

Kelly Vivanco: *Peculiar Tides*
September 13th - October 4th

Thinkspace (Los Angeles) - is pleased to present *Peculiar Tides*, featuring new works by Southern Californian artist Kelly Vivanco. A graduate of the Laguna College of Art and Design, Vivanco works primarily in acrylic on panel to create illustrative paintings with whimsy and play. Her beautiful, and eerily knowing, protagonists and their stalwart friends offer endless visual adventures. Inspired by the creative spontaneity of fantasy and dream, her works capture a childlike sense of wonder: animals come to life, the inanimate is magically awakened, and nothing strange is improbable. Not unlike fairytale or folklore, her characters find themselves accompanied by sympathetic creatures in haunted forests, enchanted swamps, and in this newest installment of work, seaside and underwater worlds. Combining mannered portraiture with highly stylized environments, Vivanco's surreal works display a true technical facility coupled by an emotive edge - think the unlikely pairing of Egon Schiele and Japanese Manga. Endlessly charming, and just dark enough to conjure adult associations, Vivanco's worlds are evocative and personal but remain interpretatively generous in their use of open-ended metaphors.

Vivanco intentionally avoids circumscribing her imagery with definite symbolism or a singular narrative. Her works offer endless threads from which to weave and imagine, inspiring the process of creative discovery in others, and recalling the oft forgotten possibility of uncynical imagining. Transforming the familiar with an expansive curiosity for the beautiful and the strange, Vivanco creates emotive works that invite active participation from the viewer. They function as fluid worlds in which multiple realities are possible and viewing is playful. Drawing inspiration from vintage photographs, memory, dream and childhood fairytales, Vivanco creates her works intuitively, allowing the subjects to evolve on their own terms. Her paintings tend to feel both otherworldly and strangely nostalgic, but are always amply relatable with association and empathy.

Like lucid dreams, an awareness permeates Vivanco's paintings. Suspended somewhere between half sleep and waking, they feel somehow distant and yet close. Her subjects, beautifully exaggerated as they are in their childlike quality, retain an innocence and a simultaneous self-possession. This often ambiguous feeling of opposition animates Vivanco's works from within. Her figures display both strength and delicacy, and confidence and trepidation, allowing them to feel both strangely heroic and ordinary, like the best characters of fiction. With endless readings at our disposal, Vivanco's memorable works hum with an irrepressible stirring of possibility.

Curiot: *The Moktulen Kingdom*
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Concurrently on view in the Thinkspace Project room are new works by Curiot in *Moktulen Kingdom*. Working out of Mexico City, Curiot's approach to imagery is energetic and monumental. An accomplished painter and street artist, his mythical murals are internationally renowned for their vibrant palettes and host of surreal creatures. Influenced by his Mexican heritage, and an appreciation for its cultural legacies, Curiot incorporates aesthetic elements to invoke its crafts, design and legends. Drawing from visual patterns, geometries, Day of the Dead styles and mythology, Curiot creates powerful visual hybrids from a combination of contemporary imagery and ancient culture.

Curiot often pits man against nature in epic, quasi-mythical, encounters, creating works that convey an undeniable feeling of tradition and legend. Symbolically immense and populated by beautifully strange composite creatures, his works thrive as larger than life metaphors for the oldest of human conflicts: the struggled reconciliation of the natural and human worlds. The artist's attention to detail is staggering. Working on massive public scales at times, and on huge architectural surfaces, his command of large-format minutiae is humbling. Curiot's vibrant and saturated pieces command an incontestable presence in the gallery and on the streets, and remind us of the power of the visual to sustain both the present and the past.