

FRANK GONZALES

DESERT DISCOURSE

March 2 - March 23, 2019

Concurrently on view in the Thinkspace project room is *Desert Discourse*, featuring new works by painter Frank Gonzales. Born in Mesa, Arizona, the artist is currently based in Phoenix and incorporates the desert botanicals and bird specimens native to the surrounding area into his vibrant and detailed paintings. His love of botany and ornithology have sought expression in works that combine both the organic and artificial, the natural and the contrived, to produce what the artist himself has aptly coined 'artificial realism.'

This balance between life and design is at the forefront of Gonzales' practice; rarely ever planning a piece with preliminaries before its set to a panel, the artist is resolving the composition in paint as it unfolds in real time and as it's made. The resulting works convey an organic sense of balance and an internal logic. In this new body of work, Gonzales incorporates looser areas of paint application, using a freer stylization to offset the precise handling of others, while he has also included new geological elements like crystals and geodes.

Amidst beautifully rendered natural specimens - everything from brilliant birds, exotic cacti, lush desert blooms, to prismatic rock - the artist's surreal stylization prevails, bringing the extant to strange, vibrant, new life. Gonzales' works are punctuated by moments of graphic mark making and intentionally synthetic motifs in bright, electric hues, providing visual contrast to the tightly rendered counterpoint of the wildlife specimens.

Inspired by the vastness of the desert's natural landscape and the humbling impermanence it invokes, Gonzales combines the intuitive and the observed in a contemporary take on the Naturalist's obsession.