

Press Release

## Flora Yukhnovich

Sweet Spot

8 February – 30 March 2019

Private view:

Thursday 7 February, 6-8pm



Flora Yukhnovich, *Thank Heaven for Little Girls*, 2019  
Oil on canvas, 220 × 190 cm.

© Flora Yukhnovich 2019. Courtesy Parafin, London

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Parafin is delighted to present its first exhibition of the work of young British painter Flora Yukhnovich (born 1990).

Flora Yukhnovich's paintings trace connections between a visual language originating in the Rococo with contemporary popular culture, examining and questioning how notions of femininity, taste and beauty have been encoded and restated throughout art history before becoming entrenched within the contemporary aesthetic. The diverse sources for her work are drawn from art history – specifically 18th-century French painting – but are filtered through references to contemporary fashion and music imagery, glossy magazines targeted at young girls, or the packaging of Barbie dolls and Disney toys.

Yukhnovich's research revolves around a series of binary positions: feminine and masculine, low and high culture, good and bad taste. To address these ideas she repurposes the motifs, palette and painterly gestures of an aesthetically contentious moment in the history of art, the Rococo. As an artist working in the twenty-first century the works of Fragonard, Boucher and Watteau and the cultural freight they carry become a vehicle for her ideas, rather than the sole focus of them. Through her images Yukhnovich explores aesthetic codes, specifically the ways in which painted images encrypt and reinforce gendered positions. Central to her investigation is the gendering of the colour pink. She says: 'I feel a bit conflicted about the colour and the aesthetic it embodies. On the one hand, I accept the designated female imagery which I have grown up with and genuinely like, and on the other hand I feel embarrassment at the reflection it has on me. I think a similar tension exists in the recent popularity for Millennial pink. There is an enjoyment of nostalgia and pleasure, but also a feeling of the necessity for some degree of irony to create distance from the unwanted associations. I am trying to find a balance between these two feelings in my paintings.'

The series of new paintings shown at Parafin navigate a terrain between figuration and abstraction. While motifs such as trees, *putti* and aspects of the female form are recognisable, they are indeterminate, dissolving in fluid passages of vibrant and painterly mark-making. For Yukhnovich paint is a physical and sensual medium as well as a tool for cultural reflection.

The exhibition will also include a series of smaller studies on paper. Made as part of her preparatory process alongside the larger paintings, the studies are pared down responses to works in the historical canon by Fragonard, Boucher, Tiepolo or Pater, painted rapidly as a strategy for reducing colour and composition to its essence, and as a way of refining and rehearsing gesture and palette and exploring questions of composition in preparation for the larger works.

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Flora Yukhnovich completed her MA at the City & Guilds of London Art School in 2017. Her work is currently included in the group exhibition 'Dialogues: New Painting from London' at GASK, the Gallery of the Central Bohemian Region, Czech Republic, and will also be included in 'Telescope' at the Jerwood Gallery Hastings, curated by Nigel Cooke, from 18 January 2019. She recently completed The Great Women Artists residency at Palazzo Monti, Brescia.

## Editor's Notes

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## Parafin

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Parafin was launched in September 2014 and is located at 18 Woodstock Street, just off New Bond Street. Parafin represents a broad selection of contemporary artists from emerging names to established international figures.

## Gallery artists

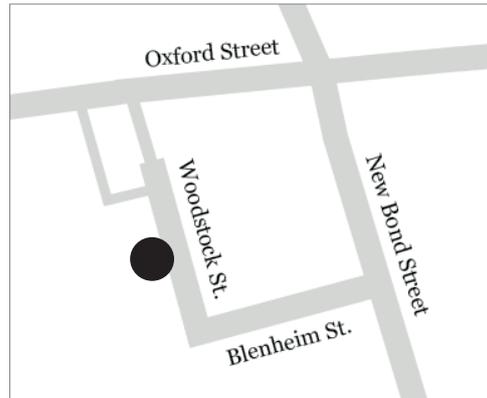
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Fernando Casasepere	Nathan Coley
Hamish Fulton	Tim Head
Nancy Holt	Hynek Martinec
Melanie Manchot	Justin Mortimer
Katie Paterson	Hiraki Sawa
Indrė Šerpytytė	Alison Watt
Hugo Wilson	Uwe Wittwer
Flora Yukhnovich	

## Woodstock Street, Mayfair

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Woodstock Street is located on the northern edge of Mayfair, London, between New Bond Street (via Blenheim Street) and Oxford Street. Parafin is situated near to the historic tiled Art Deco entrance of auction house Bonhams.



## Opening Hours

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Tuesday–Friday, 10–6  
Saturday, 12–5  
Or by appointment

[www.parafin.co.uk](http://www.parafin.co.uk)  
@parafinlondon