

## Larissa Bates: Las Doñas

Exhibition Opening: October 25th 2019 from 6 to 9 pm



Larissa Bates, *After Party*, 2019, gouache, ink, mother of pearl and 22k gold leaf on panel, 20 x 16 in, 50,8 x 40,6 cm

## Larissa Bates: Las Doñas

October 25th - December 21st, 2019

Ever since she was a child, Larissa Bates' everyday life has been characterised by conflicting experiences and contrasting impressions. She grew up in minimalist houses, some without electricity, with her American father, who was part of hippie subculture and had dedicated himself to a simple life, and whom she describes in *El Viudo* (The Widower) in particular. She thus developed an early interest in the aesthetics of the material culture around her and life in 'normal' homes. Though Larissa's mother died young, her glamorous family were an immense draw for Larissa at that time. The upper class women of Costa Rica swathe themselves in colourful fabrics, shimmering jewellery and elaborate make up. The differences between the two branches of Bates' family therefore derived not only from their ethnic origin in the different Americas; rather, they also concerned contrasting experiences of spirituality, and conceptions of class, roles, and living standards. How does one deal with having only a subliminal and confused understanding of part of one's own family and consequently of part of oneself?

Larissa Bates' art processes questions such as this relating to identity, belonging, and feelings of loss and 'in-between-ness'. She herself describes her work as a kind of diary in which she records her attempts to approach them. Her use of bright gouache, glimmering gold leaf and mother of pearl creates a unique materiality in her images that results in complex floral and ornamental images. On the one hand they are reminiscent of her Costa Rican family's lifestyle, which so captivated her as a child. On the other, the materials are also a reference to the former colonial trade routes, thus addressing the cultural interweaving in Costa Rica of European colonialism, Asian trade influences and the South American base. These multi-layered cultural implications are reflected in contemporary arts and crafts in particular, as South Americans apparently attempt to use art to gain access to the motifs and objects that have brought in to their country. This has given rise to Mexican interpretations of Japanese folding screens, named *biombos*, and *enconchados* inspired by the art of lacquering. This kind of artistic appropriation is what ultimately inspires Bates' paintings. Hybrid works of art never quite fit into indigenous traditions, yet they maintain a definitive point of access to the other – they are intermediaries between cultures. Bates recognises in this her own search for a way to access her foreign/familiar maternal family. This imagery that oscillates between continents and cultures becomes almost a metaphor for cultural convergence, where art provides a unique form of expression for the internal differences that are so difficult to put into words. The language of the materials and style in Bates' paintings are the point at which her own private experiences and (artistic) attempts to gain access blend with the political dimensions of post-colonialism and the associated questions of cultural property, authenticity, hybridity and multiculturalism. However, they then immediately go beyond this in their use of humorous twists and surreal absurdity. This is how Bates' multi-layered imagery attempts, in a very personal way, to make tangible the two different cultures within herself and her family, incorporating times and spaces, the foreign and the familiar, in equal measures in an opulent exoticisation of the self.

Klara Niemann



Larissa Bates, WhatsApp After Altar with images of Virgin, 2019, gouache, ink, mother of pearl and 22k gold leaf on panel, 36 x 18 in, 91 x 45 cm

## Larissa Bates

Larissa Bates (b. 1981 in Burlington, USA) lives and works in New York. She was raised in Vermont and Vara Blanca, Costa Rica, and graduated from Hampshire College in 2003 with a degree in Studio Art. In her elaborate small-scale paintings she often deals with her Caribbean heritage and inquires into social functions of families and the role of women in creating identities. She has been the recipient of the Artadia Award and was a resident artist at the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

# GNYP

## Solo Exhibitions

2018

Biombo, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

2015

Mama Lengua, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

2012

Chiquita Banana, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

2011

Snap and Go, Galería Espacio Mínimo, Madrid

2010

Man Enough, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

If The Accident Will, Richard Heller, Los Angeles

2008

Just Hustle and Muscle, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

Man Power, Mogadishni, Copenhagen

2007

My Little War Mongers, Richard Heller, Los Angeles

2006

MotherMen, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

2004

The Peaceable Kingdom, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

2003

Semina's Little Circus, The Grubbs Gallery, The Williston Northampton School, Easthampton

## Group Exhibitions

2018

Indulge, ArtMovement, Los Angeles

You Tell Me, Foley Gallery, New York

2017

Mommy, Monya Rowe Gallery, Saint Augustine

2016

Larissa Bates and Beverly Semmes, Topless Gallery, Rockaway Beach

A Verdant Summer, Taymour Grahne Gallery, New York

2015

Boston Artadia Awardees, DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln

Nothing Pathetic About Her, bkprojects, Watertown

Not Really, The College of New Rochelle, New Rochelle

Out of Place, Monya Rowe Gallery, Saint Augustine

Alchemy, DC Moore, New York

# GNYP

2014

The Cat Art Show, 101 Exhibit, Los Angeles

2013

Inaugural Group Exhibition at 34 Orchard Street, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

2012

Zagga Zow, Cooper Cole Gallery, Toronto

The Calender's Tales: Fantasy, Figuration & Representation, Boston University, 808 Gallery, Boston  
Pinta, New York with Galeria Espacio Minimo, Madrid

2011

Mini Size Me: A Monumental Critique of Today's Handheld Society, Bakersfield Museum of Art,  
Bakersfield

2010

Metallika, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

2009

Out of Order, Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York

Our Beginnings Never Know Our Ends, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

2008

Inaugural Group Show, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

The World's Smallest Art Fair, Anna Kustera, New York, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

All Gouache All the Time Part 2, Jeff Bailey Gallery, New York

2007

Ornament: Ho Hum All Ye Faithful, Bravin Lee, New York

Vera Illiatova, Rebeca Raney, Larissa Bates, Mogadishni, Copenhagen

All Gouache All the Time, Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington

Momenta Annual Benefit, White Columns, New York

The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, Galleria Glance, Turin

2006

The Young Americans, Bendixen Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, Denmark

Garden Paradise, The Arsenal Gallery in Central Park, New York

Drawings, Roberts + Tilton, Los Angeles

Do You Think I'm Disco, Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos, Bronx

Almost 30, The Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University, Wichita

2005

Bunny, Soo Visual Arts Center, Minneapolis

Le Papier, gescheidle, Chicago

Radical Vauderville, Geoffrey Young Gallery, Great Barrington

Something is Somewhere, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

Things of that Nature, Sixtyseven Gallery, New York

Can't See the Forest, Sixspace, Los Angeles

2004

Art Mobile, Art Basel Miami Beach, Miami

I've Met Someone Else, Monya Rowe Gallery, New York

Fictitious Fixations, The University of Maine, Augusta

The Drawing Show, Soo Visual Arts Center, Minneapolis

Tag Team, The Tank, New York

Aviate Collective, The Knitting Factory, New York

## Grants & Awards

2016 Sustainable Arts Foundation Finalist

2014 Boston Artadia Awardee

2003 Hampshire College Independent Productions Grant



Larissa Bates, *La Madrona*, 2019, gouache, ink, mother of pearl and 22k gold leaf on panel,  
16 x 20 in, 40 x 50 cm