

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

GAGOSIAN GALLERY

456 NORTH CAMDEN DRIVE
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Tue–Sat 10:00am–6:00pm



CECILY BROWN

Friday, September 6–Saturday, October 12, 2013

Opening reception: Friday, September 6th, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Gagosian Beverly Hills is pleased to announce a major exhibition of recent paintings by Cecily Brown, her first show in Los Angeles in ten years, following an exhibition of related work in New York earlier this year.

In this exhibition Brown continues to explore the tradition of the nude ensemble in painting. In her visible grapple with formal concerns, she crowds each canvas with stylistically diverse anonymous figures—some loosely suggested, others identifiably expressive—who fulfill her explicit aim of conveying figurative imagery in a just-elusive shorthand, resulting in encounters with subjects glimpsed, rather than fully seen. The relative clarity of some faces encourages the viewer to perceptually “finish” other, less defined figures, to resolve the gestural abbreviations. Each painting reveals an active present state, unfolding in a succession of deliberately fluid unresolved moments over time.

Brown draws equivocally from the history of painting as well as pop culture. By freeing her subjects and inspirations from their original contexts, she subverts the role of narrative in the construction of genre, and points to the slippage inherent in quoting from source. Fragmented figures and faces, reduced to complexions or expressions, dissolve into kaleidoscopic concentrations of grey, purple, and sienna with a sudden accent of electric teal or orange. Eyelashes, teeth, hair, the curve of a breast or a shoulder blade may stand out from contrasting brushwork, or separate into momentary tonal distillations amidst the compositional flux.

Building upon the tenebrous compositions of her recent New York exhibition, Brown introduces a bright palette and prominent male figures, making visible sexual and psychological tensions that culminate in *The Quarrel II* (2013). Engaging with the paintings of Edgar Degas, she draws on the alienated subjects and color-rich settings of *La Coiffure* (c.1896) and *Young Spartans Exercising* (c. 1860). In the monumental *Be Nice to the Big Blue Sea* (2012), *Young Spartans Exercising* is recast as a pastoral whirl of grassy greens and flesh tones. Brimming with the intensity of human presence, these paintings play out Brown's persistent fascination with the tension between bold painterly gesture and figurative clarity.

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The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with an essay by James Lawrence.

Cecily Brown was born in London in 1969. Public collections include the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Tate Gallery, London. Solo exhibitions include "Directions: Cecily Brown," Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (2002); MACRO, Rome (2003); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2004); Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (2005); Kunsthalle Mannheim (2005–06); Des Moines Art Center, Iowa (2006); Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2006–07); Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2009); "Based on a True Story," Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover (2010, traveled to GEM, Museum of Contemporary Art, The Hague); Essl Museum, Klosterneuburg, Austria (2012).

Brown lives and works in New York.

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Image: CECILY BROWN, *Be Nice to the Big Blue Sea*, 2013, oil on linen, 109 x 171 inches (276.9 x 434.3 cm), photograph by Robert McKeever

Gagosian Gallery was established in 1980 by Larry Gagosian.