

# VENUS OVER MANHATTAN

Press Release

## SOPHIE LARRIMORE: CLOISTERS AND OYSTERS

October 18 – November 11, 2023

Opening: Wednesday, October 18th, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Venus Over Manhattan

55 Great Jones Street

New York, NY 10012



(New York, NY) – **Venus Over Manhattan** is pleased to present *Cloisters and Oysters*, an exhibition of new paintings and works on paper by **Sophie Larrimore**. The presentation will be on view at **55 Great Jones Street**, from October 18th to November 11th, 2023. This is Larrimore's first solo presentation with the gallery.

Sophie Larrimore's meticulously crafted paintings consistently feature statuesque human and canine figures, set against intricately patterned landscapes. Her compositions evoke the richness of mosaics and tapestries, and frequently incorporate motifs that engage a diverse range of visual references, including medieval illuminated manuscripts and 18th-century American needlework. A remarkable attention to detail is central to her practice, evident in the textured elements of her compositions, from pebbled pathways to del-

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icate cross-hatched trees and plants. Her distinctive approach to materials—Larrimore works directly with acrylic directly on raw linen—results in forms that possess a fossilized quality, seemingly embedded in the very fibers of the canvas.

Larrimore's work is characterized by a profound emphasis on the rhythm and repetition of forms. Her paintings frequently feature recurring motifs, including human and poodle-like elements, alongside bushes, trees, and waterways. These characters, whether arranged in groups or isolated as singular elements, are typified by a deliberate economy of design. For instance, a singular curve elegantly links her figures' semicircular eyebrows to their noses, recalling the visual simplicity of hieroglyphics or bas-reliefs. Similarly, Larrimore's renderings of dogs, marked by a uniformity of texture, attain the elegant simplicity of symbols. In *Damp Fold*, the repetition of a bright pink circle denoting the end of a felled tree suggests a compelling pattern weaving throughout the composition. Each of these motifs serves as a vehicle for exploring pattern, form, scale, and color.

The works on view adhere to rigid compositional structures, some prominently centered around geometric shapes such as semicircles, crosses, or quadrants reminiscent of a flag. Eschewing linear perspective, these paintings embrace a vertical perspective reminiscent

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of ancient frescoes, wall paintings, miniature painting, and pre-Renaissance iconography. Depth within her works is conveyed through the clever overlap of forms, a technique that recalls axonometric rendering, where one can see both above and below a surface simultaneously.

In a manner reminiscent of the pre-Renaissance painters, who meticulously adorned their devotional works with elaborate frames to enhance their sense of sanctity, Larrimore sets her paintings within substantial, handcrafted frames. In this exhibition, each painting is housed in a custom wood frame that evokes the distinctive style of Tramp Art. Larrimore's frames serve a dual purpose, lending the works a reverential quality, while also complicating a secular relationship to the veneration of objects.

Certain works in the exhibition engage references to specific historical paintings: *20 Hours* recasts Henri Matisse's *The Rose Marble Table* (1917)—which itself recalls *The Little Garden of Paradise*, a medieval work by an Upper Rhenish Master—held in the collection of The Museum of Modern Art. Matisse's painting features an eight-sided rose marble gueridon table from his garden in Issy-les-Moulineaux, characterized by its soft pink hue and a mottled surface. Larrimore's painting reduces the table's shape to six sides and re-imagines its mottled design with a terrazzo texture, peppered with stone and oyster shell elements. The tabletop reappears in another painting in the exhibition, *287 Bushes, 9 Trees*, where the familiar pink form emerges in miniature among the foliage. In this referentiality, Larrimore hints at a cohesive universe, suggesting that each painting participates in a singular, expansive world of her own construction.

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Larrimore's scenes telegraph a warm and inviting environment, characterized by their vibrant, brightly colored figures, playful dogs, and lush flora. However, a subtle disquiet emerges upon closer inspection. Many of the trees are leafless or felled, and what may initially seem like a relaxed female figure reveals an eerie state of petrification. The works resist placement within a specific time or place: the environments evoke an almost prelapsarian landscape, while the lurid palette and ambiguous forms suggest a post-atomic terrain. Taken together, these elements hint at a looming apocalyptic backdrop, suggesting a world grappling with the unsettling specter of profound change.

The exhibition will also feature a series of line drawings on tinted paper. These drawings relate in structure and motif to her paintings but the delicate nature of the line work allows for additional exploration of complex compositions.

## ABOUT SOPHIE LARRIMORE

Sophie Larrimore was born in 1980 in Annapolis, Maryland. She holds a BFA in painting and printmaking from the Cooper Union, New York. Larrimore's work has been the subject of several solo and two-person presentations, including exhibitions at Kate Werble Gallery, New York; Situations, New York; The Pit, Los Angeles. Her work has also featured frequently in group exhibitions, including recent presentations at Venus Over Manhattan, New York; Harper's, East Hampton and Jack Hanley Gallery, New York. Larrimore lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

For further information about the exhibition and availability, please contact the gallery at [info@venusovermanhattan.com](mailto:info@venusovermanhattan.com)

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39 Great Jones Street  
New York, NY 10012  
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## GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday – Saturday  
10:00 am – 6:00 pm

## IMAGE CREDITS

*4 Heads*, 2023. 72 x 96 in (182.9 x 243.8 cm)  
*Wet Fold*, 2023. 56 x 70 in (142.2 x 177.8 cm)  
*20 Hours*, 2023. 80 x 64 in (203.2 x 162.6 cm)  
*Watering the Garden*, 2023. 32 x 24 in (81.3 x 61 cm)

All works by Sophie Larrimore: Acrylic and water soluble crayon on unprimed linen, in artist's frame.  
Images courtesy the artist and Venus Over Manhattan, New York.