



Press Release - To the Bog of Cats I One Day Will Return

Exhibition Dates: September 14th - October 26th, 2024

la BEAST gallery is beyond honored to present 'To the Bog of Cats I One Day Will Return,' a stunning solo presentation of oil paintings by artist Amy MacKay. In this striking series, MacKay bridges the world of theater and painting, capturing the essence that lives and breathes in the spaces between the spoken realm and the landscape of fixed images. Inspired by Marina Carr's haunting play 'By the Bog of Cats,' MacKay explores the depths of visual storytelling, not only by evoking an experience of layer, emotion, and form, but by presenting a perspective that the separation between event and document, is a distinctly fascinating place to devote one's attention.

'To the Bog of Cats I One Day Will Return' opens with a reception on Saturday, September 14th, from 6-9 pm at la BEAST gallery in Cypress Park. The show's conclusion will take place on October 26th.

About the Exhibition

Somewhere in the canopied neighborhood of San Marino California, we were invited to a play. Not our usual Sunday-Funday activity, but an intriguing offer none the less. Squarely positioned in the driveway, a well dressed and gregarious looking fellow greeted us, directing us through a narrow Japanese inspired walkway. What became abundantly obvious as we entered, was the presence of a pool. Overflowing with conspicuous inflatables, this inviting body of water presented itself loudly and clearly. *"This whole idea, though a simple idea, started with the concept of creating a performance where the audience is submerged in a body of water,"* MacKay muses. Without fully understanding what we were getting ourselves into, us and a collection of friends and colleagues, found ourselves dripping wet, and properly immersed in the throws of Amy MacKay's reenactment of 'By the Bog of Cats'.

If you don't know it, the play itself is an interpretive take on the Greek myth of 'Medea,' centering around the existence of 'The Overbearing Mother,' all cast through the lives of a community in the Irish 'Midlands'. Though a very compelling play, one of the more interesting parts of the whole experience was watching not only the actors prance around the garden, but also witnessing the crew of documentarians dance about the stage, trying not to interrupt the unfolding performance. The two photographers and one cinematographer, were indeed, impossible to ignore. As twilight shifted into nightfall, an unshakable feeling presented itself. Despite being the invited guests, our purpose wasn't really to observe what was happening around us. More like, our role as the audience, was to be documented as 'the observers'. This is all to say that everything about this evening was conceived, captured, and rendered for another purpose all together.

"Like a road doubling back on itself in the wrong direction, the resulting paintings lend themselves to a crisis of translation," explains Amy. MacKay has an unique commitment to the



exploration of narrative through site-specific performance. Subsequently, these performed productions slowly fade away, but still linger in the ether, more akin to an oblong memory than a hardened record. The resulting works mimic the liminal space they were born from; dramatic yet soft, luscious but eerie. *"It is precisely the impossibility of creating a 'true' account of such a complex set of experiences that makes me interested in using paint as a form of documentation,"* adds Amy.

MackKay's work invites us to enter her theater; to become part of her story. The chill of water, the weight of words, the pulse of movement amid the stillness, are all exposed in her compositions. She effortlessly captures a quivering dream, holds onto that feeling, and shares it with a crowd of willing spectators. *"Each image is made and destroyed repeatedly, so that the surface becomes a site of performed forgetting."*