

VENUS OVER MANHATTAN

Press Release

ANASTASIA BAY: THE STUMBLER'S PARADE

February 9 - March 11, 2023

Opening: Thursday, February 9th, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Venus Over Manhattan
55 Great Jones Street
New York, NY 10012



(New York, NY) – **Venus Over Manhattan** is pleased to present **Anastasia Bay: The Stumbler's Parade**, an exhibition of new work by the Brussels-based artist. Comprising a series of twelve paintings inspired by Pieter Bruegel the Elder's masterpiece *The Blind Leading the Blind* (1568), the exhibition is Bay's first in New York City, and her debut presentation with Venus Over Manhattan.

Anastasia Bay: The Stumbler's Parade will be on view at 55 Great Jones Street from February 9th through March 11th, 2023.

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Rendered directly on canvas with soft pastels, Bay's gestural, figurative imagery combines blocks of saturated color with loose and suggestive lines that convey motion: her figures travel across the canvas with speed and purpose. Bay draws deliberate connections to antiquity and art history in an oeuvre that routinely offers up such classical forms as Greek caryatids and Roman wrestlers. The works on view in *The Stumbler's Parade* engage a more precise point of reference: they reflect Bay's long fascination with *The Blind Leading the Blind* (1856), from the collection of the Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte. Bruegel's painting depicts six blind men grasping onto a walking stick at the moment when their leader stumbles and falls. Illustrating a Christian parable, this famous work creates a powerful sense of movement through the composition's radically diagonal organization. Describing her intentions for the works on view at *Venus Over Manhattan*, Bay imagined a series of large paintings that would similarly organize figures to "form a big round of characters falling on each other."

While Bruegel meticulously rendered his diagonal composition to create a sense of imbalance among highly detailed figures, Bay's paintings take a different approach. Her sketchy, fractious human forms gain momentum from echoed lines, shapes, and the blurring of pastels. Hung in a specific sequence on the walls at *Venus*, the works portray the instant of falling as if in a slightly blurred time-lapse video. And whereas Bruegel achieved realism through explicit detail and a somber naturalistic palette, Bay's imagery, loose and caricatural, is rendered in colorful hues that lend her figures a distinctly modern mien. Her paintings achieve an air of eroticism heightened by the physicality of the abutting figures in them. Bay may echo her source material, but she has invigorated it through the heft and energy of the bodies she paints.

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Bay's works here call to mind a host of sources, from Kabuki theater to sports, from classical sculpture to Egyptian hieroglyphs. Her invocation of these sources endows her art with a special resonance. By deploying monochromatic backgrounds, Bay dislocates her subjects from specific places and times, removing boundaries to their legibility and inviting viewers to ponder the subtlest components of her art.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Anastasia Bay (b. 1988, Paris, France) lives and works in Brussels, Belgium. She holds a BA from École Nationale des Beaux-Arts de Paris which she earned in 2012 after studying under François Boisrond. Bay's work has featured in numerous presentations including shows at Sorry We're Closed, Brussels; Galerie Derouillon, Paris; Anna Zorina Gallery, New York; White House Gallery, Lovenjoel; and Spurs Gallery, Beijing, among others. Her work can be found in the permanent collections of many public institutions, including the Fondation Lafayette Anticipations, Paris; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; X Museum, Beijing; and Zuzeum, Riga.

For further information about the exhibition and availability, please contact the gallery at info@venusovermanhattan.com

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55 Great Jones Street
New York, NY 10012

GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday – Saturday
10:00 am – 6:00 pm

PRESS CONTACT

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IMAGE CREDITS

Anastasia Bay, *The Stumbler's Parade (Landscape)*, 2022. Pastel and acrylic on canvas; 78 3/4 x 104 1/4 in (200 x 265 cm). Courtesy the artist and Venus Over Manhattan, New York. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Blind Leading the Blind*, 1568. Tempera on canvas; 37 7/8 x 60 5/8 in (85.5 x 154 cm). Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Naples.