

Karla Marchesi: Exhibition Text – Sugar Fever Dream  
Nicholas Thompson Gallery 2023

The exhibition *Sugar Fever Dream* by Brisbane-born, Berlin-based artist Karla Marchesi presents a range of hyper-natural Post-Humanist landscapes. These paintings are bowls of brightly wrapped candy, offering enticement on first glance, but may induce nausea if consumed in totality.

With an air of affirmative nihilism and a playful aesthetic of excess, *Sugar Fever Dream* is a counter vision to Western thought at the height of anthropocentrism. In a waking nightmare of interspecies revenge, this collection draws 17th century Still Life and Vanitas traditions into a Contemporary post-internet landscape. Employing Ecohorror tropes, Art Historical references, semiotic and autobiographical elements, Marchesi delivers a variety of Still Lifes that pulse with life. Nonhuman entities are protagonists embodied with agency, movement, menace and desire: from the skies of the heavens to the depths of the ocean floor.

Marchesi's practice has long employed the still life genre as a means through which to reflect upon socio-cultural anxieties of our age. Her paintings theatrically critique what it means to be human at this present moment under conditions of late capitalism and existential climate crisis, interweaving an allegoric deconstruction of ideological systems with autobiography, pathos and humour.

Here the nonhuman actors perform as guides reflecting ourselves back to ourselves, as the violence and vulnerability of our time is navigated. Tangled digital ouroboroi present visions of existential confusion. Slaughtered game rise from the dead. Octopus yearn for touch. Rock lobsters transcend the decadence of civilization in hubristic decline. Baby squid find tender shelter in a graveyard. Portals of escape are offered through digital displacements. *Sugar Fever Dream* beckons you to feast. Give yourself over to the belly of the beast. Laugh so much you want to cry; cry so much you have to laugh.

Exhibition: Nicholas Thompson Gallery, 27 April – 15 May 2021