

PARK VIEW / PAUL SOTO

Pinky?

Tom Borgese, Nika Kutateladze, Adam Martin,
Elliott Jamal Robbins, John Sandroni, Daniel Wenger
September 28 – November 4, 2023
Los Angeles

PAUL SOTO is pleased to announce *Pinky?*, an exhibition of paintings, video, and multimedia works by six artists working in Los Angeles, New York, Tbilisi, and Tulsa. This exhibition opens the fall season at our Los Angeles location on Thursday, September 28th with an opening reception for the artists from 6 to 8pm. The exhibition will continue through Saturday, November 4th.

"Pinky?"

Is it a question or an exclamation or both? I was walking through New York this past summer and happened to look up from my phone, and there it was written on a billboard, "Pinky?" A number of associations came to mind: cartoons, etiquette... But mostly I was intrigued by it as an utterance that was abstract. It had no meaning for me until it did. It is language but it is almost just sound, and also a color and also a body part. Kind of girly and kind of gay, too, but not entirely those. Just, "Pinky?"

This utterance inspired the show, or my experience of it at that moment. These artists use methods of abstraction that seem peculiarly subjective, with decisive or objective qualities that reflect something personal. They observe, document, compile. Some deal with media and some with art and architectural history. And then they translate or transform their subject matter through a sort of filtration process. There is a personalizing element that ends up in their artworks as they do this, so strong for each that their artworks take on personified qualities. Erudite scholar, transcendent stargazer, angsty adolescent, obsessive fan, etc. Looking at these works I am transformed out of myself and into myself.

I wanted to know, how could something so personal (representation, subjective decision-making) also be so universal (abstraction)? Invisible, affective substances seep off the works, producing a kaleidoscope of feelings in my body: longing, alienation, tenderness, humor.

–Paul Soto

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

TOM BORGESE is a painter who depicts the natural world at a remove, utilizing media imagery and memory to compose heavenly formations, seascapes, and weather phenomena. He has been painting his series of sky-scapes for over twenty years. Evoking the Hudson River School and the European Romantics, Borgese brings a keen attention to atmosphere in flux. He uses source photos from the Hubble Telescope and newspaper clippings to begin. He often uses multiple photos at a time, which he sets aside once he achieves a particular palette and rhythm. Borgese then paints from memory and from objective inquiry, which he describes as a type of source code. This form of subjective channeling in effect portrays the chaotic unpredictability of outside forces as personally felt.

TOM BORGESE (b. 1969 in Reading, Pennsylvania) lives and works in Los Angeles. Borgese graduated from Tyler School of Art in 1991 before moving to New York City. There, Borgese found close cohorts in Jack Pierson, Alex Bag, Danny McDonald, Lizzie Bougatsos, Rob Pruitt, and Jack Early. In the mid-90s, Borgese created the Utopian Art Fair (the first 'alternative art fair') to coincide with the Armory Show. Participants included Bag, Pruitt, Karen Kilimnik, Mariko Mori, and Art Club 2000. Around the same time Borgese was performing in a dance group with Christian Holstad and Delia Gonzalez. In 1998, he curated *I Hate Movies*, a group show at Andrew Kreps Gallery, featuring his own work, as well as pieces by Bag, Pierson, Tom Burr, and Julian LaVerdiere. His work has also been included in group shows at Greene Naftali, Spencer Brownstone, Texas Gallery and Galerie Thaddeus Ropac.

NIKA KUTATELADZE works in installation, sculpture and, recently, paintings. His works explore the quotidian and day-to-day from a transformative perspective. His figures and landscapes highlight complexities of migration and how socio-economic conditions manifest in architecture and daily life. The works contain an introspective energy, with characters who are lost in physical activity or in thought.

NIKA KUTATELADZE (b. 1989 in Tbilisi, Georgia) lives and works in Tbilisi and Paris. His works have been exhibited at Gallery Artbeat, Tbilisi; Stuart Shave / Modern Art, London; VITRINE, London; Foundation Cartier, Paris; Kunsthalle Tbilisi; and Yarat Contemporary Art Center, Baku, amongst other venues.

ADAM MARTIN's multimedia works take the form primarily of visual novel games, designed and accessible on an ordinary PC. They are a collection of short stories or "scenes," which the viewer or player guides themselves through, choosing their own path. Confessional and atmospheric, many of the scenes are autobiographical and others are fictionalized. They illustrate adolescent experiences that harbor grave interior intensity – rumination, angst, paranoia, and fear. Dealing with this relatable and emotional content from the point of view of the young self, his visual novels are open-ended, generating distinct moods as the viewer or player clicks along in a form of digitized, game-like abstraction. The title of the artist's visual novel in the exhibition is called, "Brain Damage," which

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revolves around self-destruction and memory. The scenes are foreboding and involve some sort of reckless behavior for the player. These vignettes placed side-by-side “break down life into its most intense moments, intensities of experience that result in permanent memories, says Martin.

ADAM MARTIN (b. 1989 in Iowa) lives and works in New York. His works have been exhibited at Galerie Buchholz, Cologne; Francesca Pia, Zürich; Etablissement d'en Face, Brussels; Edouard Montassut, Paris; Lomex, New York; Plymouth Rock, Zürich; GANDT, Queens; and Heidi Gallery, Berlin, amongst other venues.

ELLIOTT JAMAL ROBBINS' moving image work and ink and watercolor works contend with mass media and norms within comics and animation. They deal with racial and gendered stereotypes, reading like critical displays of masculinity and blackness. From a recent press release of Robbins' work: “A black and queer body bumping up against white hetero-patriarchy – as dually oppositional and pleasure seeking, drawn out to an extreme of hyper violent sexuality.” Robbins' latest animation, featured in the exhibition, focuses on the figure of John Wayne, in particular the worship of Wayne as the preeminent example of laissez-faire, Manifest Destiny masculinity, the ultimate frontiersman. Robbins ink drawings of stereotyped black figures converse with Wayne's image, altering and enveloping him.

ELLIOTT JAMAL ROBBINS (b. 1988 in Oklahoma City) lives and works outside of Tulsa, Oklahoma. His works have been exhibited at Paul Soto, Los Angeles; Galerie Nagel Draxler, München and Berlin; Weiss Falk Gallery, Basel; Kai Matsumiya Gallery, New York; Samson Projects, Boston; Greene Naftali, New York; and The Drawing Center, New York, among other venues. Robbins received a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2021.

JOHN SANDRONI's paintings depict cityscapes, sprawled figures, and glints of imagery peeked on the street, amongst other subjects, which he delicately renders. His atmospheric style of painting registers a moment as it comes into focus, when particular details develop personal meaning. Elements in his compositions sharpen into relief through a vapor of painterly gesture. His imagery feels familiar, evoking typical genre paintings found in a bourgeois home (still life, landscape, portraiture, etc.). Yet certain twisted elements, like an unconventional palette or unexpected detailing, evoke Sandroni's sense of humor as he re-codes the ordinary.

JOHN SANDRONI (b. 1994 in New York) lives and works in New York. His works have been exhibited at Derosia Gallery, Fierman Gallery, David Zwirner Gallery, Theta Gallery, and Kai Matsumiya, all in New York; DREI Gallery, Cologne; And Now Gallery, Dallas; and Christian Andersen Gallery, Copenhagen (solo, forthcoming), amongst other venues.

DANIEL WENGER is a painter who is interested in the problem of storytelling in abstract painting, in particular the transformation of thought-language into visual grammar. His practice focuses on the physical, in how the elemental properties of paint on canvas bear ideology, cultural genealogy and biography in themselves. Wenger brings a forensic capacity to the medium, investigating particular historical narratives closely and developing series from them, turning distinctive elements on their heads. The painting in the exhibition evokes a particular Édouard Vuillard painting, “First Fruits,” commissioned by the Jewish-French banker Adam Natanson for his Paris villa in 1899. Wenger has sampled a section of the painting, revised and reversed the palette of the work in order to experience his own “afterlife” with the painting's narrative through his own subjective decisions in rendering it.

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DANIEL WENGER (b.1987 in Los Angeles) lives and works in Los Angeles. He received his MFA from Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, and his BA from Harvard College. His works have been exhibited at Artist Curated Projects, Los Angeles; and HIT, Geneva (with Maggie Friedman). Wenger's work will be included in a forthcoming group exhibition at Morán Morán Gallery, Los Angeles.

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