



AUTOBODY

A solo presentation of works by Emma Stern

OCTOBER 20 - DECEMBER 22 2019. NEW YORK, USA.

The paintings included in this presentation don't immediately read as such; they are flattened for your viewing pleasure. Emma Stern builds her muses on computers. The familiar, augmented, hyper-smooth forms of *Mia* (2019), *Jess* (2019) and *Kinley* (2019) are all software-generated, but rendered in oil on canvas. A choice directly influenced by Stern's interest in the tradition of European portraiture.

Reconfiguration of the artist-subject relationship is central to any relevant practice. Throughout art history, the female nude has been stripped of all mannerism, context and idiosyncrasy. Stern does the opposite. *Minnie* (2018), the coiffured CG female torso, reposing on a deep buttoned chaise lounge, is granted interiority - her eternally vacant stare reflecting the viewer's humanity as they project it onto her. Stern's figures all lack essential personhood. They exist as empty vessels and are only filled once the viewer is forced to introduce female subjectivity.

By using a material-based practice to produce this effect, Emma Stern subverts the long-standing and naive belief in a fundamental separation between our "virtual" and "real" lives. The Surrealists claimed to intermeditate between the material world and subconscious/hallucinatory states. Stern demonstrates the flaw in this hierarchy and shows us that our experience of, and representation inside, non-physical spheres inevitably produces material effects. To that end, the palette of the works included in *Autobody*, is deliberately synthetic. Flesh tones are replaced by vibrant blends of aero blue and lilac, contoured and shaded to produce an expressive yet uncanny chiaroscuro. Canonical portraiture's iconography of wealth and finery is replaced by the motifs of a post-2000, digital aesthetic. Proportion is meticulously observed throughout, although exaggerated in 3D-modelling software in the first place.

The Other End (2018) depicts a winged gunwoman in knee-high boots, arms crossed and feathers splayed, working late in a curtained office. The bright shine, emitted from a back-lit monitor, vests the figure with a divine glow. You are invited to join her in a melded fantasy of day-job monotony and angelic gun violence. In *Jess* (2019), a svelte partially-nude figure, beatific despite her naked vulnerability, brandishes a gigantic blade. The scenes and characters imagined in these paintings potently evoke the grandiose fantasy of big-budget MMORPGs and pop-up ads of the "You Won't Last 5 Minutes in this Game" variety. Stern deftly engages with these familiar tropes and invites viewers to consider the tendency towards the pornographic or porn-adjacent representations of women that proliferate the Internet, in the process.

Yet the tone of the works included in *Autobody* is far from dystopian. There is subtle suggestion throughout, of an excited transhumanist anticipation, as Stern re-contextualises the female nude for a Kurzweilian future.

EMMA STERN

Born 1985 East Chicago, IN
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY



EDUCATION

2010 – 2014, B.F.A. With Honors, Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2019

Autobody @ PDF Preview, New York, NY

2017

Works @ Jorge Andrew Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

2015

Tabs @ Stream Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2019

Post Analogue Studio @ The Hole, New York, NY

Champs-Elysée @ 427 Gallery, Riga, Latvia

Fever Lure @ Selena's Mountain, Brooklyn, NY

Another Scorcher @ Martha's Contemporary, Austin, TX

Main Attractions @ Lubov, New York, NY

Clear Objects, Like Laliq (curated by Nick Farhi and Kate Messinger) @ Farhi Studio, Mexico City, MX

2018

Cheek to the Cliff @ Love Unlimited Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

Innocence @ Superdutchess Gallery, New York, NY

SKINS @ Greenpoint Terminal Gallery, New York, NY

The Fool's Journey (curated by BBQ.LA) @ Haw Contemporary, Kansas City, MO

New Releases @ New Release Gallery, New York, NY

Small @ Galerie Manque, Brooklyn, NY

On The Tip Of My Tongue @ Cloaca Projects (curated by BBQLA), San Francisco, CA

I'm Sorry, I Didn't Quite Catch That @ Arebyte Gallery, London, UK

Stranger In A Strange Land @ Castor Gallery, New York, NY

2017

Virtually Real @ VR World NYC, New York, NY

Life 2.0 @ Is This It, The Wrong Biennial (Digital Art Fair)

Paradise On Mars @ OJ Gallery, Istanbul, Turkey

Eyes, Nose, Lips, Etc., Etc. (curated by Ryan Travis Christian) @ Left Field Gallery, San Luis Obispo, CA

Nature's Bounty @ 0-0 L.A., Los Angeles, CA

Better Living Through Technology @ Galerie Manque, Brooklyn, NY

2016

Airplane Mode @ Superfine! Fair, Miami FL

Body Language @ Powrplnt, Brooklyn, NY

**2014**

Witness Above Ground, @ Gallery 151, New York, NY

Polish, ROX Gallery @ New York NY

One Or More (curated by Greg Drasler) @ Galapagos, Brooklyn, NY

Pivot @ Pratt Institute Fine Arts Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

PUBLICATIONS**2019**

Important Magazine issue 02: Advance Or Remain

2018

isthisit? Issue 04, curated and edited by Bob Bicknell-Knight

2018

The Finder (Ethnography of the Personal Interface), curated and edited by Wade Wallerstein