

Tara Walters
Cessna
February 4 – April 1, 2023

Kristina Kite Gallery presents *Cessna*, an exhibition of new paintings and wallpaper by Los Angeles-based artist Tara Walters.

The exhibition takes its name from Walters' beloved horse, Cessna, who passed away in 2022. Cessna is depicted in several paintings at various stages of her life — as a young foal, in her prime, and as a mare surrounded by her offspring. The meadows, flowers and trees that she loved and lived amongst feature prominently in landscapes both real and imagined and also serve as the inspiration for a newly conceived wallpaper. Referencing historic wallpaper designs of the Victorian era and the Arts and Crafts Movement as well as artists such as Walter Crane, Charles Burchfield, and William Morris, a pattern of tiny horses jumping in and out of their corrals is surrounded by an endless field dotted with irises, clovers, and poppies.

Two large-scale vertical landscape paintings hang on the wallpaper in which Walters' motifs of balloons, butterflies, and rainbows converge with references to East Asian scroll paintings, European castles and 18th century astronomical illustrations. The paintings' titles as well as their imagery also reference the Flammarion engraving, an unattributed illustration which first appeared in French astronomer Camille Flammarion's *Latmosphère: météorologie populaire* published in 1888.

Using pure pigments and water sourced from the Pacific Ocean, Walters' large-scale canvases are built up from numerous layers of water and paint. As the first layers of pigment and water are applied, the canvases are left to dry face down on the studio floor. The resulting pools and stains serve as the starting points for the compositions in a collaboration with chance and circumstance. The accumulation of pigment and water rarely extends to the edges of the canvases and the resulting images appear like visions floating within the sharply defined edges of the stretchers. As the ocean water dries, the delicate salt crystals that remain add subtle areas of shimmer.

A recording of Claude Debussy's *Clair de Lune*, performed by the composer himself, plays intermittently in the space. Inspired by Paul Verlaine's poem of the same name, the romantic and melancholy tune transforms the installation into a life-sized keepsake box or musical jewelry box. A place of fantasy, memory, history and invention that aspires to Verlaine's lyrical mood —

The dreamy moonlight of a Watteau painting,
That silences the birds, and where one sees
The sobbing fountains all like figures fainting,
Tall, slim, amid the statues and the trees.*

Tara Walters (b. 1990) received her MFA from Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA in 2020 and BFA from Savannah College of Art and Design in 2016. Her work has been included in group exhibitions in Los Angeles and New York and she will be having a solo exhibition at Indipendenza in Rome in summer 2023. This is Walters' second exhibition with the gallery.

*From *Clair de Lune* by Paul Verlaine, Translation by Arthur O'Shaughnessy