

Wilde

PRESS RELEASE

Vidya Gastaldon

Natural Herstory

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WILDE | BASEL

...life is mutation and multiplicity.

Paul B. Preciado in *Can the Monster Speak?*

Wilde is pleased to present *Natural Herstory*, the gallery's fifth solo exhibition with French artist Vidya Gastaldon (b. 1974 Besançon). The exhibition explores female representation, androgyny, and the intrinsic connection between humans and nature. Drawing inspiration from the concept of "herstory," which emphasizes the role of women in history, the artist assumes a feminist position that challenges conventional portrayals of gender and power.

Gastaldon's large-scale paintings are displayed prominently on the gallery's ground floor. They showcase a world where eyes and mouths emerge from the sky, hills, sea, and other elements of nature, evoking a sense of longing that resonates with viewers. Without boundaries, these large emotive faces highlight the vulnerability of these beings, urging us to reflect on the collective melancholy experienced in a world under a deluge. Each canvas contains two halves, with the faces appearing in the lower frieze while in the sky above, geometric shapes emerge. These squares, triangles, and rectangles contrast sharply with the fluidity of the rest of the canvas, adding visual intrigue and connecting to a sculptural installation within the exhibition, resembling pieces of a puzzle.

The subjects depicted in Gastaldon's mid to small-scale paintings in the remaining gallery feature equally fluid, non-gendered beings. They are a part of and in harmony with the organic, orgasmic environment surrounding them. With references to biblical figures like Lilith and personifications of natural forces, such as the sun embodied as a young female, the artist challenges the traditional portrayal of power as male-dominated. As an extension of her "healing painting" practice, Gastaldon has painted unique frames for each canvas, giving them a sense of extending beyond the confines of a canvas, breaking boundaries and breaking boundaries and defying their expectations of what a painting is.

Influenced by her experiences with eco-consciousness, Gastaldon treats the natural world as an extension of the body and consciousness. Her relationship with nature is one of love and respect, transcending the roles of landlady, gardener, and caretaker. This approach is also evident in her relationships, where she transcends the roles of mother, wife, and lover, dissolving societal expectations and embracing a more profound sense of identity.

The *Natural Herstory* exhibition invites viewers to reflect on the interconnectedness of human beings, nature, and the world around us. It is a celebration of the female perspective and a reimagining of traditional power structures. Through its captivating and thought-provoking imagery, *Natural Herstory* encourages us to challenge societal norms, embrace our true selves, and foster a deeper connection with the natural world.

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