



CLEARING

Julia Yerger
Yard Problems

September 7 — October 21, 2023

Surrounded by the road, rail and water circulation network of LA (The 5, the 2, the 110 freeways and a Railroad all wrap around this area) the river demands constant motion. Being still suddenly breaks you out of this agreement between yourself and others enjoying the path. Taking a seat on the concrete embankment or loitering in the walkway feels incongruous to its natural flow. Relaxation in motion turns the path into a kind of conveyor belt. Cyclists and Joggers are huffing by, dogs are being walked. The path isn't really wide enough to hang out. Although there are benches and two small parks, they somehow feel out of place.

The section of the LA river between Fletcher and the San Fernando/Riverside traffic circle has been through many transformations, the most recent of which being a busy recreational promenade complete with an abundance of coffee shops, craft breweries, co-working spaces and other fixtures common in the tableau of affluent development. Julia and I spent many hours on this narrow path. Walking, sitting, talking, picking up small pieces of interesting trash, looking at weird birds, pointing out some squares of painted over graffiti. On the river there is this implication of leisure__a sunny stroll, a trickling river gently flowing south, a breeze moving through the trees, but like a lot of places in the city one has to suspend their disbelief to see anything other than a fresh coat of paint over an industrial interchange.

We've spent a lot of time here wrapped up in our own ideas, having laughing fits and being in people's way. I see the same delinquency coming through in Julia's landscapes. They are describing this awkward feeling of in-between places, an unnerving stillness in a stream of forced motion. Shapes appearing, growing, gushing, flowing and floating while remaining completely static. The paintings exist in the middle of many states. An animation cell. A colorful haze that is avoiding definition but still sharp with deliberate lucidity. An apparition of characters not quite in focus, an amalgamation of cartoon outlines distilled. There is a rebellion against beauty happening. An assault of formalism. A sickly reaction. It demands that the spectator sit with the discomfort of being out of place and appreciate the minutiae of small gestures.

Our eyes have grown to understand all kinds of new gestures that were unimaginable a century ago. The dynamism in painting the Futurists sought out to express has been wholly superseded by the moving image, animation. Their understanding of movement in a linear succession feels quaint now. Julia is tracing a kind of motion untethered to the movement of a physical machine. What's being defined here is a reflection of an emotional continuum belonging to the world of memory, suspended in the passage of time.

-Harley Hollenstein

Julia Yerger (born 1993 in Rockville, USA) lives and works in Los Angeles. She received her BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art in 2015.

Solo exhibitions of her work have been held at New Low, Los Angeles and Johannes Vogt, New York. Her work has been included in group exhibitions at Paul Soto, Los Angeles; Harkawik, New York and Los Angeles; and February Gallery, Austin.