

Art & Object

"A Motif Exhibition from Clare Rojas, Belle of the Balls"

By Carlota Gamboa

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Clare Rojas' "The Stallion", 2024, Oil on linen, Courtesy of Jessica Silverman

San Francisco-based artist Clare Rojas explores the motif of dots, points, circles, and orbs in her new solo exhibition, "Clare's Balls". Presented by Jessica Silverman, the 23-piece show runs from April 25th to June 1st. The paintings range from stylized portraits, like the recurring image of figures putting on blue boots in front of floral wallpapers, to the more strikingly surreal. A gradual progression into this alternate landscape draws the viewer in and asks them to examine each detail in the seemingly "typical" illustrations.

Even the more straightforward pieces vibrate with an underlying whimsy: a woman stands in a doorway with her back towards the viewer, as a cat's yellow eyes peer out from the dark house; a

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couple sits together with the man holding a double-handled mug of coffee, as his bent arms cause the decorative flowers to jut out in angular directions; a woman sweeps black and white spheres as they roll around a dizzying room, with a single orb placed in the corner of the window, resembling the moon.



Clare Rojas' "Just Landed," 2024, Oil on linen, Courtesy of Jessica Silverman

The quiet metaphors employed by Rojas span across the 23 paintings and create a nuanced magical realism that generates deep emotions within its viewers. Subjects of loneliness, expectation, introspection, anxiety, curiosity, and intimacy are transmitted through orbs, big and small. Perhaps due to its naturally-occurring shape, this orb motif melts into different facades. One is able to look past the individual parts that make up the images and further experience a distinct vulnerability in each of the displayed figures. From the anthropomorphized rain cloud with its lightning bolt arm, to the flower-headed floating ball-man with legs, the humanity in all of these pieces spring off the canvas.

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Clare Rojas' "What Remains," 2024, Oil on linen, Courtesy of Jessica Silverman

Rojas also works in other mediums such as video and installation work, street art, and children's book illustration. This is her third show with Jessica Silverman. Rojas' work is also held in the permanent collections of MoMA New York, SFMOMA, Los Angeles' Hammer Museum, The Dakis Joannou Collection in Greece, and Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León in Spain, to name a few.

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