

NINO MIER GALLERY

NEW YORK | BRUSSELS

Deborah Druick

Past Present Tense

New York | Tribeca

February 13 - March 22, 2025

Nino Mier Gallery is pleased to present *Past Present Tense*, a solo exhibition of works by Canadian-American artist Deborah Druick. *Past Present Tense* is Druick's first solo exhibition with the gallery, featuring a selection of new paintings that continue her critical exploration of female objectification, identity, and agency. *Past Present Tense* opens with a reception on Thursday, February 13th and is on view through March 22nd.

Druick's faceless figures live stiffly within their domestic confines; their bright, patterned attire and billowing hair clash in loud harmony against their graphic environment. The instances in time depicted in Druick's works are drawn from meditations of the past modulated by the present moment, as revealed by the exhibition's title. The tension that exists between the two tenses is mirrored by the feminine struggle between authenticity and prescribed expectations. Her works address how women are compelled to minimize their subjectivity such that their existence is rendered inoffensive to societal norms.

The women in *Past Present Tense* often appear trapped, whether physically enclosed or else yearning for some symbolic freedom. This sense of confinement is emphasized by Druick's meticulously painted borders, framing the women as objects of beauty and desire. In *Outlook*, a woman reaches two fingers between the wooden fence boards behind which she is concealed, her hair ballooning upward. Next to the fence is a cluster of tulips, growing freely yet exuding a sense of solidarity to their female companion. Elsewhere, the flowers are arranged decoratively in vases, their beauty likewise harnessed and contained, reduced to vessels for visual pleasure. In the diptych *Absent*, mirroring scenes depict two women seated in profile. Each woman sits in a chair against a wall; a vase of flowers resting on the dresser in the left frame is reflected by an elegant lamp on a similar dresser in the right frame. Placed side by side, the two solitary figures appear to flank an unseen corner, echoing a sense of unified strength.

Druick's faceless protagonists express themselves by hair and dress, with their connection to nature and each other. In *Plumage*, a faceless woman with flowing curls stands before a wooden fence that bars her from the lush greenery in the background; a tropical green bird is perched on a metal stand in front of the figure. Physically untethered, the bird rests comfortably near the woman, obscuring her face as if to momentarily lessen the burden of constant disguise. From Druick's newest body of work, *Blindfolded* features a fan with a floral design masking the face of a female figure, held delicately by a hand that extends into the scene. Her stylish updo swells outward organically from behind the fan, standing in contrast to the orderly rectangular pattern on her shirt. The woman's anonymous companion provides her with a respite from the oppressive weight of conforming to outward standard. *Aspirational*, another new painting, shows one of Druick's women outside, a cement road separating her from the flora on the other side. The insect-like forms on her large, attention-grabbing yellow hat resemble the wing-like shape of the woman's collar, peeking out from behind her yellow and blue blouse, which stands in tension to the graphic patterning of the frame's painted border. By deliberately denying us full view of her faces, we are instead compelled to find beauty in the ways that Druick's women choose to express themselves. The viewer's focus shifts to the depicted women's attire, relationships and gestures, accessories and hairstyle, highlighting the societal barriers that shape their identities and locating feminine agency amidst the pressures that aim to define and confine women.

NINO MIER GALLERY

NEW YORK | BRUSSELS

Deborah Druick (b. Montreal, Canada, 1951) studied at the Montreal Museum School of Art and Design. In 2020, she was one of five favorites chosen by Jerry Saltz out a group of 60 artists to be featured in the 2020 issue of "New American Paintings". Druick lives and works in New York.