

Midnight Bloom

Marcela Flórido

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Midnight Bloom is Marcela Florido's second solo exhibition with Ross + Kramer, her first in the gallery's Manhattan location. The exhibition consists of nine new works, combining oil paintings on canvas and a new series of oil paintings made upon a diaphanous silk substrate. Florido's new paintings are playful, whimsical, and bold. They are large in scale and continue to depict portraits of the artist's recurring character, a cartoonish pseudo-self-portrait who has been the subject of Florido's paintings for the past three years. Yet, this new body of work explores the interplay between color, form, and texture in a new way.

As alluded to in the titles *Midnight Bloom* and *Cosmic Violet*, these new paintings have a mysterious inscrutability. Dark washes of Rothko-like swaths of color combined with the transparency of silk chiffon create a sense of ambiguity regarding the picture plane. The unfixed spatial relationship between surface and image is further explored in Florido's more traditional paintings on canvas. *I've Grown Stars on This Face of Mine* features her recurring character covered with a grid of stars, while in *Midnight Bloom*, the character is seen beneath a grid of flowers. This play of superimposition of graphic elements encoded in a familiar femme-y visual language, such as stars, hearts, and flowers, is akin to social media aesthetics like stickers and filters, highlighting the artist's concern with the digital world.

This fusion of seemingly disparate influences creates an enigmatic quality in her latest paintings. Being born in Rio, she credits the influence of the Concrete and Neoconcrete tradition on her "flat, matter-of-fact" way of constructing a painting to the geometric languages of artists like Lygia Clark, Waldemar Cordeiro, Alfredo Volpi, and Djanira da Motta e Silva. The mystical landscapes of her city have also naturally influenced Florido. "I feel that people born in Rio experience the magnitude of that landscape, the lushness of plants, and the engulfing of their foliage as almost an extension of ourselves and our bodies. So, the landscape I paint is not observed or imagined; it is felt. I approach this interwovenness of the methodology of Geometry and the spontaneity of Nature as a desire for structuring sensitivity."

Florido's work thrives on uncanny combinations, both spatially and in terms of formal content, skillfully incorporating figuration and representation with the flatness and geometry of Concrete and Neo-Concretism. While playing with unabashed girlishness (stars, flowers, pink, etc.), her work addresses profound pictorial concerns central to painting. In a world where technology and social media have fundamentally changed our self-presentation, Florido's exploration of self-portraiture takes on new significance.

Marcela Florido (b. 1988, Rio de Janeiro, B.R.) is a Brazilian visual artist based in Brooklyn, NY. After her studies at the Foundation in Art and Design, Central Saint Martins (London, UK), she achieved in 2013 a BFA from Slade School of Art (London, UK). She completed her academic career in 2015, earning the MFA from Yale School of Art in the Painting Department (New Haven, US). The artist was awarded a MASA Artist Award from Yale University (2015) and the Viridian Artist Prize, selected by Lauren Hinkson, the Senior Curator at The Guggenheim Museum (2015). Her practice has been the subject of solo exhibitions in contemporary art institutions in England, UAE, Hong Kong, Brazil, and New York. She is represented in public collections such as Sharjah Art Foundation and IBEU. She held recent exhibitions at Carl Kostyal, Stockholm, Sweden; Monti 8, Rome, Italy; and Stems Gallery, Brussels, Belgium.

Marcela Flórido has taught at Cornell University (2016) and founded Grupo < >, an artist collective focused on the geopolitical conditions that shape the art world and the needs of artists whose practices are interwoven with the history of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The exhibition will run from March 2 to April 15, 2023. The gallery is located at 515 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001. The exhibition will be concurrent with *Implosion*, an exhibition of new paintings by Jess Xiaoyi Han in the gallery's viewing room. For images or more information, please contact cielle@rkgallery.com or call +1 917 675 7293. The gallery is open to the public Tuesday-Saturday, 11am-6pm, or by appointment.