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YVETTE GELLIS

VERDURE

A Rogue Wave Project

14 SEPTEMBER - 16 OCTOBER 2021

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 2021

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Yvette Gellis, *ASCENSION*, 2021
oil on acrylic with graphite, 84 x 84 in. (213.4 x 213.4 cm)

L.A. Louver is pleased to present *Yvette Gellis: Verdure*, a group of dynamic new paintings created over the last year and hung in the gallery's light-filled second floor space. This is Gellis' first exhibition with L.A. Louver, the latest in the gallery's series of Rogue Wave Projects celebrating emerging and underrepresented artists.

The vital energy of Gellis' lush canvases manifests both in form and material. Lithe figures dance across the large surfaces, seeming to simultaneously grow from and dissolve into verdant greenery. Fluid boundaries between figure and leaf, form and space encourage a dreamlike atmosphere, emphasized by hinted-at architecture in the form of a steeply receding checkered flooring that appears in two of the large paintings. The artist's material asserts itself in frosting-thick painted passages that compound the titular verdure. The pleasure of this rich surface texture provides a counterpoint to the deep receding space created by lush abstract color.

With this series, Gellis mines deeply personal emotional reactions to current events. She writes of working in the early months of 2021:

My long time investigation into painting took a turn. What is it like to be alive today during a pandemic watching the drama of our lives unfold? Deep in isolation, this series of paintings comes from my soul as my most authentic and relevant work to date. The figures emerged from somewhere inside of me, into the here and now. Some days the work was a direct

output of what was happening internally and on other days it reflected as a counterpoint to the negativities occurring on the world stage. I was giddy with joy in the studio. I fell in love with the figures like a divine romance.



Yvette Gellis, *STUDY FOR VERDANT*, 2021
oil on acrylic background with graphite, on gessoed masonite
20 x 16 in. (50.8 x 40.6 cm)
Framed: 21 3/4 x 17 3/4 x 2 in. (55.2 x 45.1 x 5.1 cm)

The experience of a year and more of global pandemic led Gellis to consider the interconnectedness of all people, and of all life: "people, plants, animals, the water and the air - all of it is connected in nature." Drawing from this wellspring of sympathy and love for the ailing planet, Gellis infuses these paintings with tenderness through rich detail and deft paint handling. The figures become universal, alluding to a collective sense of being. Figures twist around and reach toward one another, as in *Verdant* and *Flight*; others, such as those in *River Gods*, seem translucent, correlating the space within with the space beyond. Throughout the exhibition, Gellis harnesses paint, color, and depth in a direct conversation with the social environment, proposing a gentler, more expansive mode of relating to the world.

Born and raised in Chicago, Yvette Gellis has been based in Los Angeles since the late 1990s and earned her MFA from Claremont Graduate University in 2008. Her work has been shown in solo exhibitions at 18th Street Arts Center, Santa Monica (2010, 2011); Gate Museum of Contemporary Art, Taiwan (2014); CAMAC, Marnay sur Seine, France (2014); St. Jacques Church, Dival, France (2015); Loft 8, Vienna (2016); California State University, Northridge (2019); and Fellows of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (forthcoming, 2022); and in group shows worldwide. In addition to her own studio practice, Gellis has taught at Pepperdine University since 2014 and has presented curatorial projects both locally and internationally. Her work can be found in numerous public and private collections worldwide.

About Rogue Wave Projects

L.A. Louver initiated its Rogue Wave program to present emerging and underrepresented talent in Los Angeles, mounting group exhibitions in 2001, 2005, 2007, 2009 and 2013. The gallery has also organized Rogue Wave Projects solo activities with Eduardo Sarabia (2009), Olga Koumoundoros (2010), Matt Wedel (2010), Grant Stevens (2013), Heather Gwen Martin (2014), and Chen Man (2014).

Also on view at L.A. Louver 14 September - 16 October 2021:

Michael C. McMillen: *A Theory of Smoke* (Various installations)

No Mask Is Wholly a Mask (First Floor)

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