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Maya Perry

RAINRAIN

By Gabriel H. Sanchez



Maya Perry, *Gathering in limbo (Our deepest passion)*, 2025, oil on linen, 11 × 14".

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Beds were a central motif in Maya Perry’s solo debut at RAINRAIN gallery, “The Moon Takes Shape of an Outsider’s Light,” which featured paintings, drawings, a sculpture, and one animated short. Her beds often appear alongside a menagerie of canines, birds, insects, and people in fantastic scenarios. A site for rest, sex, convalescence, and nightmares, a bed is where we spend roughly a third of our lives—some of us were born in one and, if we’re lucky, will end up dying in one. In this show, the artist unpacked the affective power of this deceptively ordinary domestic appointment through humor, wonder, and a sense of menace.

Across five modestly scaled oil-on-linen paintings, Perry depicted her bedroom—in dreamy hues of apricot, blush, and olive—from an oddly voyeuristic perspective, as if seen through a keyhole or a door just slightly ajar. In four of these canvases, the bed was a stage for the unpredictable peregrinations of the subconscious mind. In *Gathering in limbo (Our deepest passion)* (all works 2025), a battalion of red ants swarmed the top of a tidily made bed while spilling out onto the floor and an adjacent nightstand. Perhaps they are desperately searching for something to eat, such as potato-chip crumbs . . . or a soundly sleeping body. In *Is it an animal instinct to crash deeply*, the bed had morphed into the face of the artist, whose eyes are dull with exhaustion and fixed in a thousand-yard stare.



A suite of twenty-two watercolors on paper, *It’s strange to sit in a room*, occupied a full wall of the gallery. Like the worn page of a diary, each image seemed to offer a window into the artist’s thoughts, a wellspring of phantasmagoric chaos and violence. In one drawing, a lone dog appeared to shiver under the sheer weight of it all, its tail caught between its legs in fear. Elsewhere, a canine burst out of Perry’s exposed stomach like a fictional xenomorph from the *Alien* franchise. Below this tableau the horrors escalated as yet another mutt defiled the artist’s body by dragging her decapitated head across the floor, her long brown hair clenched between its sharp teeth.

Perry’s roughly three-minute animation *The hybrid between a wolf, dog and human* offered up a hallucinatory sequence of human-to-beast transformations, ostensibly illustrating the torrent of insecurities, anxieties, and insanities that roil within us all. In the center of the gallery was a partially dismantled crib flanked by two large moths, their wings speckled with dark, Rorschach-like stains. In place of the mattress was a loose piece of canvas on which had been rendered the bloodied corpse of a hound or, from a different angle, the body of a dead dove delicately splayed out.

Perry dreamed in black and white in two large charcoal drawings on paper, suspended by shiny steel leashes next to one another on a wall. While the artist’s use of leashes here was slightly on the (ahem) *snout*, these works were perhaps the most complex and vulnerable pieces in the show. In *Towards a desire that bites or a body who sleeps*, Perry was surrounded by miniature doppelgängers as well as an eclectic assortment of creatures, including a snake, a giant moth, and a flying muskrat. Perhaps this is a portrait of an exorcised self, letting loose the anxious demons that inhibit the artist’s life. In the drawing next to it—the exhibition’s namesake—a flock of birds coasted serenely across a night sky, but appeared to shape-shift into flying insects under the moonlight, going from sweet to sinister as they batted their wings.

With an almost dreamlike fluidity and irreverence, Perry translates ideas across different mediums. In a single-evening performance at the gallery, the artist brought her visions to life with a hypnotic array of live painting, shadow play, and music. With the artist concealed behind a paper scrim that stretched from floor to ceiling, her silhouette swayed against the soft light of projected animations as she rendered a watercolor swarm of red-winged insects onto the screen. She eventually traded her paintbrush for a guitar and crooned a gentle lullaby with a fitting refrain: “About to sleep. About to sleep. About to sleep.” One wonders, however, if she can rest peacefully.

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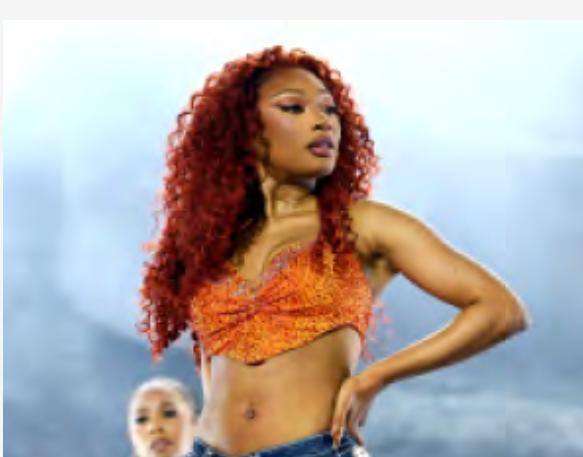
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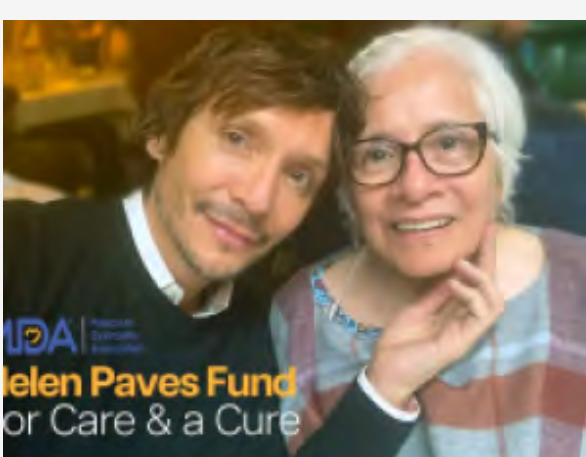
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