Art 1912–2023" at Albertinum, Dresden (DE); "Out Loud" at Galeria Labirynt, Lublin (PL); "When Faith Moves Mountains" at PinchukArtCentre, Kyiv (UA); "Transition Dialogue Talks" at LWL Museum kunst und Kultur, Münster (DE); "Europe Endless" at Kunsthall Charlottenborg, Copenhagen (DEN); National Art Museum of Ukraine, Kyiv (UA), and others.

**Pavlo Kerestey** (Uzhhorod, Ukraine, 1951) emerged from the Paris Commune in Kyiv and represented the Ukrainian New Wave movement as a prolific painter. Based in Reading, UK and Munich, Germany, he is now working multidisciplinary in painting, video and performance often in collaboration with Susanne Clausen, under the name of Szuper Gallery. Szuper Gallery as a tool to develop formal vocabularies that extend and define the concept of gallery as institutional critique, their multi-media approach spans video, performance, installation and paintings and responds to the art world and global contexts, grappling with changing definitions of the social, addresses the anxieties embedded in capitalist fantasies. Previous exhibitions and performances include GRAD London, ICA London, Perm Museum of Contemporary Art, Kunstmuseum Thun, The MacKenzie Art Gallery, Canada, Curtain Razors, Regina, Kunstverein Bregenz, Kunsthalle Helsinki, Western Front Vancouver, Shedhalle Zurich, Künstlerhaus Bremen, Whitechapel Art Gallery, Para/Site Art Space, HongKong, Lenbachhaus Museum, Munich, Kunsthalle Vienna and Kunstverein Munich.

**Paula Malinowska** (Bratislava, 1998) is an artist based in Bratislava, Slovakia. Her work is based on the medium of photography, which she uses to create 3D photogrammetric scans of plant ecosystems. She completed her bachelor's degree in Jana Hojstričová's studio at the Department of Photography and New Media and her master's degree in Martin Piaček's studio at the Department of Intermedia at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava. She participated on various group shows and events, including Temporary Connection with a dancing Plant (A Promise of Kneropy, Bratislava, SK, 2022); Kiosk festival 2022 (Žilina, SK, 2022); The Burn Before The Burnout (Karlin Studios, Prague, CZ, 2021); Disappearing Body (Schaubmar's Mill, Slovak National gallery, SK 2021); NOWLESSION ACT III (Kunsthalle, Bratislava, OFF Festival 2021, SK); Garden Dialogues (Atelier XIII, Bratislava, SK, 2021). In 2022, she participated as a guest artist on Fall Open Studios 2022 in AiR 351 in Cascais, Portugal. Paula is the laureate of 2024 Oskár Čepan Award and will be artist in residence at Residency Unlimited in New York in the fall 2024.

**Joel Murray** (Denver, 1985) is a visual artist, curator, and educator. Murray's curatorial work includes Chateau Show, an annual group exhibition seen at the Aldredge House, a Gilded Age mansion on Swiss Avenue in Dallas, Texas. Murray's paintings are ontological narratives taken from the news, art history, stand-up comedy specials, strip-mall massage parlors and animal imagery – all of which are then combined with the artist's codex of symbols both abstruse and commonplace. Murray's work also presents non-linear stories showing life's particulate, real and imagined objects, all placed in or over altered versions of pre-existing source material. Murray held a full-time position in education with The Warehouse Dallas, has been a visiting educator with the Nasher Sculpture Center, Meadows Museum, Dallas Contemporary, and currently teaches Drawing at University of Texas, Arlington. His latest exhibition was shown with Gallery 12.26 in 2023 titled Everyday Magic, Everyday Music. Murray received his BFA from Metropolitan State University, Denver, CO and MFA from Clemson University, Clemson, SC.

**Elijah Ruhala** is an artist based in North Texas. He utilizes building materials to affect the way in which we view the connotations behind them. Ruhala's work explores queerness in what are traditionally very conservative environments, influenced by his upbringing in rural Texas. He received scholarships from Scholastic Art and Writing and Young Arts, allowing him to pursue painting at The Maryland Institute: College of Art. Receiving his BFA in 2021, he constructed a permanent studio based in Putnam, TX. In 2021 he was the recipient of the Turner House's Rising Star award. In 2022, he enrolled in Texas Christian University's MFA program. Here, he uses grants to construct thought-provoking site-specific installations at The Center for Contemporary Art in Abilene, The Fort Worth Contemporary, and Arts Fort Worth. He has been featured in New American Paintings issue #165, Friend of the Artist, as well as other publications.

**Liz Trosper** (Dallas, 1985) is a new media painter focusing on machine, beauty and material fetishes. Her practice combines the speed and shareability of digital paintings intermingled with the physical uniqueness and slowness of material practices. Trosper makes paradoxically painterly images using the processes of painting and new media. She is currently Assistant Professor of Instruction in the School of Arts, Technology and Emerging Communication at The University of Texas at Dallas where she launched The New Painter initiative, promoting creative research in new media painting, and MOTHER'S ROOM, a virtual exhibition of new media works exploring the womb as a virtual spatial metaphor. Trosper is an internationally exhibited artist, having representation by the DANAÉ HI digital art network with Laffy Maffei gallery in Paris and exhibitions with the CICA museum in South Korea and the Artron network in China. She received an MFA from the University of Texas in Dallas and an MPA from the University of North Texas. Her artwork is represented by Barry Whistler Gallery in Dallas and was recently included in a survey of abstraction at The San Antonio Museum of Art. She has been featured in a solo exhibition at The Wilcox Space, an initiative of the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History, Bernice Coulter Templeton Gallery at Texas Wesleyan University, Lawndale Art Center in Houston, Academic Gallery in New York and many other galleries and exhibition spaces.

**Artem Volokitin** (Chuhuiv, Ukraine, 1981) gained attention in the late 2000s for his paintings that combine the human figure with a heightened awareness of paint as a material. He has graduated from the Kharkiv State Academy of Design and Arts and completed an internship at Antony Gormley's painting studio in London. In 2011, he was the Main Prize Winner of the Pinchuk Art Centre, which allowed the artist to make his first appearance in the parallel program of the Venice Biennale in 2011. In his figurative work, Volokitin paints human subjects against blank backgrounds, severing any signifying context while foregrounding psychological content. In response to the turmoil and profusion of violence in his home country of Ukraine in recent years, Volokitin started to paint images of violent explosions, marking a shift in the subject matter of his paintings.