

## Press Release

### **Jasmine Gregory - *Trouble at Casa Amor* 16 November - 12 December 2020 Opening Saturday 14 November 2020**

Karma International is pleased to present *Trouble at Casa Amor*, an exhibition of new paintings by Jasmine Gregory. The works on show depict figurative scenes of entropic escapism saturated with historic and pop culture referencing.

*Casa Amor*, house of love, is taken from the reality TV show *Love Island*, where men and women compete to find "love" and win money. *Casa Amor* functions as a shit show of sorts, a second "other" space used to test love and create tumult. Gregory works satirically with absurd and abstracted notions of love and commodity, creating space for otherness within figuration.

*Facts (HBIC) (2020)*, HBIC an acronym that stands for Head Bitch In Charge popularised by reality star Tiffany Pollard, is a portrait of a female figure, sat with conviction, in direct eye contact with the viewer, delivering a list with no facts. Neon green acrylics lay to rest an empty truth. Above the right shoulder, a window and second frame within the painting has an ass pressed up against the glass, mooning and further trolling the viewer.

Gregory's work orbits femininities, their mannerisms, abstractions and sensations. Subjectivities are thrown askew with the use of multiple brush techniques, the strokes form visual traces of emotions that have developed into a unique visual language: soothing cloudscapes; scrapy voids; baroque still life sheen and girly doodles build to create a sugar coated chaos.

In the painting *Hot Gas (2020)*, a warped figure with elongated legs, perky breasts and infant arms, suggestively reclines in a cloud released from an elliptical derrière. In contrast to the swaying smooth strokes of the body, clumpy rough paint textures the face, masking the emotion of the figure, mirroring the face of Dawn Davenport marred by acid in the film *Female Trouble* by John Waters. Here the grotesque portrays a surreal high camp with a sense of the subject feeling her fantasy.

Gregory's characters are often caught in states of physical, emotional or psychological transformation. The painting *Lifeline from the Outside (2020)* is a composed emotive staging, a distinct atmospheric pause mirroring the reality tv moment when contestants see their loved ones after a prolonged time gap. The dog, a dappy hero, painted SOS red like *Clifford the big red dog*, is hugged by two ghosts while squashing his plushy. Comforting others while comforting himself, soundboarding fragile validity.

Vulnerability and humiliation play out in the fantasy of choosing what story to tell, as a contestant, as an artist. Emotions are strategized, the lens filtered, reality falls into disarray. The act of masking one's reality echoes in the act of figuration. Both fabricate and therefore manipulate a reality for the subject. Gregory draws from a complex spectrum of reference points. For example: the neurotic busy aesthetic of Lisa Frank (a sticker and toy company known for their use of rainbows, neon and stylized depictions of animals); subjects of myth and fantasy in the oeuvre of Dorothea Tanning and historic genres such as the Dutch Golden Age and Hieronymus Bosch. The works are loaded yet transparent. They portray fictional perspectives of now mirroring contemporary society, invoking introspection and a need to escape.

Ian Wooldridge

Jasmine Gregory was born in Washington DC in 1987, and currently lives and works in Zurich, Switzerland. Her work was shown at Les Urbaines in Lausanne and at the Kunsthalle Zürich among others. She has also participated in "Reimagining the Museum: Open Letters and a Decolonial Framework" a roundtable discussion hosted by the Hammer Museum.