



Figuratively

Inga Guzyte
Delany Jackson
Kaoru Mansour
Randi Matushevitz
Antonio Pelayo

March 5 – March 26, 2022
Opening Reception: Saturday March 5th, 5 – 8pm

LAUNCH Gallery is proud to present **Figuratively**, a group exhibition of 5 artists who use the human form to drive their narratives and introduce deeper metaphorical themes. Detailed graphite drawings, acrylic paintings, skateboard deck collage sculpture, mixed media on paper as well as embroidery are the mediums utilized to create these figurative artworks. These masterful techniques combine with deeply personal themes to present final images that exude layers of hope, history, joy, despair and belonging.

Inga Guzyte - "The stories that inspire my work are the stories of fierce women. Born in Lithuania, I was raised in West Germany, where an unbreakable bond with the street culture of skateboarding was born. Later, I migrated alone to the USA. I come from a place where my father rejected me because I was born a girl. That just filled me with determination to prove myself. Ironically, every world I chose was male-dominated - from skateboarding to woodworking and sculpture. My experience gave me the motivation to fight for what I want and to take on any challenges coming my way. The techniques I am using today to construct my sculptural-portraiture pieces are *self-taught*. The choice of material to express my intentions is rooted in my early teenage years growing up in Germany, where an unbreakable bond with the street culture of skateboarding was born. My goal is to meld opposite worlds together to create work that makes you stop and think. At the same time, I want to empower women to think for themselves and to strive, not for equality, but for even better things!"

Delany Jackson - Inglewood-born, multidisciplinary artist, Delany Jackson's work focuses on creating self-affirming depictions of black women embracing their features surrounded in surreal flora environments through embroidery and a range of paint mediums. With the combination of African pre-colonial braiding and hairdressing and modern-day styling of black hair, her work speaks to the displacement of the ancestors of the black Americans, who were stripped from their lands, culture, and religion, forced to assimilate into western society by creating a new culture and a sense of belonging in a foreign land. Embroidery is an essential aspect of Jackson's art practice and a craft that was passed down by her grandmother. She can recall memories of being in her grandmother's studio, fascinated by all the materials and linens, hoping that one day she would be a skillful embroiderer and seamstress like her.

Kaoru Mansour - "My figure work started in 2019. Most of the pieces I'm showing in this exhibition were created during quarantine. I feel a closer connection to these figures than many of my previous works. As soon as I draw a face, the piece begins to tell a story I do not expect." Growing up in a small village in Hyogo prefecture, Japan, Kaoru Mansour was always interested in creating things from scratch. She studied sciences in college but dropped out after 2 years and began working in graphic design while singing at local nightclubs in Kobe, eventually earning her a contract with RCA records in Japan. Once her contract ended in 1986, she moved to Southern California where she soon became a part of the experimental music scene. Despite her musical



endeavors, she maintained a passion for crafting visual art and enjoys a vibrant commercial art and gallery practice.

Randi Matushevitz - "Sublime and grotesque, the artwork of the *Dystopian Lullaby* series depicts the emotional and physical frailty caused by uncertainty instigated by the influence of the Covid Pandemic. Autobiographical in nature, the paintings reverberate from a visceral place that is simultaneously singular and universal. The figures exist in noir spaces, where the effects of past traumas linger, roused by new concerns of the unresolved abject conundrums and distorted expectations of the unknown. The series embodies a quiet sense of dread, devoid of gender, language, and culture yet filled with fraught human connectivity.

Antonio Pelayo – "Tacos and fruit are my favorite types of street vendor. Nothing like the experience of eating an amazing taco or delicious ripe fruit on a hot evening in Los Angeles. However, the main reason I love seeing the brightly colored umbrella of the "Puesto de Frutas," it symbolizes the realization of a dream. Daily, these vendors contend with heat, rain, wind, biting cold, haters, business owners that feel threatened by their presence, law enforcement always looking to hassle them, it makes for very long days. However, by taking small steps daily, they thrive.

"Growing up in both Mexico and the United States, as a child I felt like I didn't belong to either place. Instead of playing in the neighborhoods of Jalisco, Mexico or Glendale, California, I would stay at home and spend hours drawing every day. Like the daily small steps of the street vendor the discipline of drawing has lead me to become an artist for the largest animation studio on earth. These images on display depict steps of my journey both as the son of an immigrant family and an artist."

About Launch LA

LAUNCH LA believes exposure to the arts enhances quality of life and strengthens community for all through the shared appreciation of creative expression in all its forms and hybrids. LAUNCH LA is passionate about providing all artists regardless of race, color, creed or sexual orientation with quality opportunities to present themselves and their creations that reflect our times to a curious and enthusiastic audience at important happenings throughout Los Angeles.