

MATTHEW BROWN

Julie Beaufile

Diegesis

712 N La Brea Ave

Opening Saturday, February 11

When I visit her light filled studio in Paris this winter, French painter Julie Beaufile (b. 1987) tells me: "Painting is a place where we can travel to a kind of quiet place, where the immensity is present, but there's some kind of human reference for the eye, something you can hold onto, to cope with it all." She chooses the word "diegesis," ancient Greek, to title to this, her first exhibition at the gallery. French film theorists first revived the term in the 1950s, and art critic Craig Owens adopted it in his writings on poetics and metaphor. "It means a particular space and time from a fiction," Beaufile explains. "Which totally makes sense for painting. Because one painting is one fiction. Each one gives a different kind of feeling."

Beaufile is a traveler, drawn to desert landscapes, which she considers analogous to mental clarity. She's developed a rigorous and introspective aesthetic, adopting a perfectly "neutral" square to contain the expansiveness of her abstract landscapes. As if appearing in mirage, individual elements in Beaufile's oil paintings hover on the surface of her canvases in radiant vibrations of color and line. "Each element in these paintings is like a thought," she says. Unique and electric, then, if we allow ourselves to plunge into the vast complexities of the human brain.

For the first time here, Beaufile exhibits her drawings as finished works, giving us a glimpse at her process. She consistently starts her work on canvas with a selection of her favorite drawings, which she refers to as a "mother structure" or "dictionary of shapes." As if reading from a map, Beaufile consults these drawings to determine where her paintings might go. Here, we can see the wind filled element in her drawing *Giant* (all works 2022) unfurl and expand in her large-scale painting *Canopy*. Like *Pool*, that glows with a shimmering vision of water and deep space, this work is rendered on a brilliant stretch of textured cotton. All other canvases here are stretched linen, whose darker tone shifts towards shadow and fine weave allows Beaufile's enigmatic compositions an even sharper silhouette. In *Judgement (clarity)* a nearly anthropomorphic figure rises jubilant; on wood, Beaufile's tightly balanced construction truly sparkles.

Mixing her own paints with natural pigments, Venetian red, red iron oxide, burnt umber, Green earth, and yellow ochres, Beaufile's palette begins, for the most part here, with cool blues and purples, colors of dusk and shadow from an in between time and place. "I start each painting with a first color that will decide of the rest of the painting. One tone calls for another and another and another. It's like a chain reaction." Energetic and alive.

Titles come last, "like a key, to lead people to a certain vibe where they can finish the story." Her canvas *Boomerang*, for example, pictures two forms that hint at the ancient tool, one ascending left, the other fluttering right. For Beaufile, this work imagines a model of Karma. "Whatever you put out in the world, it's going to come back to you in some way." Reminding us of our place in space and time, Beaufile's work quietly requests engagement. What if we might follow her on this path towards lucidity, that flickering possibility of peace, even if it is only a fiction?

Text By Lillian Davies. All quotes: Artist's conversation with the writer, Paris, December 14, 2022

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Julie Beaufils (b. 1987, France) lives and works in Paris. She studied at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and at University of Southern California's Roski School of Art in Los Angeles.

Recent solo exhibitions include *ART021*, Shanghai, China (2020); *La Plage*, Balice Hertling, Paris (2018); *True Myths*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, Brazil (2017); *Cadors*, Balice Hertling, Paris (2017); *Le Meilleur des Mondes*, La Kunsthalle, Mulhouse, France (2017); *In Tongues*, Overduin & Co., Los Angeles (2017).

Recent group exhibitions include *Palai*, Palazzo Tamborino Cezzi, Lecce, Italy (2021); *Amitiés* (curated by Exo Exo), David Giroire, Paris (2019); *Vol. 3 : Nothing to hide* (curated by Marie Madec), Sans Titre, Paris (2017); *Your Memories are our Future* (curated by Julien Fronsacq), Palais de Tokyo, Zurich (2016).