



DANICA LUNDY

MAGENTA PLAINS

Danica Lundy builds worlds to evoke vivid, slow-release experiences that sit on the tongue and dissolve in the mouth. Autobiographical content shares space with collective and imagined histories. Recently, these worlds have settled in around adolescence, where sentience is heightened to a fever pitch and many versions of selves are tried on and discarded. Thinking about the dull edge between woman- and girl-hood provides access to a familiar paradigm of untidy transformation— of discovery, danger, and abrupt loss of innocence. Reoccupying it helps inform pictorial decisions, so that a painting can become a poem, a nightmare, a construction site; a lived-in arena for testing out the limits of one's own power.

Lundy received her MFA in 2017 from the New York Academy of Art, and her BFA in 2013 from Mount Allison University. She was the recipient of the Leipzig International Art Programme Residency, the NYAA Chubb Post-Graduate Fellowship, and is a three-time Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grantee. Her work has been exhibited in shows and fairs internationally; her most recent solo exhibitions include *Sunday Fair* in London, *bleach cologne* at GNYP Gallery in Berlin, and *Cherry Log Road* at Super Dakota in Brussels. Her works are included in private collections around the world, as well as the ICA Miami, the Sydney Modern, The Schorr Family Collection, and the Collezione Maramotti. Lundy will mount a solo exhibition at White Cube in London in 2022.

Born in 1991, Salt Spring Island, Canada
Lives in New Haven, CT and works in Brooklyn, NY

94 Allen St.

New York, NY 10002

www.magentaplains.com

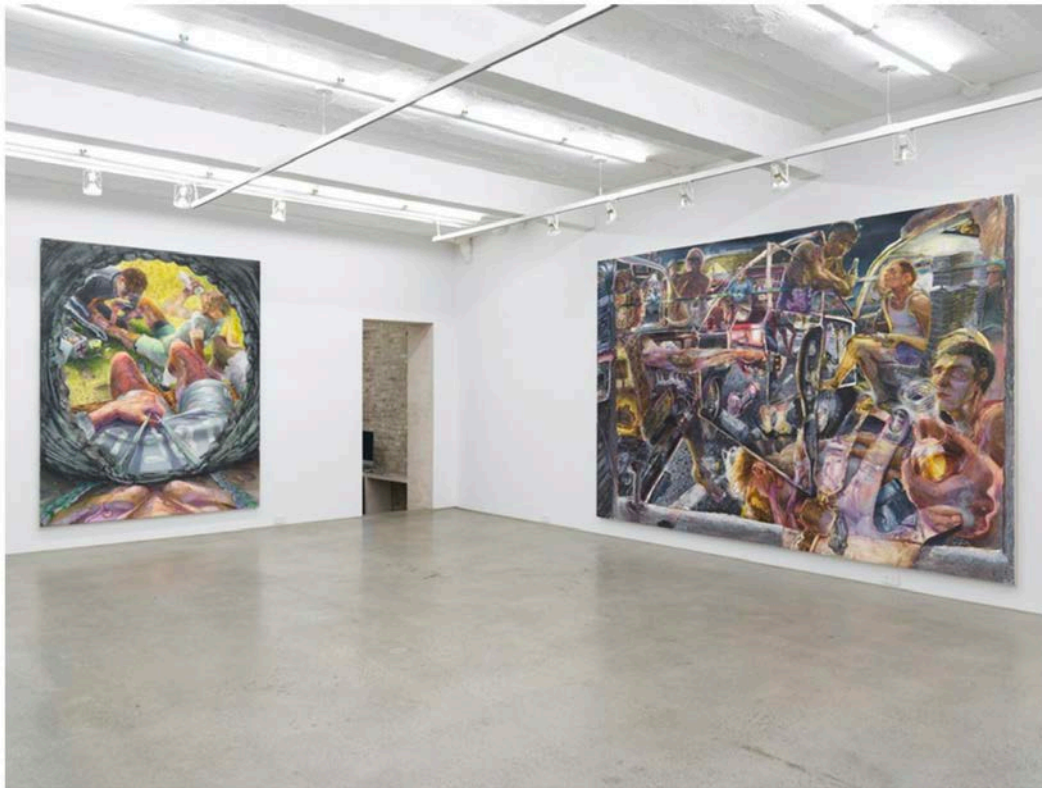
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The Brooklyn Rail

9 March 2022

BROOKLYN RAIL**ArtSeen**

Danica Lundy: *Three Hole Punch*

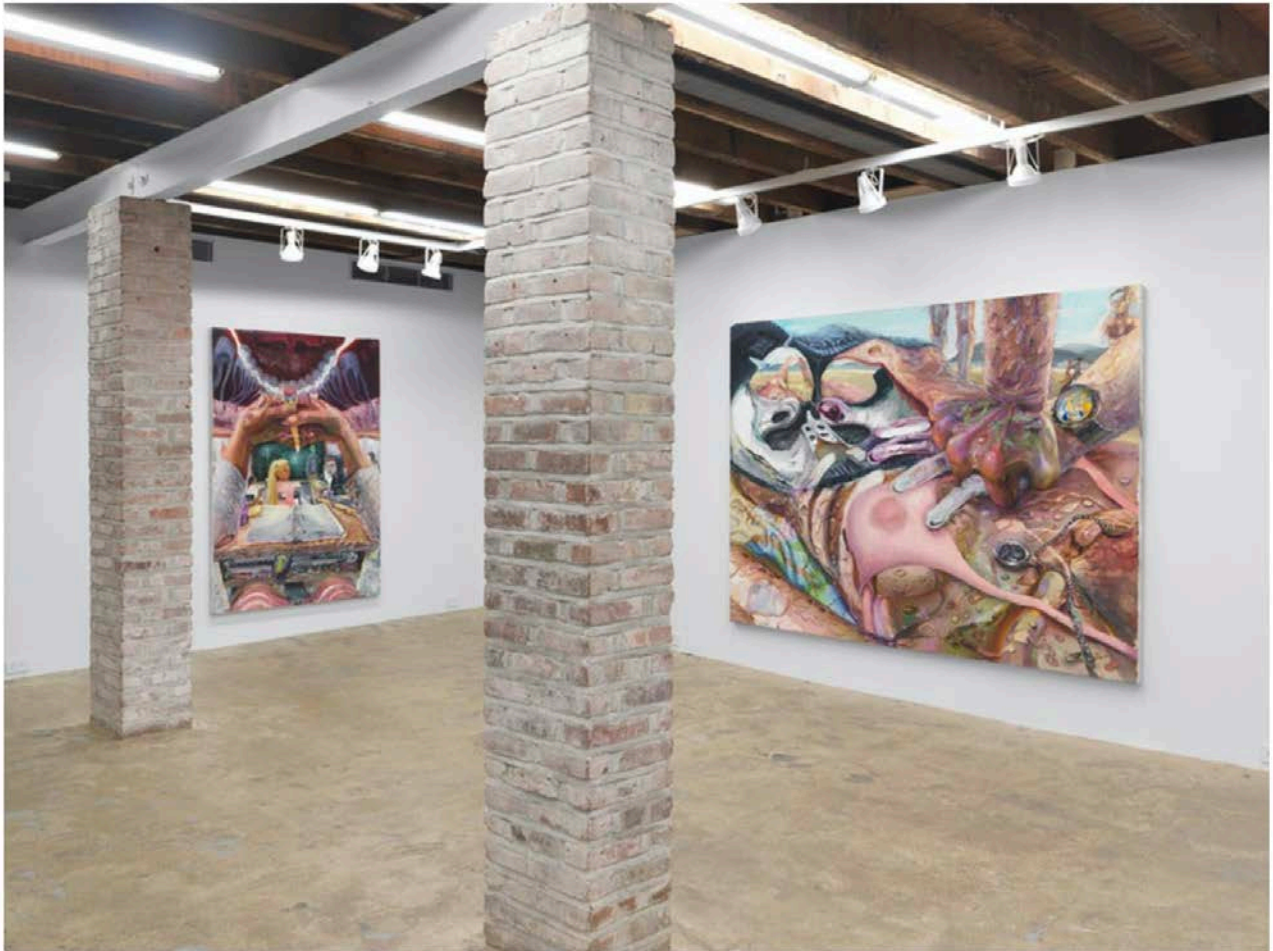
By **Andrew Paul Woolbright**

Installation view: *Danica Lundy: Three Hole Punch*, Magenta Plains, New York, 2022. Courtesy Magenta Plains, the artist, and Super Dakota, Brussels. Photo: © Shark Senesac.

Who is a worthy subject of the contemporary portrait? Last February, I wrote about Angela Dufresne's show at Yossi Milo Gallery, a show that posited what a post-humanist figurative painting practice could look like by transferring the significance of the individual subject to the group that they are swept up in, in all of its polyphonic swarm. This transition from critical feminist theory to depicting our ecological contingencies in figurative painting has become a recent development. There is an urgency to reconsidering humanist subjects as the background of human life continues to drift into the foreground. Simultaneously, there is the realization that the existential threats to our shared existence require community organization, not individual awakening or self-care.

A year later, Danica Lundy's exhibit *Three Hole Punch* potentially offers an alternative response to a post-humanist painting practice through an intentional *multivalent* painting. Although painting itself is always multivalent, Lundy purposefully uses brushstrokes to index multiple interpretations and coexisting moments of time and space simultaneously, specifically upsetting the boundaries between personhood and objecthood. For example, in *Compressions* (2021), a wrinkle in the fabric of a blanket also weirdly registers as a vein that is painted with the same texture as a nearby telephone cord. Lundy is purposeful with this texture confusion, throwing materiality like a ventriloquist throwing their voice, painting shiny cylinders with heavy impasto, or human skin through machinic, rectilinear forms. This multiple inter-translation of time, space, and meaning is unique to painting. In the case of Lundy's work, this multiple indexing—one that forces an agnosia between muscle, tissue, cord, and wire—ultimately makes the world of objects more human and the world of humans more object-like. When it is most successful, it works on a Deleuzian level of disassociation, where the world itself becomes reticular, undifferentiated—and the bodies are plugged into an ecological machine that is at once materially real and psychically understood.

In *Art, as Device* (1917) Viktor Shklovsky wrote that abstraction's utility was the disruption of the *over-automatization* of everyday life. Lundy's indexical uncertainty has an opposite effect, driving directly into the manic disorientation of self and space, a compositional confusion of figure and ground. The multiple registers and open indexes of mark-making, and the estrangement produced within the representational image that resists quick gestalt, produces an anxiety that echoes our difficulty to individuate in the newly territorialized Web 3.0 and the subsumption of all of our interests into non-consensual data collection, down to the harvesting of our pictures at parties.



Installation view: Danica Lundy: *Three Hole Punch*, Magenta Plains, New York, 2022. Courtesy Magenta Plains, the artist, and Super Dakota, Brussels. Photo: © Shark Senesac.

Figurative painting took a navel gaze-y turn during the Obama administration. Bodies in paintings were seen on contemplative wilderness hikes, looking in the mirror and pinching body fat. Lundy's work seems to both acknowledge this recent inward turn of figurative painting while complicating and evolving it into a post-humanist turn. Ten years out from a solipsistic moment in figuration, the subject in *U of u* (2021) gazes so hard into the navel that the body splits and splays open into a genre of body horror. Is the neoliberal mantra, that the *personal is political*, a Cronenberg fate of self-alienation?

This hollow body motif reoccurs throughout *Three Hole Punch*. The language of Lundy's inside/outside isn't patient; instead it's a carving out, a splitting of the body down the center. Lundy's inside/outside politics of self triggers the nervous system. Once primed, the show registers the spectrum of Lundy's material handling of paint in the spine as much as in the eye. In *Ferry Ride* (2021) and *U of u* the bottom of the painting dives straight down the spine and into the ground, transferring into us a dizzying vertigo. As your eyes move up the paintings, the vantage point shifts, bending and pulling sharply upwards towards you like the peak of a rollercoaster, before speeding away into the far distance as you reach the top of the canvas. The multiple perspective points create a forced fisheye lens, or bring to mind the visual sense of a 360-degree camera, where the farther things get away from the lens the more legible they appear. The more we try to look down at ourselves, the more anxious and vertiginous the space becomes.

Whether the exit velocity through the self is able to arrive at something more transcendent or critical seems secondary to what Lundy's multiple indexing allows. *Spark up, gas down* (2021) accelerates her ideas and scale to the genre of history painting. An open, invisible car door is a compositional device that divides up the bodies within the scaffolding of a parking lot hangout. For every panic attack felt in the forced first-person perspective the painting sets up, you are also made aware of the bodies of others. With the fear of being a poser, there's also the chance of finding community, the thrill of romantic possibility, and the luxurious in-between of being bored and having nothing to say on a Friday night.

The Brooklyn Rail

5 March 2022

TWO COATS OF PAINT

SOLO SHOWS

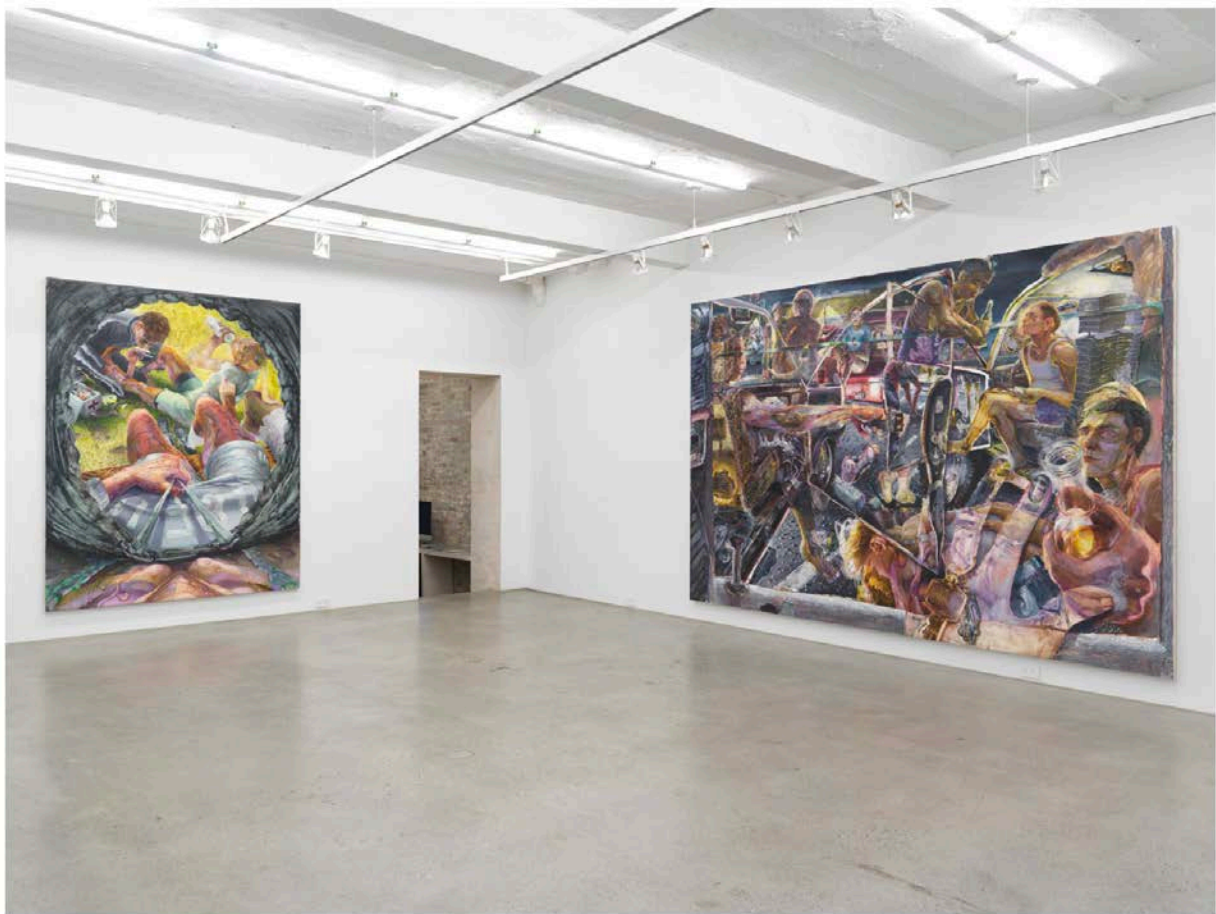
Memento Vivere: Danica Lundy at Magenta Plains



Danica Lundy, Spark up, gas down, 2021, oil on canvas, 96 x 144 inches. (Images courtesy of the artist and Super Dakota, Brussels)

Contributed by **Margaret McCann** / Like a strobe light gifted with consciousness, Danica Lundy lets whatever she sees point a way through a painting. The six works in “Three Hole Punch” at Magenta Plains are informed by memories of soccer practice, parties, school, and more – themes that function mainly as armatures for corporeal drama and mesmerizing painting detail. In the large, dazzling *Spark up, gas down* young people hang in and around cars in a parking lot at night. Someone proffers a beer, farther up people sit on car hoods or, in the far distance, rummage through a trunk. To the right a couple are having a conversation, but whether it’s deep or shallow is unclear. Cloisonnistic borders, like the Cubistic ones in **Thomas Hart Benton**’s paintings extolling modern labor in the machine age, organize these vignettes. What might appear to be a carefree, youthful idyll is subverted by incidentals such as a bent over girl puking in a bag; because it’s not quite funny it doesn’t comedically resolve, suspending the narrative to keep the viewer guessing.

Electric light bouncing off glass and metal gives the image a shimmering quality. A glittering seat belt and door-lock knob in extreme foreground fortify the rectangle to contain the action. There, a **Robert Birmelin**-like transparent hand holds sparkling keys. Nearby, fingerprints on the window are one of Lundy’s many diverting **Proustian** footnotes – offhand instances of cause and effect drawing on the eye’s ability to shift, refocus, and inquire – the pleasures of open-ended looking. If unnoticed by the viewer on the first go around, they emerge like rewards later.

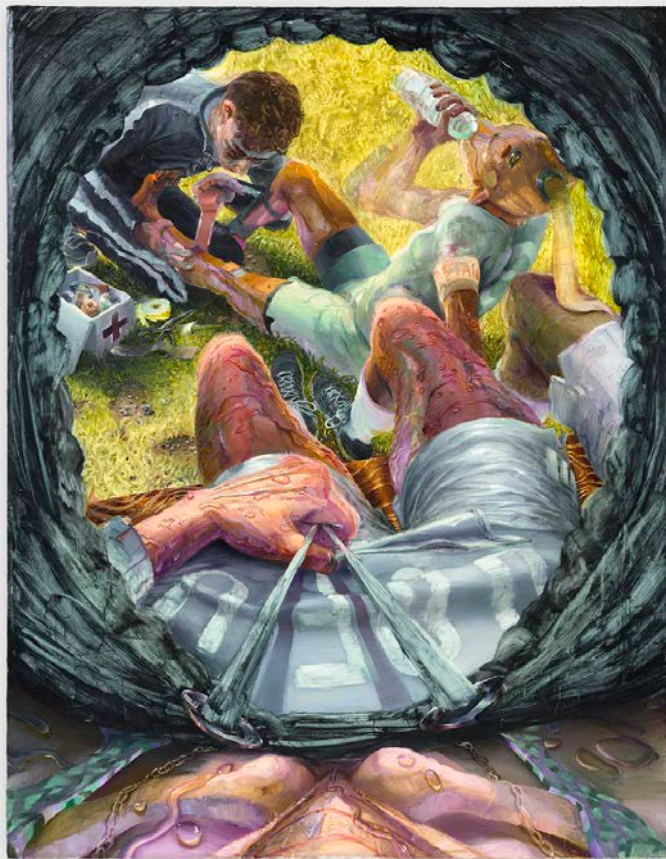


Danica Lundy, installation view

Lundy’s use of cars (in several works, two in this show) echoes the Futurist enthusiasm for gleaming metal, velocity, and change. Seat springs, dials, glove compartments, and six pack rings suggest the multivalent sensations cars offer – headlights piercing into hypnotic one-point perspective as speed blurs out the side window; smells of gas, exhaust, cigarettes, air conditioning; engines revving, idling, or humming along in a sealed chamber for meditation, conversation, meditation or music. A latecomer in *Spark up, gas down* thrusts open her car door. We can almost hear it creak as the push responds to the inevitable heaviness felt when momentum is halted by the hinge. Implied here and elsewhere is the physical pleasure of manipulation – how the car (especially a standard shift) is handled by a body as Lundy happens to express them in the act of painting. The vigor of the painter is acted out in her figures.

Against the sensitive equilibrium held by the exiting passenger's taut, strong, yet scrappily defined arm, her foot tests how rough the pavement is. As it seems to consider how to position itself, her eye aligns with the forefront window, and perhaps regards another female across the way – a potential rival, an alter ego? It doesn't matter, because attempts to understand their relationship are diverted by information on the latter's door, asking us what those reflected bodies are doing and where they are. Deciphering spatial cues is another entertaining aspect of Lundy's paintings. Full of sensory reaction and understanding, they express feelings more fundamental than psyche or interpersonal rapport. Despite the teen films cited as inspiration, there is little or no psychodrama or romantic suspense. Faces don't betray individuality, readable emotion, or motive. Undriven by narrative responsibility, characters are eager actors happy to perform for us, act out in whatever spectacle Lundy concocts.

Bodily actions trigger muscle memory the way watching the Olympics does – an impersonal but highly attuned physical empathy with its own exquisite drama. Sports is featured in *U of u*, following a tradition that goes back at least to Greek sculpture's praise of the athletic body. Our vision, framed by a hoodie that touches a blocky clavicle recalling **Luca Signorelli's** earnest anatomical thinking, slides along the player's body and up the picture plane. We land on the sideline, where another being bandaged seems more thirsty than distressed. There is no conclusion to this slice of life, but the lack of apparent meaning in Lundy's stories – like the tale of someone vomiting in *Peggy cries softly* – does not dishearten because Lundy's youthful skepticism stops well short of nihilism. Unlike Damien Hirst's shock-jockery, an animated, technical bravado and respect for particulars keep us involved and caring.



Danica Lundy, *U of u*, 2021, oil on canvas, 96 x 75.25 x inches



Danica Lundy, *Peggy cries softly*, 2021, oil on canvas, 60 x 60 inches

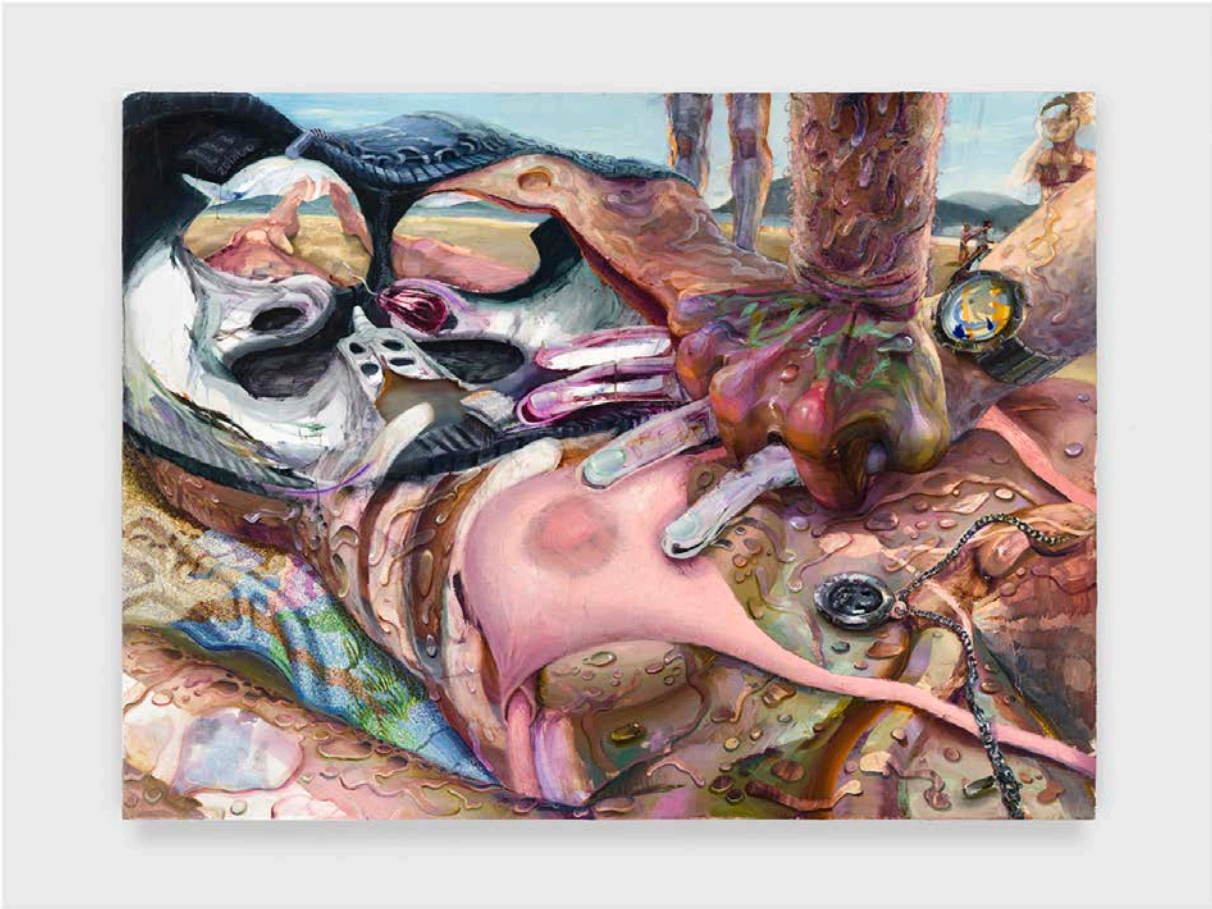


Danica Lundy, *Kissing cavity*, 2021, oil on canvas, 72 x 48 inches

Lundy's unapologetic vantage doesn't need to surpass any male gaze. While her quizzical eye for detail and affinity for muscular gesture were no doubt honed from observation and figure study, her confident scan may have developed from experience on the field. In the United States we can thank Title IX for strengthening vision beyond gendered inhibitions – although today's desiring consumerist eye, navigating the internet looking for stimulation, might deserve more credit. In any case, Lundy's opportunistic gaze is mirror neuron-driven, recalling the Greek "psychopodia" – a tactile form of perception that preceded the model of the eye as receptor. Freely roving, Lundy seems to revel in Gustave Flaubert's optimistic observation that "anything becomes interesting if you look at it long enough."

Lively impatience is carried through the classroom scene *Kissing a Cavity*, where our view is conducted through a schoolgirl's mouth. Zooming in and out, we notice a specter at the distant blackboard, perhaps a teacher, though drawings there could be by a naughty classmate, or the protagonist's woolgathering projections. Greater attention to these options is derailed by a mean girl's glowing blonde hair and a boy looking back, a pencil pointed at the girl or at herself – hara-kiri style, or, as in a Freudian nightmare, to be gnawed on with ineffectual gossamer teeth. Back stories don't matter; simultaneous, free-associative combinations – like the triangulating term "three-hole punch" – naturally occur, mind-pops that vision darts through. Around the three-ring binder here, the play of light on paper and glinting off metallic parts in the desk below, steals the show – another not-pretty yet jewel-like treat from her paintings.

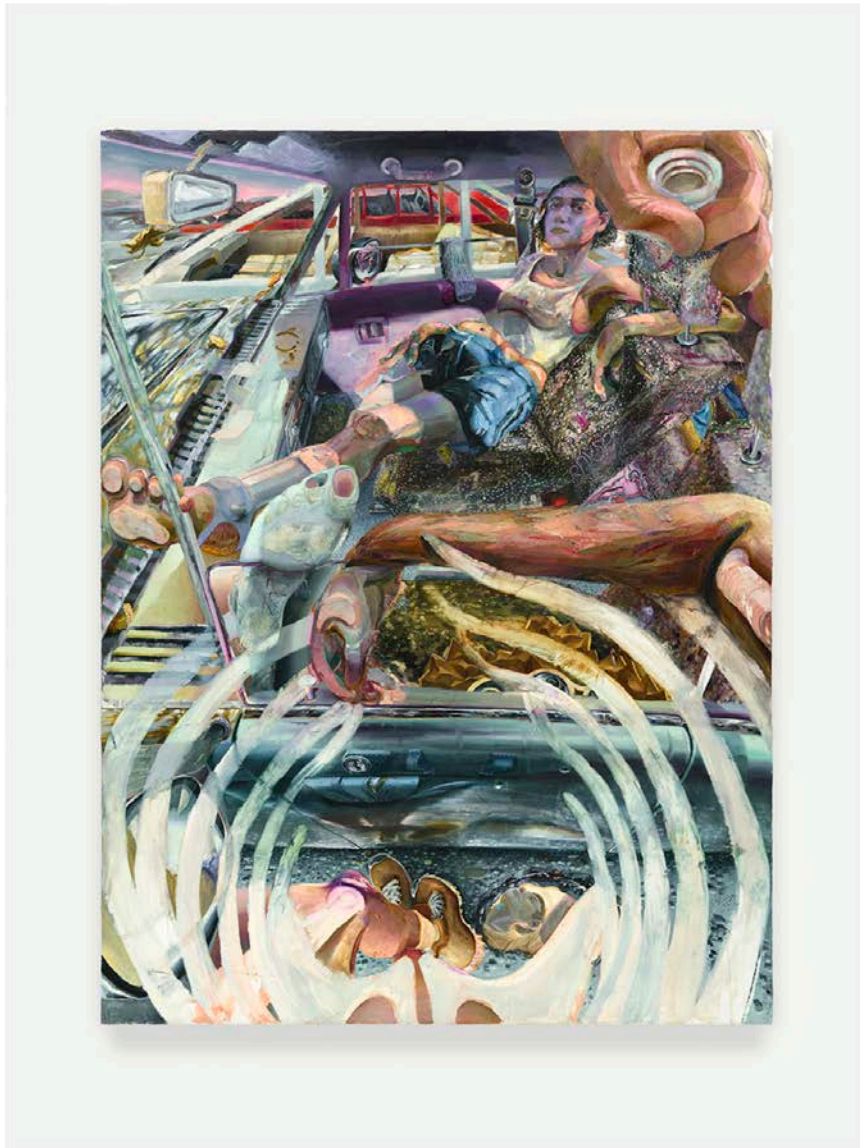
In *Compressions*, reminiscent of Dana Schutz's tender *Surgery*, mortality is joked about as realization dawns that a near-death experience, or the attempted revival of a rotting corpse one might imagine oneself to someday be, is punctuated by a bloody tampon floating in invisible pelvic anatomy. The pressure of the **David Siqueiros**-like hands pumping the sternum and heart is intensely satisfying yet cartoonish, like the gruesome yet goofy, rubbery, twisting flesh. Meanwhile, omnipresent beads of sweat or desiccation delicately fragment the surface. Captivating articulations of light and shadow on glistening timepieces, and in careful folds of tropical-patterned terrycloth, lighten the mood. A **Jorg Immendorf**-like energy keeps the gloomy at bay as visual curiosity is continuously propelled forward.



Danica Lundy, *Compressions*, 2021, oil on canvas, 72h x 96w x 1.5od in

Despite its attraction, color is incidental and saturation may at times impede the way. Lundy's present power is centered in tonal structure and variegated textures – upholstery, slimy grass, droplets, metals – that her more dry, delicate pen drawings showcase. In her oils, local textures play off fluid abstract ones that flinging paint around gives way to – and which may then surrealistically determine how forms ensue, à la Max Ernst. While flesh feels mostly like paint, her alchemical textures can disarm, evoking sensations that imply gentleness, anger, and disgust – not unlike those Otto Dix found in his etchings of decaying soldiers in trenches. But while his depict the horror of war, Lundy's ungainly swashes, awkward dabs, and inconsistent smears, made by whim and loose-limbed vitality, can contradict iconography. Opposing emotive responses on our part – ick, wow, huh? – keep us in a state of non-linear expectation, ever-ready to enjoy the bumpy ride's surprises.

Ferry Ride might have a conclusion, however. The cubic interior of a front seat both aligns with the picture's rectangle and braces a passenger in the upper corner waiting to cross to another shore. The mythology of driving or the open road implied here has been mined by filmmakers from Federico Fellini to Wim Wenders and wordsmiths like Walt Whitman, Jack Kerouac and Bruce Springsteen. Lundy's existentialism is oblique, with no minor chords or painful sweetness to guide feeling. From a stretched diagonal pose, the tension of toes against the window highlights tacky contact of toe pads against glass. We can feel the stickiness and may wonder whether grime or humidity caused it. This element of levity distracts from the potential of the scene to convey quiet waiting, something Edward Hopper would poetically evoke, and which is also muted by a dizzying vortex pulling the eye from a flat pattern of ribs into a deep dive down the car door to feet on the ground. The flamboyant iconography of this other figure's half-skeletal anatomy, a jarring juxtaposition like that of the anamorphic skull in **Holbein's *The Ambassadors***, ruptures the reading.



Danica Lundy, *Ferry ride*, 2021, oil on canvas, 96 x 72.25 inches

The painting's division into two areas holds the vectored space together: a light, flat one of bones, sock, dashboard, adjacent white car, short shirt and bottle mouth that disintegrates reality like a photographic negative, and a colored one full of life, with a vertical ballast of dark down the center. Her bare toes touch the border between them, as does the subtle shadow of the standing figure across her body. While Lundy doesn't say much about the rapport between these people aside from ease, the image implies separation and passage. Without the angst or mourning of **Kathe Kollwitz** or **Edvard Munch**, sudden and inexplicable departure is suggested. The x-ray ribcage, which might appear corny at first, lingers hauntingly like an afterimage. All her pictures avoid sentimental rumination by keeping things moving with multiple focal points – circus-like visions that are **Nietzschean** reminders that one is alive and can flourish with passionate commitment.

Lundy's fearless gusto reminded me of Tintoretto's theatrical Biblical paintings at **San Rocco in Venice**. The massive cycle offers one visual thrill after another; the spectacular *Crucifixion* feels almost like a celebration. Tintoretto may lack the subtle resonance of Titian or Bellini, who more quietly induce the profound. But his histrionics probably gave the private Catholic institution that commissioned them, serving victims of the plague, a shot in the arm. Likewise, Lundy's intelligent, challenging, life-affirming sensationalism feels just right for a pandemic.

Hyperallergic

3 March 2022

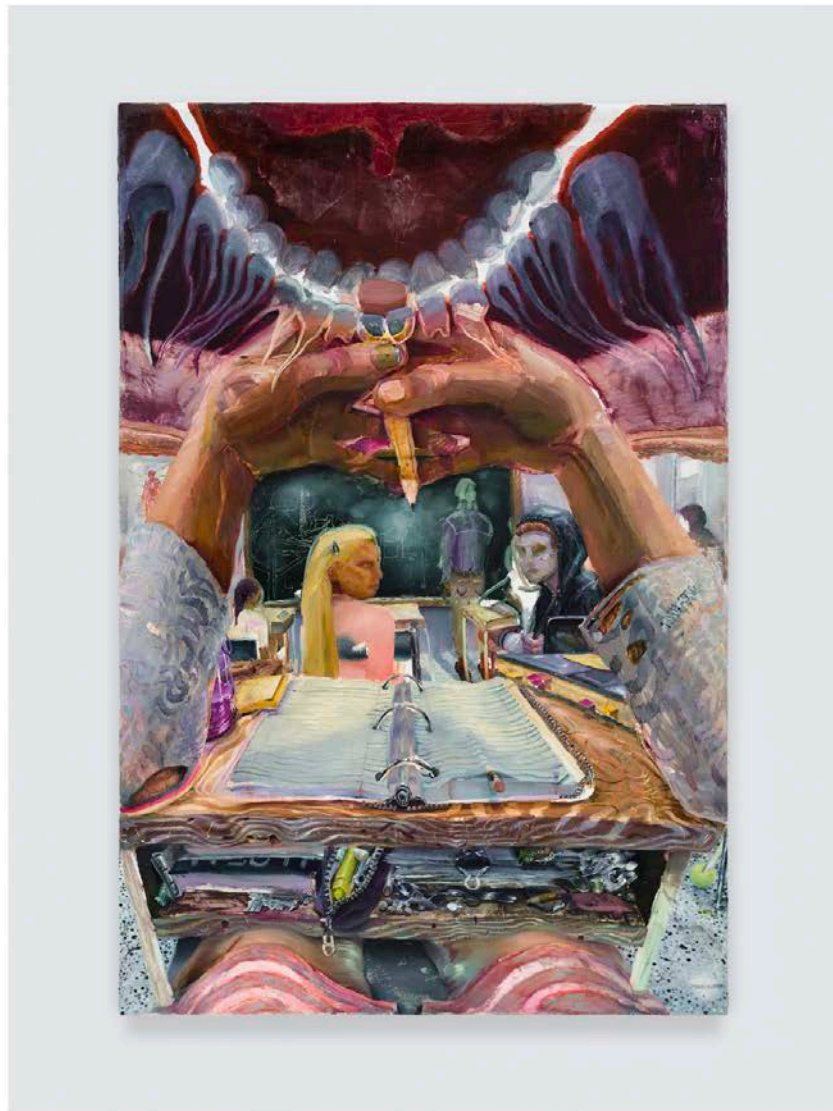
HYPERALLERGIC

A “Boobs-Eye View” and Other Perspectives on the Body

In Danica Lundy's paintings it seems that I can see two places at once, inside and outside my body.



by John Yau
5 mins ago



Danica Lundy, "Kissing cavity" (2021), oil on canvas, 72h x 48w x 1.50d inches
(Photography by Shark Senesac. Courtesy the artist and Super Dakota, Brussels)

I have the feeling that I am perched inside a teenage girl's mouth. I am looking at two classmates who are seated directly in front of me, and the blackboard beyond. The image on the blackboard seems to mirror what I am seeing. Or am I inside my own mouth, pushing the tip off a pencil through the space between my teeth and their roots, while glancing at the three-hole notebook on my desk (do these still exist?), as well as the classroom in front of me? It seems that I can see two places at once, inside and outside my body. Or, I can see both what's outside and inside my body, which suggests that I am transparent, like a jellyfish.

These are some of the thoughts I had while looking at the painting "Kissing cavity" (2021), which is one of nine included in the exhibition *Danica Lundy: Three Hole Punch* at Magenta Plains (February 5–March 10, 2022), the artist's debut in New York. (She has had solo exhibitions in Belgium, Germany, Italy, and South Africa.)

Later I read in an [interview](#) between Lundy and Annabel Keenan (*Cultured*, February 8, 2022) that she "conceived of 'Kissing cavity' from a 'boob's-eye view,' imagining painfully visible, budding breasts having their own visual agency over the scene."



Danica Lundy, "Compressions" (2021), oil on canvas, 72h x 96w x 1.50d inches (photography by Shark Senesac. Courtesy the artist and Super Dakota, Brussels)

Lundy's use of transparent planes (such as an open car door), elongation of forms (a bare leg), multiple perspectives, atmospheric lighting, trompe l'oeil details, and the body's expulsions, particularly sweat, is a sharp contrast to much of the figurative painting being shown and celebrated in New York. Rather than working within the long-established conventions of a three-dimensional space, which proposes a stable world, she seamlessly incorporates filmic devices such as overlays and exaggerated close-ups that are often used in horror films, as well as microscopic and magnified views, to great effect.

Most of the figures in her paintings are adolescents and young adults trying to interact, while feeling varying levels of discomfort and comfort within their changing bodies. In almost all of the paintings, Lundy establishes a deep space, as in "Kissing cavity," which pulls the viewer into a world at once familiar, unsettling, and strange. Looking at her paintings is like walking around in a maze with something interesting to see on every inch of the surface. The tension between the details and the overall image is taut and perfectly pitched; everything feels necessary.

Engaged with the works' simultaneity and transparency, and one thing becoming another, I happily got lost in the looking. Lundy delights in details and in making impossible amalgamations out of ordinary things. She has a flair for the dramatic and for unfolding multiple and diverse strands of reality in her work. I had the sense that she knows all the characters in her paintings, and that they are not just props to be moved around.



Danica Lundy, "U of u" (2021), oil on canvas, 96h x 75.25w x 1.50d inches
(photography by Shark Senesac. Courtesy the artist and Super Dakota, Brussels)

In "U of u" (2021), Lundy depicts a man with a medical kit wrapping a young woman's straightened leg with an ACE bandage, while she chugs water from a plastic bottle. The viewpoint is from someone looking down through what looks like a shaft, but what is it exactly? Whose body has Lundy placed us in? How does being inside this body shape how we see the world? The last question seems fundamental, obvious, and important. This is one of the themes the artist returns to in her visceral evocations of the sweating, vomiting, active human body.

In “Compressions” (2021), one hand extending down from the painting’s top edge squeezes the fingers of another hand, pressing on the sternum of a young woman’s bare chest. And yet, even as I write this, I realize that this does not begin to fully describe what I am looking at. Is the woman wearing a top that depicts bare breasts or is that her skin, which is separate from the greenish-tinted layer beneath it — what I read as the dermis? Lundy explores these collisions and intersections in pursuit of the questions: What is the body made of, literally and metaphorically? Where do one’s sensations end? How does it feel to live in a world of multiple colliding realities? What does it mean to inhabit something that is constantly changing, and over which you do not have complete control?

Because of the plethora of details and multiple perspectives, viewers may not notice how deftly composed these paintings are. In the largest, “Spark up, gas down” (2021), which measures 8 by 12 feet, I suggest the viewer start in the painting’s lower right-hand corner, where a hand is tilting an open bottle of booze toward you, offering you some. It seems you are sitting in the passenger seat of a car, looking out the side window at the gathering of cars and peers around you. If you shift your attention above the hand holding the bottle and the face behind it, looking at you, it becomes quickly apparent that Lundy’s placement of the figures’ heads forms an irregular arc that pulls you deeper into the space of the painting. She is able to do this because of the fluent flexibility of her brushwork, which ranges from sharp detail to loose, evocative strokes of paint.



Installation view of *Danica Lundy: Three Hole Punch* at Magenta Plains. Pictured, “Spark up, gas down” (2021), oil on canvas, 96h x 144w x 1.50d inches (courtesy Magenta Plains)

Another thing Lundy does — and I have not seen this achieved so masterfully in figurative painting since I first wrote about Robert Birmelin, an unjustly overlooked painter, in the mid-1980s — is to physically implicate the viewer. In “Spark up, gas down,” we are inside a car with the world going on around us. As viewers, we seem to always inhabit a partially seen body inside the space of the painting. We are in no way superior to the people we are looking at.

In addition to Birmelin’s jarring crowd scenes, Lundy’s work brought up memories of Alfred Leslie’s “Killing Cycle” (1967-78), a series of dramatized, tightly choreographed, moodily lit paintings about the death of his friend, the poet Frank O’Hara, and Ivan Albright’s morbidly captivating “Picture of Dorian Gray” (1943-44), with its celebration of human decay. One reason I bring up these unlikely and certainly unfashionable associations, which Lundy might not even know, is to emphasize that she is following her own trajectory and that she comes across as having no interest in making a stylistic or subjective twist to the well-known conventions of figurative painting. Rather than set out to be original, I think she has a deeper ambition. I imagine Lundy wants to stay true to the complexity of her feelings, sharp states of consciousness and distinct memories, however banal they might be, that she experienced on her way to becoming a painter.

The Art Newspaper

25 February 2022



THE ART NEWSPAPER

Three exhibitions to see in New York this weekend

From Danica Lundy's disquieting tableaux of teenage angst to Claudette Schreuders's introspective doubles

Benjamin Sutton and Daniel Cassady

25 February 2022



Danica Lundy, *Kissing cavity*, 2021
Photography © Shark Senesac. Courtesy of the Artist and Super Dakota, Brussels.

Danica Lundy: Three Hole Punch**Until 10 March, Magenta Plains, 94 Allen Street, Manhattan**

Figurative painting is ubiquitous as ever in New York City galleries, but nobody is doing it quite like Danica Lundy. In the seven large-scale canvases on view here, the Brooklyn-based Canadian artist puts viewers in improbable positions within tableaux of teenage life that hum with narrative detail. In *Kissing Cavity* (2021), for example, we peer out from inside the mouth of a student nervously nibbling on her pencil. Her teeth, arms and legs frame the classroom scene; her desk in the foreground overflows with papers and baubles, its every surface scratched with juvenile images and messages. Two fellow students stare back ominously, while the teacher draws what looks like a duplicate of the very same scene on the chalkboard. The composition, with its disquieting intensity and layered references, may actually be the most straightforward in the show, which also includes a disorienting car park party scene and another painting that might depict the party's aftermath, where we see a young woman vomiting into a toilet from a point of view that might be located inside the plumbing. Throughout, Lundy conveys the unwieldy physicality of adolescence and early adulthood with impressive, sometimes-discomforting vividness.

Cultured

8 February 2022

CULTURED

ART

Danica Lundy Paints the Drama, Chaos and Reckless Abandon of Adolescence

Painter Danica Lundy reflects on the teenage dramatics in her latest body of work, on view in her first New York solo show, "Three Hole Punch," at Magenta Plains.

WORDS

Annabel Keenan

Danica Lundy's paintings are arresting, visceral, and unsettlingly familiar. Blending references to teen movies with her personal experiences, Lundy paints dark scenes of classroom insecurities, sports injuries and chaotic high school parties. She captures the moments in adolescence when the dregs of childhood innocence fade away and the adrenalin of a world on the verge of adulthood freedom rushes in, as if visual representations of the reckless teenage feeling of being indestructible. Like trying to recall a dream, Lundy's paintings toe the line of narration, yet her choice of perspective defies logic, giving the viewer a glimpse of fragmented episodes about to erupt. With her first New York solo show, "Three Hole Punch," having just opened at Magenta Plains, Lundy reflects on the layered influences hidden within her latest body of work.



Danica Lundy, *Compressions*, 2021. Photography by Shark Senesac, courtesy of the artist and Super Dakota, Brussels.

Annabel Keenan: First of all, congratulations on your well-deserved first solo show in New York. How does it feel to have achieved this milestone?

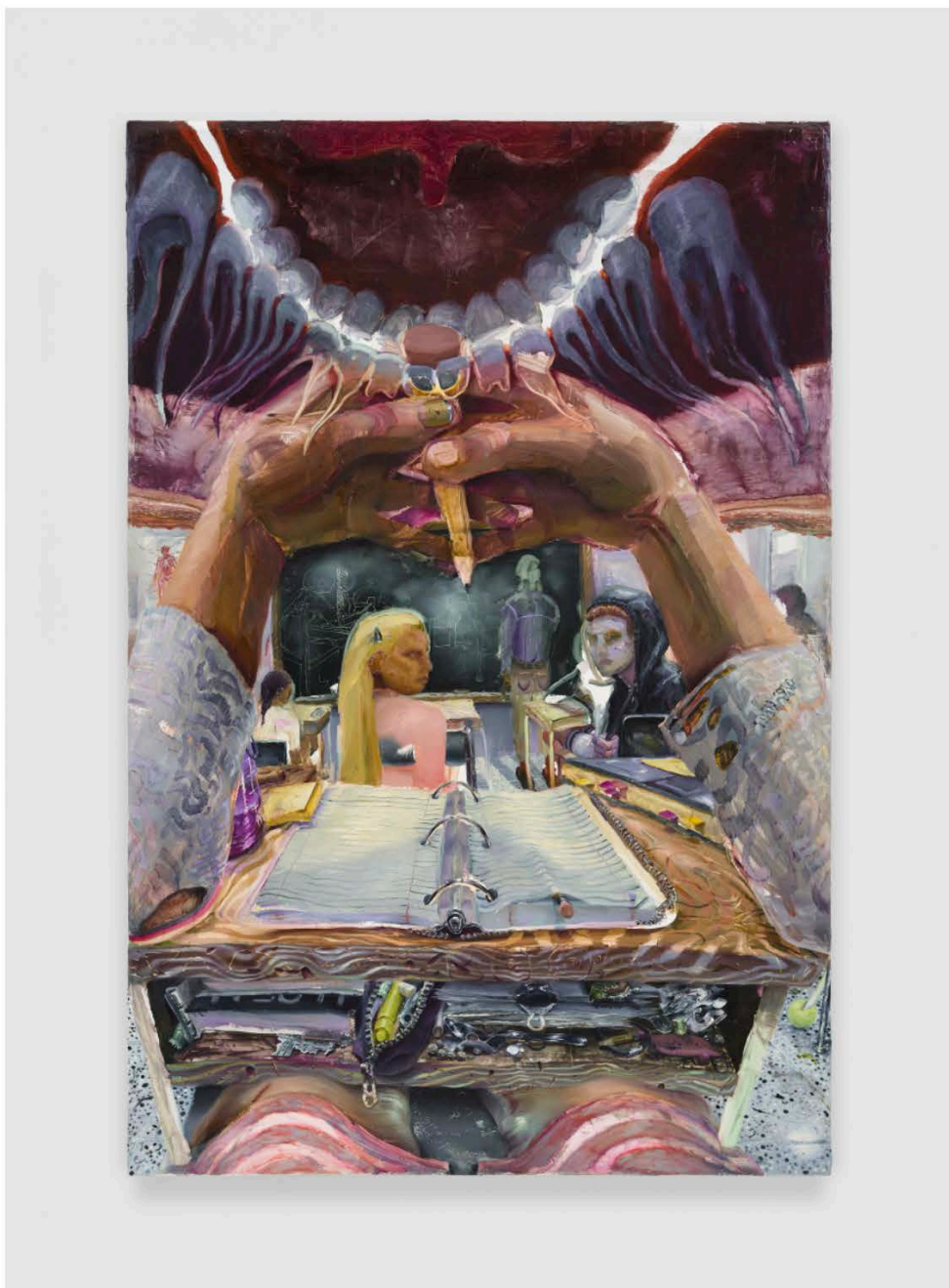
Danica Lundy: Thank you, Annabel! It feels dreamy. I've been living here for six years and have shown mostly in Europe, so shipping the canvases across the bridge to Manhattan instead of across the pond is pretty exciting. I haven't been able to see any of my shows in person since 2018.

AK: In the past, your works have had incorporated references to personal experiences. Is this still the case with the paintings in the show?

DL: With the way I currently work, it would be impossible to completely divorce myself from the subject matter and content. The compositions usually start with a strong feeling, and then they pull in the outside world. Ultimately, I think a painting should leave you with a strong feeling too.

AK: Some of the feelings that come into play in your paintings derive from chaotic scenes of adolescence and teen movies. What are you interested in conveying with these references?

DL: Cinema might be the most widely accessible visual art form. Especially now. As a culture we are obsessed with the film industry. The idea of "behind the scenes" (a peek at the artifice) is a well-understood mechanism: we know how things are made, the equipment, green screens and special effects. But in good cinema, even equipped with that knowledge, we are swept up in the story. Most of my paintings point out the fact that there's a life beyond the set, that the boom's just out of sight. That there's a director, a crew, a trail of their debris left behind.



Danica Lundy, *Kissing cavity*, 2021. Photography by Shark Senesac, courtesy of the artist and Super Dakota, Brussels.

I have always been a sucker for teen movies as a perfect arena for drama and chaos. It's an emotionally unstable time where those in the throes of adolescent abandon go right up to the edge—to establish where that edge is—to peek at whatever danger lies in the unknown. Painting that edge feels potent because it helps direct my brush in a technical choreography. It evokes the feeling of occupying a teenage body, where everything is in flux. I try to push that novel feeling into the paint itself.

AK: The perspectives you choose, like looking down through the body into a set of ribs, add a visceral quality and heightened sense of self-awareness. How did you develop this perspective?

DL: I'm not completely sure how this came about. It just made sense. Pulling away things to reveal a function, to look in, to highlight windows and doors into the body or picture plane is a preoccupation of modernism onward, but it goes back further. For example, the biblical story of Doubting Thomas has been depicted since the 5th century: "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." Or Rembrandt's portrait of Agatha Bas, whose thumb slightly overlaps the frame she sits in, nudging into our space and blurring the boundary between inside the painting and out. And there's Michelangelo, sneaking into morgues at night to dissect and understand. We live in bodies we can't usually see into, so why shouldn't painting be a forum for that imaginary observation? Also, painting has historically leaned on Albertian perspective, but it is just one way to organize the picture plane. It isn't necessarily an intuitive organization to show how we actually experience the world.



Danica Lundy, *Spark up, gas down*, 2021. Photography by Shark Senesac, courtesy of the artist and Super Dakota, Brussels.

AK: Connecting the film references and your unique perspectives, your painting *Kissing Cavity* makes me think of the scene in *Beetlejuice* where the main characters have their stretched, scary faces on and when they open their mouths, there's this giant set of teeth and huge red tongue with tiny eyes looking out. *Kissing Cavity* is as if the viewer is looking out from those eyes inside their mouths. Do you approach your paintings with specific references in mind?

DL: I absolutely love that this painting brought up that scene for you. I conceived of *Kissing Cavity* from a “boob’s-eye view,” imagining painfully visible, budding breasts having their own visual agency over the scene. Most of the paintings have at least a few cinematic references. The Lolita-esque hitchhiker from *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* has her foot against the surface of the canvas in *Ferry Ride*, for example.

AK: There's a sense of tension in your work. The figures seem carefree, yet they're engaging in activities that have the potential for danger or harm. You've captured that precarious moment in teenage years where nothing seems to matter, but the activities suddenly accessible come with a higher risk. Would you say your subjects are dark, or could you call them a celebration?

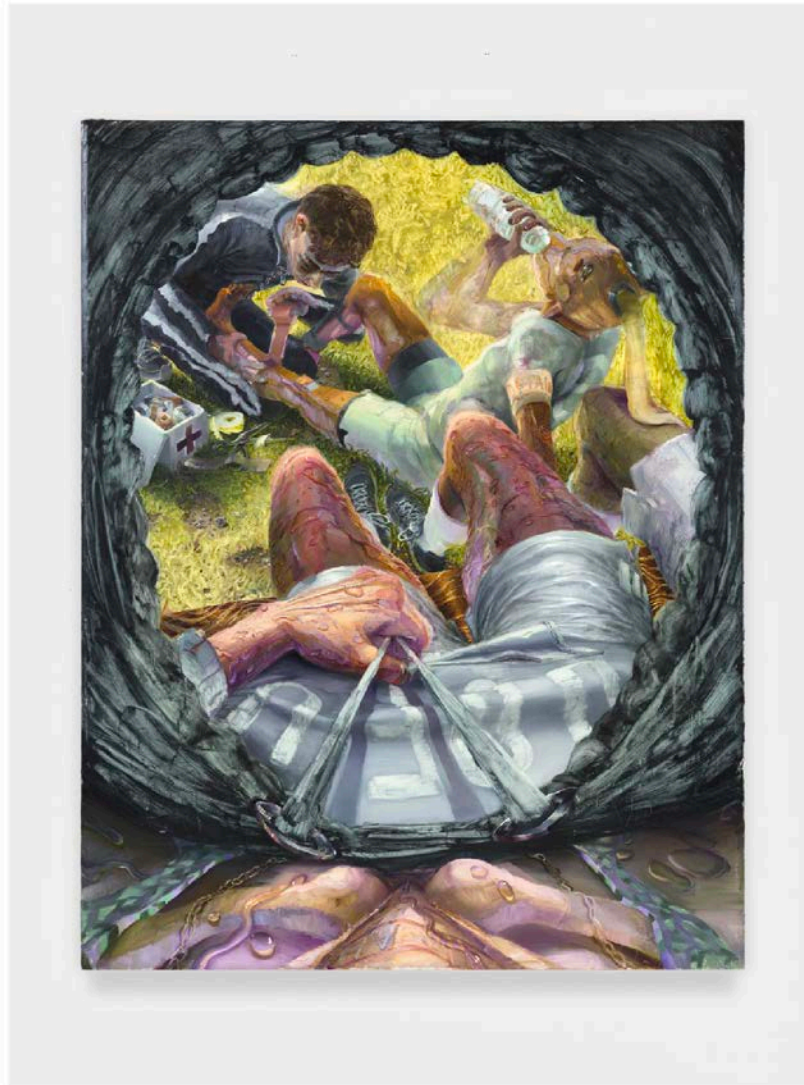
DL: Very well put, I couldn't have said that better myself (and I've been trying for years). I'd say the subjects are receptacles for chaos and danger, improvisation, risk and ecstasy. There's no doubt there's darkness there, but there's light and humor too. All those things are possible at a kegger, you know?

AK: What is the significance of the exhibition title “Three Hole Punch?”

DL: There’s this Eminem lyric that says: “I’ve been dope, suspenseful with a pencil / Ever since Prince turned himself into a symbol.” Here, we’re offered at least three ways to derive meaning: Prince himself was an icon, a sex symbol. In 1993, Prince changed his name to a literal symbol. And then in the arrangement of the song—Dr. Dre’s handiwork—a cymbal instrumental pings, creating an almost synesthetic, self-referential link to the musical medium. In one sentence, a playful triple entendre somehow manages to morph into a multifaceted, multisensory cultural time stamp. I think good paintings work that way too.

When I look at paintings that really move me, their ultimate meaning never arrives by way of just the paint, or in the image and the historical/contemporary symbolism it carries. There’s always a third thing, usually hard to put a finger on, whose meaning is synthesized in my body.

The title attempts to translate all that, while incorporating other motifs that appear in this body of work. The words physically echo their own meaning: three one-syllable words that punch into the page. It sounds intuitively violent alone but is banal when looked at in context. It refers to adolescent subject matter: a tool once necessary for note-keeping in high school. And paper/drawing is integral to the painting process. There’s also a crude allusion to female anatomy. Incidentally, each floor of the exhibition has three paintings.



Danica Lundy, *U of u*, 2021. Photography by Shark Senesac, courtesy of the artist and Super Dakota, Brussels.

AK: The scale of the works in “Three Hole Punch” is so impressive. Why do you choose to work on this large scale?

DL: My very athletic sister took to kiteboarding a decade ago. She explained to me that she’d rather be overpowered by the wind and have to figure out how to harness it with her kite and body than be totally in control. Perhaps a feature of her affinity for risk as a teenager. My body would actually crack if I tried this, but I can relate to the metaphor. Painting at that scale is an all-encompassing experience. It’s stimulating, like a way to settle into the brain and bones of the painting and shake the whole thing awake. I want to give the viewer a real-world (or larger) scale to get sucked into.

AK: What else is in store for you for 2022?

DL: I’m preparing for a solo show that opens in July with White Cube in London. I’m currently tackling a smushed banana in a painting of a locker room.

Juxtapoz

1 February 2022

JUXTAPOZ

Art & Culture

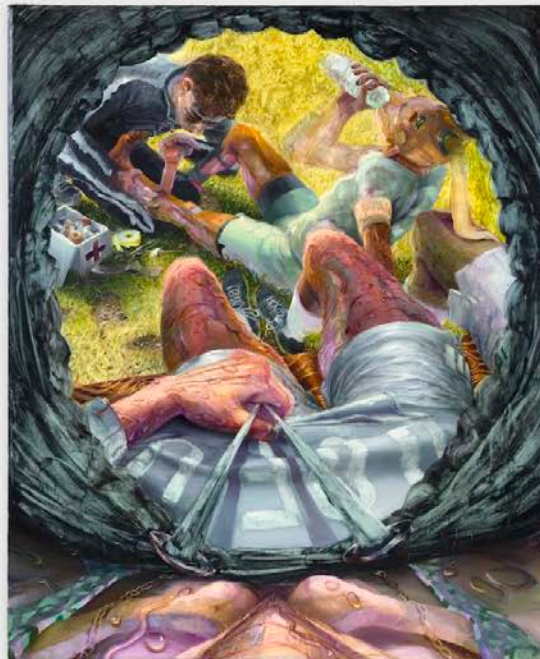


Three Hole Punch: Danica Lundy @ Magenta Plains

Magenta Plains

February 05, 2022 - March 10, 2022

February 01, 2022 | in Painting



Looking at the new body of work [Danica Lundy](#) painted for her long overdue NYC solo debut and thinking of all the times we've used the term "introspection" or "self reveal" it is hard not to feel at least a bit silly. Because while other artists might be using metaphors, symbols, and other ways to examine themselves and reveal their secrets, it feels that no other body of work we've seen in a long time gives these terms a more honest, real, and literal meaning.

Three Hole Punch, which opens on March 5th at [Magenta Plains in NYC](#) is continuing Lundy's exploration of scenes from adolescent memory, literally dissected into something that can be described as 90s teen films from the science-obsessed, high-tech future. Depicting stereotypical and highly relatable moments that include classroom, parking lot, football field, or party scenes, the Canadian-born and New Haven-based artist is capable of constructing unseen, sci-fi-like angles of these experiences. With a rich repertoire of confident and utterly effective paint manipulation techniques she is taking a jumble of surfaces and textures, interlocks them with different views, angles, and perspectives, into a seemingly unsolved Rubik's-cube of visuals that somehow, in the end, make all the sense. This is how puking at the party with a friend taking care of you, nervously chewing on the pencil in the classroom while getting judgemental looks of your classmates, hiding in your hoodie during sport practice, or undergoing a PCR procedure become an outlet to revive some carefully buried emotions. Melding the figural and the mechanical, or better anatomical and technical, such a unique vision of de-romanticised teen years is punching the viewer with a raw, sometimes gruesome, but undeniably factual reality.

"I want to make a painting that acts on the viewer like a slow-release pill," Lundy mentioned in the interview [we did for our Winter 2020 issue](#), and we've never imagined we would get the front seat alongside the pill. While offering an exciting of different views at the location in her previous works, the new paintings seem to be revolving around the human body as the epicenter of what's happening. Engineering the impossible views through bones and insides into a cinematic or theatrical setting, she "makes an explicit connection between emotional uncertainty and bodily discomfort." Binding together a documentation of feelings, depictions of factual and fantasised realities, as well as unpopular factualities, Lundy's paintings are transformed into a three hole punch that organizes and archives confusing memories which form and determine our adult selves. And after receiving these preview images, we've moved closer to the edge of our seats, have our popcorn and drinks installed, and are beyond ready for the rest of the action! - *Sasha Bogojev*

All images courtesy of the Artist and Super Dakota, Brussels. Photography by Shark Senesac.

Juxtapoz

18 January 2021

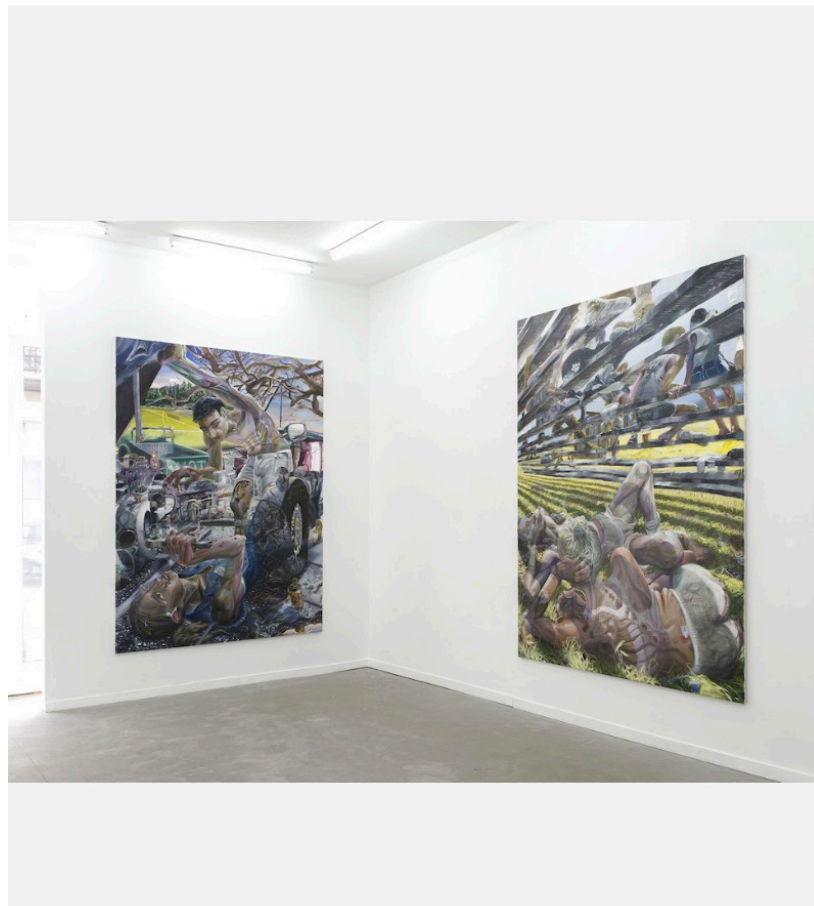


Cherry Log Road: Danica Lundy Candid Look at Growing Up @ Super Dakota, Brussels

Super Dakota
January 14, 2021 - February 20, 2021

January 18, 2021 | in Painting

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"You hit 16 and bam, ou do whatever you can to get your hands on a puttering hunk of hand-me-down metal to just get you outta there!" exhales [Danica Lundy](#), speaking about the frequent appearance of cars in her work featured in our [Winter 2021](#) Quarterly. "And suddenly the world opens up. It's a room you can speed around in, where you can collect private conversations. Sneaky sex. It's safe until it's not. You can stuff so much in a car. And with all that, it's such a kind of perfect metaphorical and compositional armature for a picture." Lundy continues this rousing motif in her first solo exhibition, *Cherry Log Road*, with [Super Dakota in Brussels, Belgium](#), currently on view through February 20, 2021. With ten new paintings, and a title inspired by James L. Dickey's poem, offers an expansive, candid vision of the world, especially the intimate and confusing world of pre-adolescence.

Rhythmic repetition thrums through Lundy's visuals, adding drama to stories that become more intense when taken in as an entire series. Along with two figures in *Oil Stain*, for example, we experience a mysterious confrontation, as well as the magical qualities of a car, including its wires, bolts and pipes held mid-air by an invisible chassis. Sweaty skin, pebbly gravel, the shine of a tin can and scars on the tire rubber grab attention until we notice the parked Toyota pickup and the empty soccer field in the background, each an enticing optical clue that sings the senses and piques the cognitive web. Lundy builds tension as each element vies for viewer engagement.

David Lynchian scenes mesh reality and symbolism collide, portraying the confusion of adolescence, through her askew use of focus and angle. The discovery of new pleasures, the carelessness about latent dangers, the uncomfortable growing pains and struggles, and burgeoning desires, reinforced by experience and popular culture, are universally relatable. As Lundy's stills-only feature switches from wide-angle backseat shot to brown paper bag closeup. We peer over the coach's clipboard, revisit the parked truck in hyper, widescreen format, teleport to a late-night club scene, and finally, come full circle, as doors-unlock, to (or from) home.

With disparate points of view, abruptly changing perspective and shifting focus, the Canadian-born artist places us in the front seat of a sensory rollercoaster of unexpected loops through time and space. Whether it's the excitement of discovering such details as the mud stain on a shoe sole or recurring hairpin, Lundy is unrelenting, offering her subjects and we viewers a wild ride. —*Sasha Bogojev*

Juxtapoz

Winter 2021

JUXTAPOZ

Art & Culture



Danica Lundy

The Art of Extended Release

Interview by Sasha Bogojev // Portrait by the Artist

I can recall the first time I saw [Danica Lundy](#)'s work in person, marveling at how the layering, perspective and dimension of her visuals seemed to open before my eyes, how a gravelly surface or metallic shine took shape from her brush strokes, how color gradients transformed the flat canvas into three-dimensional space. I also remembered meeting her a few days later at her Brooklyn studio and being charmed by her genuine, generous character, equally matched by a zestful energy that fully complemented such captivating work.

So, in order to avoid the awkward lag of video calls and exert some rebellion to 2020 protocols, we opted for a good ol' penpal method of communication. Over the course of a few weeks, we wrote to each other, covering everything from cars, to art and sports analogies, to the experience of being a Canadian living in the USA.

Sasha Bogojev: How's life been in the last 6 months since I last (and first), saw you?

Danica Lundy: Have you ever seen the movie *Dark City*? It might be kind of obvious from the title, but in that city, the sun never rises or sets, and for the most part, the characters are totally oblivious to it. Looking back, I have this weird feeling the last six months could've just been one long night.

As a Canadian in the US, how does your life journey look or feel like at this point in time?

Funny you'd ask this next—in that same movie, the protagonist has this vague but enduring memory of his coastal home called Shell Beach. Everyone in the city is aware of the place, but no one remembers how to get there, and each attempt to get there is thwarted somehow. And when they finally do find it, it's just a massive poster at the edge of the city. I'm pretty sure my home in Canada does exist, and I miss it terribly. But that's the kind of feeling I get while thinking about finding my way back right now.

It's a strange time to be an "alien" here—maybe even stranger to be an alien in disguise. I'm assumed to be American until a certain word or two escapes, and then the game's up. It's even more disconcerting when I'm assumed American at a time when actual citizens are told to "go back to where they came from" by their own president. I guess any sense of stability forged here is tenuous within this kind of political backdrop.

I feel focussed here. I have a studio in a neighborhood within walking distance of a bunch of peers, a damn good man-friend—and a new dog we just adopted. I guess I feel a sense of purpose in making things, and deadlines have allowed me to side-step the over-thinking. Despite what I just said about tenuousness, there's a totally convincing, non-illusionary feeling of home here.

Does it feel, though, a bit like having a joker card, knowing you actually do have another home and this isn't your original home, that this president isn't your president?

The only answer to this question is Orwellian: "Two plus two makes five. Oceania is at war with Eastasia. Oceania has always been at war with Eastasia." Sort of kidding, although I find myself watching what I say here closely. I've never felt more suited to a place before. New York specifically, I mean. I don't want to leave. And it would be tempting to denounce the absolutely egregious MAGA shit-storm as, "not my monkey, not my circus." But that would be impossible—especially because I'm living and breathing here in the middle of one of the biggest civil rights movements in US history, where systems of oppression are being challenged and deep-rooted racial and social inequities exposed. It would be unconscionable to be on the sidelines for that.

But my American boyfriend Tim and I do talk about moving back to my island. He wants to get a float plane. We biked around on the fourth of July, fireworks popping up on the street in front of us... and Tim started singing "O' Canada" at the top of his lungs. A little middle finger at American patriotism, I guess. In retrospect, it was funny, but at the time, I just shook my head in embarrassment and tried to pedal away. I was like, "That's such an ironically American thing to do."

Did the current situation affect your practice or maybe even the focus of your work?

I mean, how could you not be altered in some huge way? There are such profound shifts happening all around.

Ha, yes, it would be worrying to hear you say “nope” to that one. I wondered more about whether it changed or redirected the focus of your work.

Do you mean the Black Lives Matter movement? Or do you mean the pandemic? Or the shaky economy? Or the ongoing degradation of democracy? Like I said, completely impossible to be unchanged, and I’m definitely processing it in my work and life.

Yeah, exactly. Can you give an example of how you incorporated some of those issues into your latest work?

I usually lean away from quick, overt political responses in my work. There is certainly a place for satire and sensationalism, but I think my work tends to be better served by allusions to topical issues than direct assertions. Power structures have been a central theme... and it certainly feels as though those remain well worth prodding in this era. I listen to audiobooks while I paint and am currently three-quarters of the way through *The Power Broker*— all about Robert Moses’s notorious reshaping of New York City at the dawn of the car era until the ’60s.

And, surprise surprise, the very infrastructure of the city—many of its roads and parks and bridges—was constructed with racism and classism so sturdily that the repercussions still haunt NYC a century later. So much was built in pursuit of power and to curry political favor, without considering the needs of the city’s inhabitants—immigrants, the poor, and people of color, in particular. This is not unique to New York, of course. It’s not unique to the twentieth century. It’s only one example of many in which an ostensibly tremendous feat—I mean, look at the city from a distance and how could you not get a feeling caught in your throat—can prove to be a double-edged sword. In this case, it was both a triumph in the name of steel-and-concrete progress, and a terrible, terrible plight on a multi-generational human level. Not exactly sure where I’m going with this, except to say it’s all connected and feels relevant... and I’m thinking about these types of structures, and where I stand in them, when I paint.

You've mentioned in the past that your athletic background influences your practice. Can you elaborate?

My little sister is a phenomenal athlete, an absolute pleasure to watch on the field or swimming or dancing. I was more of a scrapper out there— you know, grit over finesse. I practiced and played hard. From early childhood, I was in the water for practice twice a day and at meets on the weekends, and continued this in tandem with soccer, until soccer won out, and eventually I was able to play varsity at university. There's such a brutal regimen to it. It just kind of structured my life for so long. Eventually your muscles learn to comply and you ignore the part of yourself that always resists the onslaught. But it probably helped establish painting habits, yes.

How did you even end up going from being an athlete to making art, and how often do you come across artists with a similar trajectory?

Are the two paths that discordant? I guess I was always into both. I think painting and sports could kind of be siblings. You've got the hand-eye coordination component in each, mental diligence, repetition of a physical task to build muscle memory. And all the while, your mistakes and shortcomings are laid bare in front of your teammates or peers—in the name of constructive criticism, or because your coach is a sadist and you are a masochist. You have to be a bit dense to keep going. And at some point, you have to shake off the critical eye of the coach or the weight of your own judgement and trust your body's current. To me, they both provide a release... a fierce, kind of ecstatic labour that belongs intimately to the body.

In soccer, like art, you have to look at a big field that is constantly shifting and figure out where to put yourself in order to best receive and then pass the ball. They are both a conversation, a series of give and goes.

A swimmer gets fast with one kind of stroke, and the next year she's confronted with two brand-new, swollen bumps on her chest. Suddenly, that technique no longer serves her and she has to adjust. I think the same mentality is required of an artist. There's a need for nimbleness in making and thinking to ensure your conceptual desires—and your more concrete objectives—align with the way in which you go about bringing them to life... Oh, god. I'm that guy with the sports metaphors!

Yes, you are and I love it! Those are such great comparisons and parallels. So, since you're so good at it, then who would be the coach in the art side of the story?

I guess while in school, profs and peers? Then, hypothetically, the critics, if you're lucky enough to get something critical out of them. The audience—whether actual or perceived. The people who've been generously brutal... the deliverers of tough-love in your story often become the people whose opinion you weigh in your head. And I guess when you're alone in the studio, you become your coach. Scary thing when she's in a mood, though.

Your last body of work was built from your perspective outward, mostly based on personal experiences, memories, and feelings. Is this still the way you go about it?

The last body of work had loose ties to personal experiences—largely teenage ones—but no knots holding them there, if that makes sense. I've got this decade gap between my adolescent self and so much new content and refurbished memories to throw at that poor sucker. I puzzled over teen movie tropes until I was older—teen movies are not made by teens, but by adults looking back, right? So I get to go back to visit *Heathers*, *Mean Girls*, *Bring It On*, *Wet Hot American Summer*... smart movies disguised as dumb ones, and more contemporary ones like *Lady Bird* or *Call Me By Your Name*, and think about this funny snake eating its own tail scenario. The teenagers who consumed the former generations' projections and altered memories—they grow up and make movies about their own experiences. Which then helps shape the next teen generation's understanding, or misunderstanding of itself. It really feels like time travel to me.



Three Hole Punch, Oil on canvas, 48" x 36", 2020

What's with the cars in your work?

I thought you'd never ask! Ha ha. Well, the car... anything can happen in a car. In a larger sense, it's a North-American coming-of-age symbol—and sort of tucked right into the trajectory of modern art. There's this obsession across cinema with it too that aligns with real life somewhere. Bad guys chasing bad guys... violence... teenagers. You hit 16 and bam, you do whatever you can to get your hands on a pattering hunk of hand-me-down metal to just get you outta there! And suddenly the world opens up. It's a room you can speed around in, where you can collect private conversations. Sneaky sex. It is safe until it's not. You can stuff so much in a car. And with all that, it's such a kind of perfect metaphorical and compositional armature for a picture.

So, teenage-hood and cars... this has been some of the enduring subject matter, but I definitely play house with composition—start with a foundation borrowing from stories, news, lyrics... insert a ghost story here and there from paintings past. And once the beams are in, I'll give 'em a little whack and hope they'll stand up with the full force of the painting's inhabitants and all their junk.

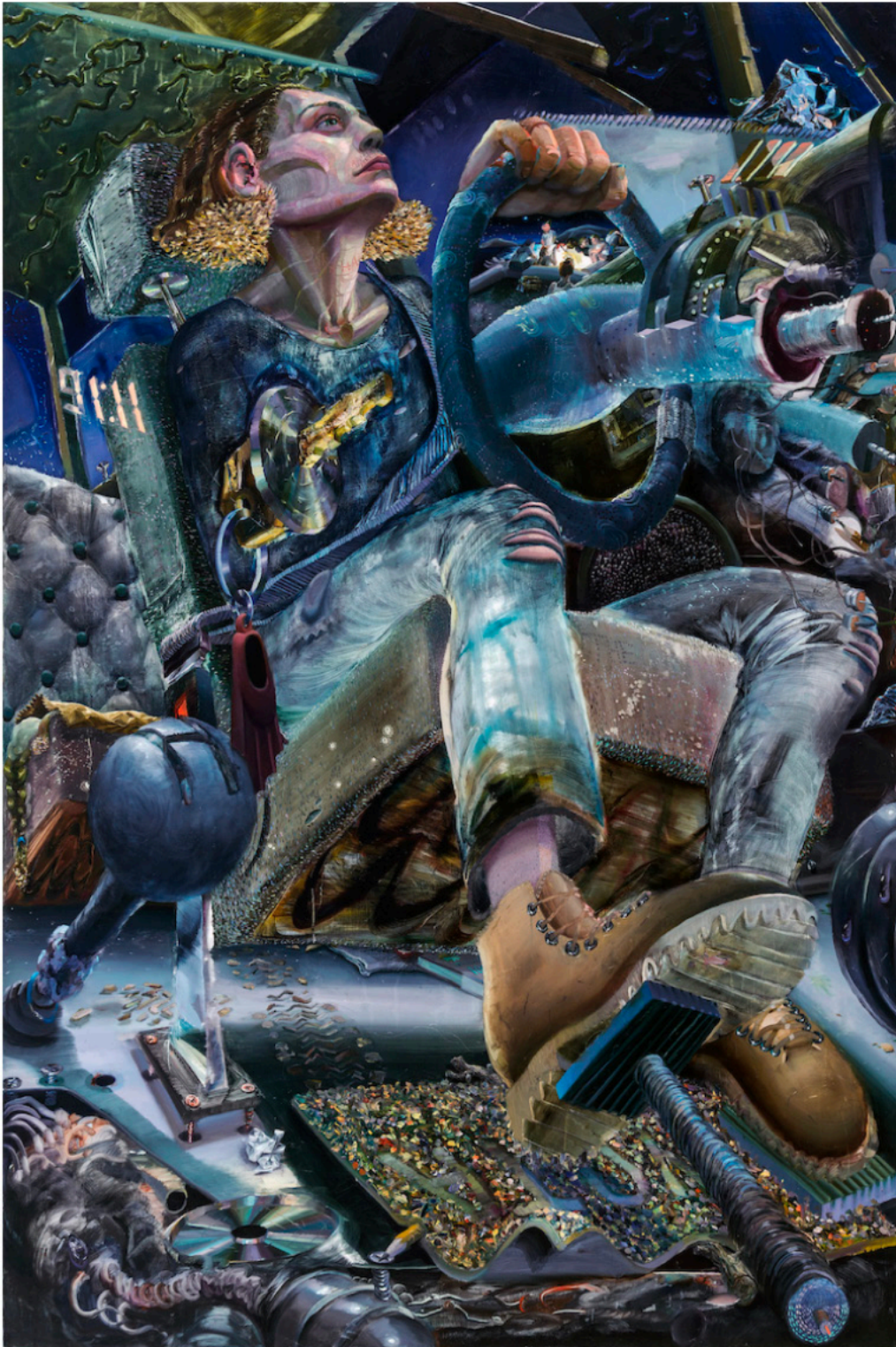
I loved how some of the works are connected to each other, depicting the same scene from a different angle or slightly different time. How did that concept come about?

Honestly, at first, mostly out of necessity. Trying to sharpen up a completely invented space can be frustrating, especially if you're building form and trying to coax paint into light. After spending so much time willing that space into existence, I'd just pivot slightly in the scene, imagine turning the viewers' head to the painting's periphery. That way, I can borrow the feeling of that space and push it into the next painting. Like eliminating one variable. Then each painting has space to change but also something to hold on to. It really just helps me move through ideas without having to go back to the dark, you know?

And clues from one painting might inform another later on, or give light to one I painted years back, or solve questions whose answers might currently be remote to me. Nice sometimes to defer to a future version of myself who has her shit figured out.

“The dark” being having to think of what to paint?

The dark being the place behind your eyes before the world shapes itself in paint.



Kiss the Clock, Oil on canvas, 48.5" x 71.5", 2020

So, is that how you go about making a painting for a new body of work?

Sort of. It's all evolving slowly. I was listening to a podcast that described the Supreme Court making moves at snail-speed. If you have a lifetime appointment, there's decades-long three-dimensional chess to play... in that context, it's incredibly unsettling to think that a small group of people have so much time, and ultimately power, to warp the country to their will. But I've been trying to apply the concept of snail-speed to my work. Thinking about it as a slow, lifelong thing.

You seem to be focused on rendering surfaces—aluminum sinks, gravel, droplets of water, hair, skin. Why this interest in creating such tactile surfaces?

Before I start a painting, I take the idea and figure out of the gist of it in a drawing. That's like establishing the power lines—or like I said before, the foundation of the house of the painting. But then it takes time to come into focus. It's like being in a dark room and willing it, or feeling it into existence with your fingers.

Maybe it's an argument for a specific kind of experience. One that's full, unfolds over time, sometimes uneasily. A 10K compared to a 50-metre dash. There's nothing wrong with fast-twitch muscle paintings... it's just not what I'm doing. I want to make a painting that acts on the viewer like a slow-release pill.

I'm holding onto an archaic medium that some might argue is still dead and just experiencing a temporary resuscitation. But I can't get the feeling I get looking at a painting—that really works on me in such an abrupt, physical way—anywhere else. So imagining there isn't room for more of that feeling, or no possibility of pushing its evolution or proving it's worthy of pursuit...what a brutal place that would be.

I am not after a painting that looks real, I just want it to feel sharply familiar. I think about authors like Haruki Murakami or Jennifer Egan who can express in one sentence what most people can't get at in a whole blabbering book. In real life, I'm probably more of a whole-blabbering-book person. But I'm certainly trying to find— and make—sentences inside paintings that can encapsulate a feeling you've experienced many times—that you know in your bones, but that shrinks away whenever you try to put a name on it, kind of like a dream does. I am looking for a painting that has so much in it that it sticks to your ribs and rides along with you even after you've moved on. Did I actually answer your question at all?

Perfectly. So, what are you hoping for in 2021?

I'm hoping to step into my thirties... gracefully? I want to learn how to sew my own clothes and I'm hoping to be able to dance in an all-night techno rave. And see my family again. Art-wise, I am excited for my solo show in Brussels with Super Dakota in January and some other semi-secret projects. I'm also hoping to become a little more mysterious, you see, so this is a start.

Art Maze

2021

ART MAZE Mag



A couple recline on the bonnet of a car. We see them through the windshield, their backs and shoulders pressed up against the glass. Their postures are slumped, relaxed, carefree in the night. Inside the car we see the dashboard clock illuminated at 5:43; we imagine the couple at the end of a long night together waiting for the dawn to break. The scene is peaceful, quietly intimate – two friends, or lovers – sharing a drawn-out moment together in their young lives. We encounter the couple again in the painting Rust Bucket, however now the scene has changed dramatically. Our view has shifted to the backseat of the car and into the point of view of another character. We see the squalid interior of the car, empty cans and soft drink containers, the couple on the bonnet now outside the main drama of the scene separated by the windshield. A man in the passenger seat is turned towards the backseat, staring fixedly but unsteadily, one arm stretched back and under the skirt of the character whose view we inhabit. Outside the car other figures move about in the nocturnal scene. In the rearview mirror we see a set of female eyes. Are these the eyes of the character in the back seat? Are they our own eyes, passively taking in this scene?

Perspective is a central theme in Danica Lundy's work. As in these two paintings, Danica manipulates the gaze and thrusts the viewer into the centre of the scene. The result is distinctly uncomfortable, as these are tumultuous scenes of adolescence and the loss of innocence. They're dark, nightmarish, delirious. Bodies crowd the scenes, unnatural lighting illuminates naked flesh, liquids leak and drip. Danica's painterly language heightens the corporeal intensity of the scenes, where violence seems to lurk behind every benign gesture. Her brushstrokes are loose and seemingly messy but underpinned by a rigorous technical skill, made more apparent in her drawings. In part studies for paintings, Danica's dizzyingly intricate pen on paper works are hallucinatory, leaning towards the symbolic.

Danica is a Brooklyn-based Canadian artist who grew up on a small island in the Pacific Northwest. She received her BFA from Mount Allison University and MFA from the New York Academy of Art. She has been the recipient of numerous art accolades and has had solo shows in Canada, Italy, the UK and USA.



AMM: Hi Danica! To begin, can you tell us about your distinct, highly detailed style of working. Where did this come from?

DL: Hey ArtMaze. First off, thank you for the specificity and thoughtfulness of your questions and I apologize in advance: I'm slow and wordy. My mom is a writer and magazine editor, and has in the past gently advised me to be more direct with my language, and said that density doesn't help make things more legible. This could definitely also be said for painting. But I've embraced that maximalist way of working and thinking and recognize my own failure to concision might wind up providing some strengths as well. Though by the end of this you may take my mom's side.

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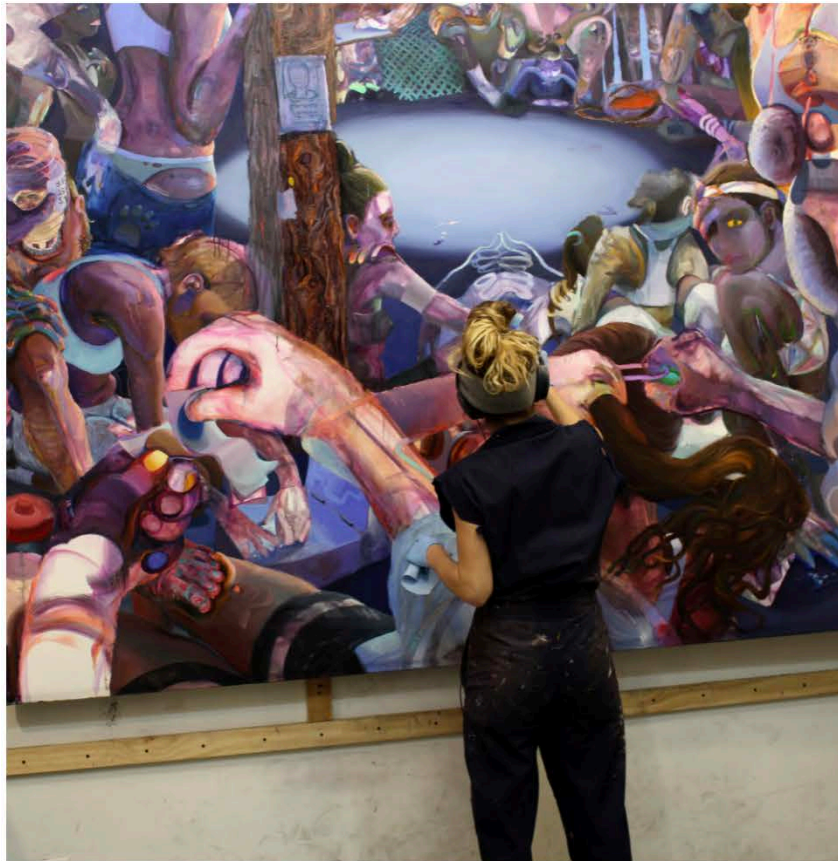
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So, I think this question answers itself indirectly over the course of the other responses, but the shortish answer is that it isn't so much a style but an accretion of all the stuff gathered up on the walls of my brain. I want a painting to be able to read like a poem or a nightmare, to evoke a young lifetime's worth of cultural gunk, great paintings, friction, disillusionment, jubilation, heartache... I want a painting that I can be totally consumed by. I wish these next words were mine, and I regretfully can't remember whose they are, but I want my paintings to be "a novel that opens up in every direction." I want them to awaken—like a dark room does, slowly, at the tips of fingers—into a visceral hyper-reality that shows everything at once. Though I'll always fail at that, too.



AMM: *How has your art changed over the years, and what has influenced this?*

DL: The most prominent influence was my move to NYC—both attending grad school at New York Academy of Art and getting to know paintings and artists in person. That really shifted the way I conceive of image-making and the process of building a painting.

(Once, in a half-time locker-room "pep talk" in university, my coach admonished my efforts in centre midfield as those of a 12-year-old boy—a wild frenzy of energy, nowhere structured to put it. That's sort of how I see myself as a 23-year-old coming to NYC: bright-eyed, naive, driven.)

I've drawn since my dad propped me up to copy from his Renaissance books. I got good at replicating things. Most of the "serious" things I made through undergrad, even, followed that same paradigm of mimicry—images sourced either from direct observation or from photographs, with little conceptual or formal reasoning to support that decision. For painting, I always had an intuitive palette, colours that I knew I liked and that liked me back. Grad school challenged all of that.

And then standing in front of centuries-old Flemish masters at the Met, or in a scruffy gallery in Chinatown at the base of the Manhattan Bridge in front of a Kai Althoff, I began developing enduring crushes on paintings. I imagine it's similar for anyone transfixed by a painting; when one gets me, it's visceral—a clamp closes over my lungs and gut and when it's released, I'm hit with a wave of relief, longing and elation.

I started conceiving of a painting as a construction site, a house that's built inside out, made without a T-square, with some degree of danger and dark humour in the scaffolding around it, and all its nerves exposed like live wires. Or, as a crime scene, where the clues left behind, if discovered, could elucidate a meaningful narrative.



Rust Bucket, oil on canvas, 70 x 62 inches

AMM: Can you share a definitive learning or realization that you've had during your studies or career? What has been the impact of this on your work?

DL: Well, this might sound nerdy. But I remember working on a frustrating painting exercise in first year grad school—I think it was a metallic object sitting on a mirror—and my professor Dik Liu kept coming around and saying, “It all needs to be darker.” I remember grumbling that there’s no way in hell to make it darker, I’ve reached the limit. How can I go darker than pure chromatic black? He said something like, “There’s no way to make that titanium white as bright as the sun, and no way to make any black pigment as dark as your shadow. It’s about compressing all the other values to trick me into believing that your white is powerful enough to blind me. You have to learn to squish the whole spectrum of light into the spectrum of paint.” (I really remember it being that poetic.)

And suddenly my mind, squeaky at the hinges, opened a crack. Understanding some technical fundamentals about how paint behaves—mostly by trying to make light “feel” like light, in my case—and getting acquainted with different pigments on a personal level helped me develop a more nuanced palette, and also allowed me to shed reliance on source imagery and work directly from my head.

AMM: In what ways does your art represent or relate to your own experiences?

DL: New York City was a culture shock, but it was also a new porthole through which to see my former life on a small island off the west coast of Canada. I realized those years on a sparsely populated, densely forested rock in the ocean provided a deep well of subject matter. But they had also created a soft space in my body that housed some innate consensus about relationships: the need for vulnerability, compassion and empathy, and the prevailing presence of human flaws and fallibility.

The connections I have with people from home (Salt Spring Island) are also uniquely deep—slow-made over many years in a slow town during the worst and best of it. We were stuck growing alongside each other as trees do. We got in trouble, witnessed each other’s fuck ups; made up and lived out stories that certainly show up in my work. All of my paintings host autobiographical content, with repeated personal iconography that shares space with collective and imagined histories. But the way I think about colour relationships and relationships between forms and figures is driven by intuition and the limbic system. In some ways, though this may come off more sentimental than I intend, I treat paint in all the different ways I’ve treated people, and how they’ve treated me.

AMM: The way in which you paint bodies emphasize their almost grotesque corporeality. How does your way of painting with oils support the subject matter or themes in your work?

DL: I recently wrote something for a different publication and I hope you'll allow me to plagiarize some of it here, because I think it most succinctly answers this question. One of the biggest imperatives of my work is in world building—if all goes well, I hope to grow these worlds into vivid and lived-in, slow-release experiences that sit on your tongue and dissolve in your mouth and play out in the space between you and the canvas. And I think oil painting really lends itself to world-building.

Paint moves along behind the brush like a slug dispelling slime, a wet trail that leads all the way back to the first time someone made a mark to the searching movements of a hand, here and now. The first marks create the bones of the picture; a mind-made structure. Paint responds to each wobble, push or adjustment, until it eventually settles in and stands still—a door between material and image—only to be covered or transformed by the next wave of pictorial construction.

Growing up on contact sports, I was given a window to my own anatomy through cuts, injuries, bruises and a close proximity to fellow teammates. Painting is a physical undertaking, and inevitably, I've also come to understand it as a contact sport. Fortunately for anyone dealing with figurative painting and metaphors therein, paint has bodily characteristics to begin with. And relatedly, we secrete our own kind of slimes when affected in some way by inner/outer forces (sick, turned on, hurt, sad, thirsty, full).

Alexi Worth, a mentor of mine, talks about Dana Schutz's "Sneeze" painting often—in one small rectangle she's able to deliver an entire painting proposal or philosophy: paint as snot, paint as an explosion, paint exposing messes, paint as a contagion, paint as a direct emission gathered inside the head and expelled quickly and inexorably outward. These ideas have also given life to emblems of physicality in my paintings.

AMM: Similarly, how do you use colour to this end?

DL: On a whim, I once went to a theremin concert, and over the course of a few hours felt this strange recalibration of my relationship to dissonance. When a theremin finds its way into a soundtrack, its eerie wail is generally used to warn you that something is haunted. Without it, visual cues might guide you to an unintended conclusion. Though I wish I played the theremin or any instrument for this reason and others, I just can't. But my reaction to and use of colour can probably be served by a musical metaphor.

I used to work with colour harmonies I was attracted to and avoid like the plague the ones that emitted a foul sound. Now colour decisions follow function, to some degree: is this hand content sitting there? Does it wish to be elsewhere? How can its colour and form transmit that restlessness or warn an adjacent character of impending danger? Which tones will make it project sweetness but also untrustworthiness? (Tangentially, if I want to hide the possibility of puncture, for instance, I might make the sharpened edge of a marshmallow-roasting stick appear softer than the marshmallow itself.) I try to listen to the painting and give it what it needs.

My own discomfort with dissonant colours and attraction to others help me build relationships between one form and another, or one character and another. It's a story-telling mechanism, but less sterile than that sounds in writing. I can sense when something is singing off-tune but will often lean into it to see if it will riff off into an unexpected, delirious solo.

I have also developed relationships, sometimes fraught, with each pigment. I've learned by now how they play with others: in an arm wrestle at a party, a lively phthalo will quickly tire out a cadmium, which has more wisdom but little stamina. Ivory black is that guy who corners you and talks your ear off even though your drink is pointedly dry. Purples entice, blues respond, reds listen at the door. I think these stories you tell yourself, as dumb as they might be, eventually animate the subtext of your paintings.

AMM: Many of your paintings seem to engage with a loss of innocence. Please tell us more about this theme in your work?

DL: Most of my work is pulled from a time (or place) that both hit hard and seduced me when I occupied it, and continues to inform what I paint about. Adolescence— where a physical and emotional reality is heightened, sentience bursts forth, different versions of selves are tried on and discarded. Hormones are screaming along to a Nirvana song. It is as painfully, awkwardly formative as it is sweaty and viscous, which is just another reason to paint about it. From my own vantage point, it is a sharp edge between woman- and girl-hood, a brand new and short-lived arena for testing out and experiencing the limits of one's own power. And yes, it's where innocence goes to puke its guts out and wakes up in a someone else's clothes. I'm trying to think of a myth— maybe Persephone being kidnapped while picking flowers and brought to the underworld? Or Eve sinking her teeth into that apple? In both of those scenarios, the protagonist is shifted from a state of innocence to another, by force or suggestion, and inexorably changed.

AMM: Can you tell us about some of the layers of symbolism in your work?

DL: Something that I love about painting: in this paradigm, a paper bag is never just a paper bag. It's at best a representation of a paper bag. It also flip-flops from paint to image to paint again, like the duck and the rabbit illusion; you're either perceiving or interpreting the bag or the paint. It's connected to any paper bag ever painted before it. If Viktor Shklovsky were roused from the grave and asked to revise his thoughts for me here, he might say, "art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make a bag baggy." A bag can become a fortress, a jagged entryway, and at a certain scale it could start to feel like a Serra sculpture. The spikes of the bag could evoke teeth, perhaps the tooth of a picket fence, and that same zigzag pattern might repeat at the edge of the waistband of someone's shorts. And all those could allude to the idea of protection, or a border between what's inside and what's outside.

Originally, a bag separates whatever it contains from the outside world, as a fortress protects its inhabitants from enemies, and in Serra's case, his wall prevents annoyed commuters from achieving the most expeditious route to their jobs. Teeth protect the mouth while smiling or cringing, and a picket fence serves little physical protection but demarcates in its own demure way the edge of a private property (as does the waistband). Each separately carries its own baggage—sorry, had to—and symbolic weight, and collectively they create new narrative possibilities. I employ this kind of thinking when I build compositions, which might explain something about their logic.



King of the Forest, oil on canvas, 72 x 96 inches

AMM: What ideas are you currently exploring in your work?

DL: I've been puttering around in the periphery of old paintings. I've been really stuck on cars, which grew in part from a memory of an old Toyota Tercel my mom used to drive with its bottom rusted out...my sister and I could watch the puddles in the road spew up and in if we didn't cover it with duct tape or our boots. Our next car had no heat. When I got mine, I'd turn the heat on and the headlights would dim. It tipped me towards a more gritty, grimy aesthetic than earlier paintings had. Cars feel private but are mostly see-through, they are personal by way of contents but not structure, still until they aren't, off until they're on, an equalizer, in a way—dynamic in their ability to hold any old thing or person, viewed outside looking in or inside looking out, and present a stage on which relationships can unfold.

I was recently directed towards an excerpt of a book by Svetlana Boym called "The Future of Nostalgia" as a prompt for a painting in an upcoming show. The following passage felt somehow relevant. She writes: "The twentieth century began with utopia and ended with nostalgia. Optimistic belief in the future became outmoded, while nostalgia, for better or worse, never went out of fashion, remaining uncannily contemporary. The word "nostalgia" comes from two Greek roots, nostos meaning "return home" and algia "longing." I would define it as a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy. Nostalgic love can only survive in a long-distance relationship. A cinematic image of nostalgia is a double exposure, or a superimposition of two images—of home and abroad, of past and present, of dream and everyday life. The moment we try to force it into a single image, it breaks the frame or burns the surface."

AMM: What is your process of working? Are your drawings precursors to paintings? Where and how do you work out the complex compositional elements?

DL: I approach a drawing with a certain strong feeling or a fuzzy idea and through line it eventually becomes concrete. Drawing has always been the most natural way for working through ideas and feelings. When I approach the painting, I'm armed with a ghost of that feeling and the pictorial elements, but I rarely look at the drawing. Then comes that contact sport element. Though I still use sketchbooks (and I have a million stacked around my studio with scribbles and notes that expose my thinking at the time, dumb or valid as it might have been, with holes and taped bits of paper to try to get compositions right), I caved and recently bought an iPad and have been using it to expedite the composition process. I'll admit it's a super handy tool, but I miss having those demented, ketchup-stained preliminary sketches on paper.



AMM: What are you working on right now?

DL: I'm sitting in front of a few paintings right now. One borrows a setting from a painting I made last year called "King of the Forest," but here the whole scene is unfolding from a different angle with some new clues and cast members. There are a few entranceways as I can see it—one through the partially open jaws of a smoker at stage right (we're inside the mouth), or over the great wall of that brown paper bag I mentioned earlier, which ostensibly conceals a Forty. Then you fly over the top of a Toyota pickup into a scene where two girls are trying to communicate with their braids from different sides of the painting, and someone else is ripping the skin off a charred marshmallow, scowling across at a stargazing couple in the top left corner. I just finished one based loosely on an Aaron Gilbert painting I saw this past year at Lyles and King, called "Citibank." Mine is of a guy with one hand pressed up against the window of a car (unrolled just a crack) and the other hand dangling down beside a girl's flattened head. The two are communicating. In my head I've been calling it "Coach."

AMM: When you're not making art, what are some of the ways you enjoy spending your time?

DL: I go on gallery crawls, watch movies, play soccer, discuss everything inexhaustibly with my friend Erin whose studio is down the hall. When I get caught in a good book (reading Murakami right now and it is bending my brain!) I can't get out of it. When I can go home, I like getting tipsy with my mom and sister and coaxing secrets out of them. I like biking around Brooklyn, finding new neighbourhood gin joints to haunt with my boyfriend, Tim. We have a "tickle trunk," which is just a duffle bag full of whacky costumes, and I'll throw one on at any opportunity and go out dancing/flailing. Hardcore techno and everything 90s. And my guilty pleasure is thrift shopping. I have a relatively expensive knack for it. I've justified the habit by telling myself the "tactile cataloguing of fabrics and colours and textures informs my practice," but it's really about the junky thrill that comes with the discovery of something fantastically worn-in and underpriced.

AMM: Do you have any exciting projects coming up? What's next for you?

DL: I am working like a lunatic in the studio right now— I have solo show with GNYP Gallery in Berlin opening April 30, and will have a piece in a group show in Brussels with Super Dakota (called "Off Nostalg(h)ia") on April 22. I'll have a booth in the Cape Town Art Fair, in TOMORROWS/TODAY with C+N Canepaneri Gallery in February. I also have a piece at Art Basel Miami Beach in the Collectors Lounge with Chubb Insurance.

White Hot Magazine

September 2018



Interview: Danica Lundy and The Vivid Scene



The Kiss (detail), oil on canvas, 64 x 84 in., 2017

By DANIEL MAIDMAN, Sept. 2018

Danica Lundy (b. 1991, Canada) is a painter and draughtswoman from British Columbia, Canada. She holds a bachelors degree in painting and printmaking from Mount Allison University and received an MFA with a concentration in painting from the New York Academy of Art. She is the recipient of a British Columbia Arts Council Scholarship, an Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant, the New York Academy of Art Leipzig Residency in Leipzig, Germany, and the **New York Academy of Art** 2017-2018 Chubb Fellowship. She has exhibited in group and solo shows in Leipzig, Vancouver, and New York.

She speaks here with artist and author **Daniel Maidman** about the development, ideas, and imagery of her current work, on display at the Chubb Fellows Exhibition at the New York Academy of Art through September 25 (details at bottom).

Daniel Maidman: Your imagery seems to be rooted in the rites of passage of adolescence - the awkwardness and excitement of rituals that bring boys and girls together just as they are negotiating how to be attracted to one another. What does this imagery mean to you, and what do you want to accomplish in depicting these scenes?



The Kiss, oil on canvas, 64 x 84 in., 2017

Danica Lundy: Oh, this is a great, can-o-worms kind of a question! I could go anywhere with this one. My initial thought was... adolescence is such a sweaty place. It's the first time you get a whiff of a new, curious stench emanating from your friend, the first time you associate the sweat on your palms and the little hook in your chest to the word "crush." a wonderful, horrifying new space to navigate the mixing of your sweat with someone else's. Your feelers are on high alert; the sensory system becomes incredibly sharp and delineated, colourful — which inevitably also leaves some things fuzzy on the edges — kind of like a perpetual acid trip. But this state of wide-open, perceptual wonder can leave you vulnerable to a hard left jab, and things can go dark pretty quickly, too. I love this about my memory of adolescence; it upholds such delicate, complicated duality.

Teenage experience establishes sharp sensory precedents. I want to dig into a time that is viscous, palpable and ineffably vivid, and make paintings that are equally so. The very act of painting lends itself to the nuances of a sweaty, confusing time, you know?

The imagery itself is plucked not just directly from my memory, but from lore and collective memory and my own reimagined...I could go on ranting, but I'll stop there. Like I said, can-o-worms kind of a question.

DM: That absolutely comes through in your paintings. You have a powerful eye for detail and for constructing and arranging a scene, in a very theatrical or cinematic way. This is going to lead me into a few questions, because I'm very interested in how you came to this sense of scene direction plus visual composition. Let's start at the beginning - what, if any, are your inspirations for this kind of construction? And are they restricting to painting, or are you drawing on other media or phenomena as well?

DL: Well, you just got me thinking about stages, like Caravaggio's — that painting at the vatican where the stage sits at eye level, and the guy holding christ has that damn perfect elbow jutting out like it's trying to stake out a new dimension or push through the picture plane — or early netherlandish paintings that are so shallow in depth you could say their "stage" is kind of a coffin on its side. Imagine getting stuck in there? (i've had nightmares about being stuck in a van der weyden painting.) And a more recent example would be those stunning, gouged-out stage-edge paintings by didier william at dc moore that evoke, at least for me, the vulnerability and power that's involved in seeing, looking, being seen. (side note: I used to star in musicals until around the time I stopped taking penalty kicks in soccer).

I think narrative painting owes a lot to the paradigm of the stage; not only does it provide the idea of a platform to act out conversations and confrontations, grow characters, and direct a plot or narrative, it demands consideration about what's happening in the wings of the painting and who is in the audience—about the lighting, props, set. Theatre is a natural armature for building elaborate worlds of artifice.



Burn Baby, Burn, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 in., 2016

All that being said, I don't really think about theatre explicitly when I'm constructing my compositions. They usually start with a sharp feeling and a space that begins to take form, as characters, colour, visual metaphor, and emblems of physicality occupy the space and complicate the initial feeling until it's much more. They usually start as sketches. The scenes need to be deep enough to dig into, to find more depth, and build relationships between everything... I guess I'm taking cues from visual and emotional experience at large. I learned a lot about composition from Wade Schuman, Alexi Worth, and Sebastian Burger.

DM: I was interested in the degree to which you start the paintings with sketches. I've been looking at your drawings for a few years more than your paintings. They obviously come from the same artist, but the feel is completely different. It's famously difficult to preserve the spontaneity and energy of drawings in paintings. This actually doesn't seem to be an issue for you at all. But the difference in feel is perhaps a difference in fineness of line - your drawings are very intricate meshes of fine ballpoint lines, and this gives your drawn worlds a kind of manic, hyper-detailed tone. Your paintings feel much more relaxed; there's less information, allowing actions and emotions to come more easily to the fore. So my question is, how do you anticipate, in sketching a painting, how the act of painting it will change its meaning? How do you explore and anticipate one set of meanings in a medium which, in your hands, leads to a different set of meanings? And by the way - "this isn't an issue for me" is a totally legitimate answer!



Preparatory sketch for King of the Forest, pen on paper

DL: You've pinpointed a contentious discussion that has raged at many a crit. for a long time, it was, "why can't you just paint like you draw, Danica?!"

To begin, I've always drawn. When I was little, I was plopped in the corner of my dad's workshop by the space heater and directed to copy from his beloved renaissance sculpture books while he chipped away at stone or wood. I mimicked michelangelo's cross hatching and leonardo's smoky shading... I was always hyper-focussed, and could copy things pretty early on. I distinctly remember my mom's reaction one day when I asked for a photo of a reindeer to copy for a christmas card. She was in hysterics, afraid my imagination had been compromised, and furious that my dad had somehow diminished it by teaching me to rely on photography. I mean, that's a legitimate concern, wouldn't you say? Anyway, drawing feels as intuitive as running at this point — the pen leads me around like my legs do on a good 10k. Painting came later. Painting is more like boxing while balancing on a bowling ball and reading proust. In french. With expired prescription glasses.



Preparatory painting for King of the Forest

I look at my own work pre-New York and wonder if I had two artists in me duking it out. The most glaring differences between the media were probably in my approach: the drawings were observed from life, or a hypnotic conjuring of my innards, or both; the paintings were derived almost exclusively from photography. I'd also add, I'm super detail-oriented, sometimes neurotically and to my own detriment — I'll walk into a familiar room and reel at inconsequential changes, or take serious note of small shifts in people's overall tenor. Beards piss me off because I can't collect micro movements. If anything is amiss in my studio I can tell right away, which might surprise people who see the state of my clothes and palette. I'm my own peppy, pathetic private detective.

So when I draw, it's really about settling into auto-pilot sleuth mode: looking, seeing, and feeling what is being looked at on a fundamental, unthinking level. If drawing was searching for what might be there and what might not, painting was establishing what certainly was. But I think my first year of grad school changed that. I realized I'd built up a young lifetime of visual data somewhere between my head and hands, and that, due to my tendency to latch on to details of all sorts, my intuition was charged with the nuance of my emotional and physical understanding. In painting, this allowed me to shed any reliance to photography, and rely instead on that interior, visual/emotional vault. I think this shift fostered a tighter relationship between the media, or at least my approach to the media.

So, it has taken three paragraphs to get to the crux of your questions—how the act of painting will change the meaning of the drawing. The sketches I now make to map out my paintings are meant to serve the painting— they're my cheat sheets. I can sketch out ten different compositions with ease, memorize the feel of them unfolding on the page, and then approach the painting battlefield armed with at least the ghost of that composition in my hand. Painting requires undivided attention. Painting is hard. My aim with painting is to get in a rhythm like drawing, and tapping into that unthinking sleuth spot.

I guess their relationship isn't mutual yet: it feels like my drawings are doing a favour for my paintings, like it's their side gig, but my paintings' influence hasn't leeches into my drawings. Actually, that's not quite right... my drawings now take on compositional elements stolen from painting conventions. The other thing I've been doing more and more in my paintings is delving into the micro the way I do in drawings. But it's hard to see those details unless you take in the painting outside of the JPG world. Also, as I paint I fill in what wasn't there in the initial sketch, so I'm actually diving into increasing detail as the painting grows.

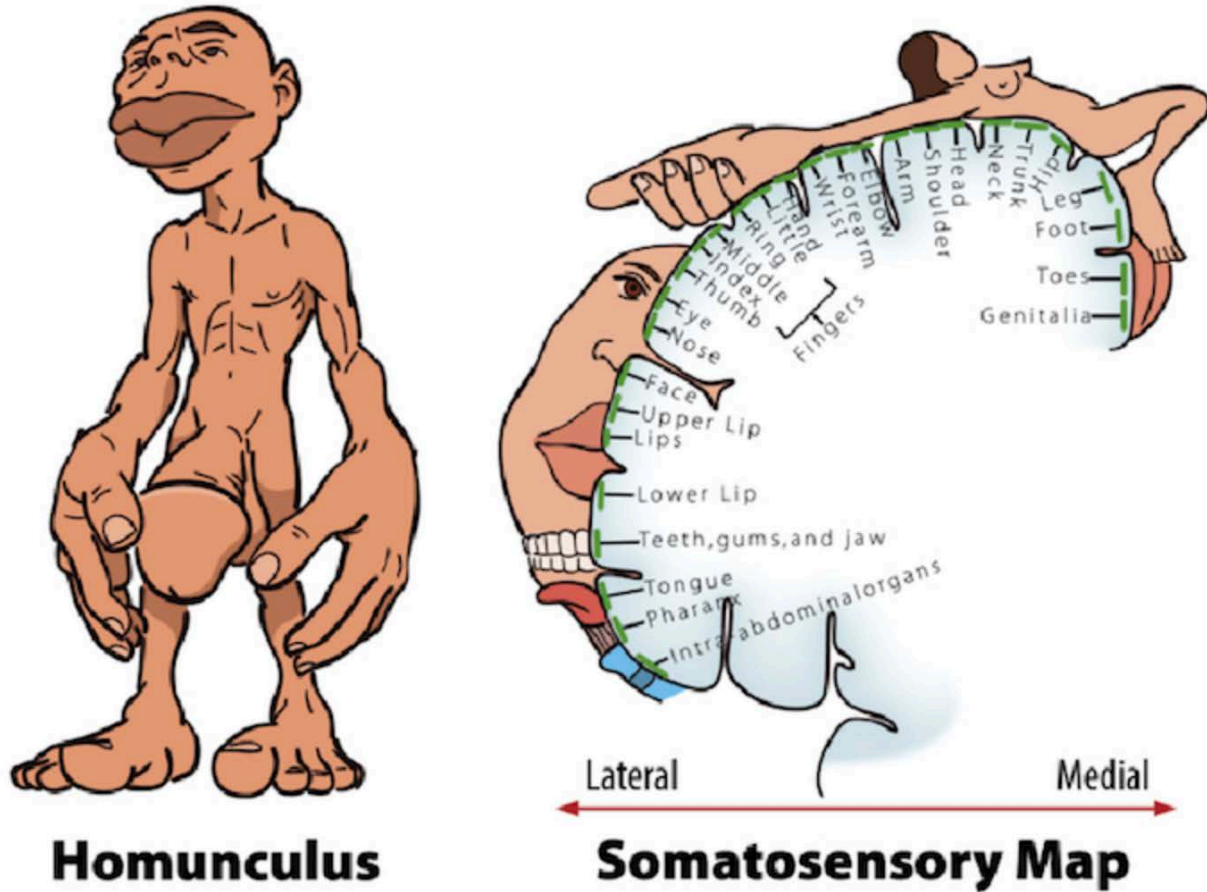
This is a great convo to be having with someone who also splits his time between two media. how do your drawings speak to your paintings? is the relationship in their meanings elastic? Do you feel like you have an alter ego?

DM: Your alter ego question is very interesting, because I've never considered it from that perspective before. I underwent a crisis in 2005, confronting the real unlikelihood that it was going to work out with me and film. When I came out the other end of that, my film impulse had fragmented into writing and art. I see those as quite distinct facets of myself. If you ever read de Chirico's novel *Hebdomeros*, you'll find it absolutely swarms with people. This is completely distinct from the empty plazas of his paintings, but the sensibility is very much the same in both his media. I feel like that - the writing and art have nothing to do with each other, but from outside, they're probably both recognizably me. However, inside of art, I've never drawn a strong distinction between drawing and painting. I've wrestled with the ordinary formal and procedural problems - why does no background work in a figure drawing but not a figure painting, what to do about the line and energy translation, etc. - but I've never considered them distinct. And in light of your question, I think I can better put my finger on a certain hold-up taking place in my paintings; that they really shouldn't just be painted versions of the drawings. So my most successful paintings are likely the ones that diverge most and have the most intrinsic painting-ness, and are neither drawing-like nor expressions of a medium-less idea that just happens to find itself embodied in paint. So, no, I don't have a feel of an alter ego, but I think I'd like to develop one over the next few years.

DL: LOVE this revelation! Can't wait to meet him!

DM: I guess that kind of covers your other questions too.

I'd like to get into something else that interests me about your paintings. They remind me a bit of the somatosensory homunculus - the representation of the human body with structures proportionate to the amount of area they get in the sensory part of the brain.



Somatosensory Homunculus (Source)

In your paintings, you will absolutely bend composition and space around making sure we get to see the nipple, the wound, the lips, or whatever else the characters crave. Similarly, you will draw attention to the desired or attended-to region with really lurid bright colors, or brightness. Do you have any account of how you developed this particular image language? It seems to me that, like the homunculus, it remaps the raw image of reality to the terrain of sensation and desire. I've found that increasingly interesting in your work over the past few years.

DL: You have touched on something super important to me. I kind of think about it as a sensory landscape, or a human-scape. I've been grappling with the right way to describe this, and the ineloquent explanation I'm about to give might be better if I were an astronomer, or explorer, and had the right terms for navigating dark places with light or landmarks. But I guess that pinpoints my intention. The places that light up in my paintings, often articulated as you said with a lurid palette, are a system for manoeuvring an unsafe or chaotic environment (both for me and a viewer), whether it turns out to be a pleasant path or not. When something lights up, it might be triggered by a character's (or a colour's) desire or alarm, but it's generally evidence of a spike of curiosity, longing, fear...it's a way of slowing and speeding up a viewer's travels through the painting while revealing the character's innermost motivations. It's a cross-section of the limbic system. It also maps and mimics the way we get through our long human days. We do absolutely crazy things to get that peek of a glowing nipple, or feel something past a growing apathy. I try to approach each painting as a patch of land I have never explored, but also as a familiar ceiling whose cracks or glow-in-the-dark stars I've observed for a long time.

It might seem like a bait and switch to lure a viewer to bright and "attractive" visual sentences, only to recognize the private, and at times gory reality of what is described. But for me, it's more about tending with violence or tenderness (or something in between) to the areas where conversation can happen between shapes, colours, and above all what they come to represent. I give a lot of attention to convergences— that which touches or comes close to touching something else. I want to charge up those encounters like they're people who have never met, or have known each other in various forms over millennia.

I'm not sure how this language came about... it's just how I've been able to find my way around. **WM**