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Autre

Powers, Bill: Pissing in the Wind Spring/Summer 2022 Issue



LOUISE BONNET

PISSING IN THE WIND

Interview BILL POWERS Portraits MAGNUS UNNAR Clothing KWAIDAN EDITIONS

What would Sigmund Freud say about the figures in Louise Bonnet's paintings? Pink, flesh-toned bodies levitate and gravitate, in a demented dreamscape like sleep paralysis demons with blond bobs. Bodies urinate, lactate, and spill blood from hidden arteries of the unconscious, submerged in the blue waters of psychosexual and libidinous tableaux, and erogenous zones are pushed to the physiological limits. Born in Geneva where she attended the Haute école d'art et de design, she moved to Los Angeles in 1994 and never left. Borrowing from the Old Masters and Surrealists, Bonnet has created a painterly vernacular that is entirely her own. On the day of our interview, Bonnet was announced as one of the 213 artists included in the 2022 Venice Biennial, curated by Cecilia Alemani, which will explore the connection between bodies and the Earth.

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BILL POWERS In an interview with There's no moral or lesson that she had to anyone else, at least in my own head. You Josh Smith, he once lamented to me learn, or even linear exposition. be an artist anymore. You have to be an resonate so deeply with you? entertainer, too. You need the personality BONNET To see a woman depicted to go along with your paintings.

good at articulating what I was doing, paternalistic. When I started, in fact, I couldn't do it POWERS I don't want to analyze access it because it's there.

in this way is rare. Especially in a movie comfortable in your universe creation at LOUISE BONNET I don't know about from the '80s. When dealing with a "bad" this point? being an entertainer. I was never very woman, the narrative is usually pretty

at all. But I didn't feel like I owed that you, but is the appeal that you can be

"I'm very interested in shame and the body in my paintings, and bodily functions bring extra shame and embarrassment."

at explaining what I was thinking, even still have these main character moments? found one where the fetus was still in its to myself, and where the ideas in the BONNET She's only the main womb, pickled. work came from beyond the obvious of character because the movie is about POWERS The last time I visited your oh, that's a foot, and realized that it was her. There's none of the trappings of the studio, I saw a painting in progress, where

old and then again after the filmmaker conventions. fifteen, you get caught up in the drama about Picasso? and was not reacting to the way things already embedded in my psyche. season-it's kind of bleak and cold. The figures with tears. isn't trading off of any of the tricks young responding to more hidden aspects, like extra shame and embarrassment. girls sometimes feel like they have to the part of the iceberg that you can't POWERS Do you see that as a sexist is that she has died. Then the movie is thinking of dead Christ paintings too, with about our bodily fluids, try to explain or justify what happened. of the body. behavior or decisions, however unlikeable, influenced by him? I found quite liberating. It's not a way that BONNET It's not just Picasso. I really POWERS Are there mythological

focus being on her. If anything, she's it appeared like a woman was peeing POWERS Remind me the name of more elusive and enigmatic as the movie golden light. Is there some art historical the movie that inspired your last show in unfolds. I was raised in an era when you precedent for such a scene? Varda which I saw when I was fifteen years to watch someone drop those societal Lotto at The Met of Cupid peeing on

that the director is not trying to justify her Picasso because you don't want to be too sometimes not. I have this whole thing

women are usually portrayed in films. try to not compare what I am doing to forces at work in your paintings?

become paralyzed if you do. But obviously, how disappointing it is that you can't just POWERS Why did that movie there's a lot of influences ingrained in my psyche.

POWERS Do you feel more

BONNET It's like I hit a vein because I kept poking around for so long. Now I can

POWERS I see an ancient Egyptian influence recurring in your paintings the last few years. Am I making that up?

BONNET I like the idea of something so old that it becomes a receptacle for something I don't understand, that I don't know the meaning of, something that feels eternal. Like a mummy holding its mysteries in a terrifying but to anyone, either. Over time, I got better unlikeable, and never explain yourself, and somehow relatable way. Recently, they

always had to apologize, and be polite, and BONNET Urine is used in interesting BONNET Vagabond (1986) by Agnès be careful of hierarchies. It's compelling ways in art. There's a painting by Lorenzo Venus [Venus and Cupid, 1520s], which died in 2019. As a teenager, the movie POWERS When you have some blue I believe was given as a wedding gift for floored me. I didn't really understand bodies, or blue body parts underwater good luck getting pregnant. I guess they why it had such an impact. When you're in your paintings, are you thinking couldn't depict semen, but the default is to replace it with urine. In a way, we are of the narrative. The main character is BONNET Actually, I try to not think much more prudish now than people someone who was close to my own age about Picasso. Or really anyone that is were in the 1500s about certain things. There's a fresco of an angel peeing on happen to her in the way I'd imagine. She POWERS I ask because a few years a crucified Christ in the Basilica of St is a young, homeless girl who is walking ago you did cite Picasso's The Weeping Francis of Assisi in Assisi, for example, so around the South of France in the off- Woman as a reference point for your that must be a good thing, I assume. I'm very interested in shame and the body in character is not trying to be likable and BONNET The blue bodies were me my paintings, and bodily functions bring

do. The first thing you see in the movie see from the surface, I guess I was also thing, or that we all have embarrassment

flashbacks, more like ellipses that don't the sores and discoloration, the "othering" BONNET Both. I paint these characters that are sometimes When I saw it again, being older, the fact POWERS Is the distancing from empowered and in charge of it, and with control and constraint.

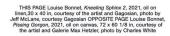


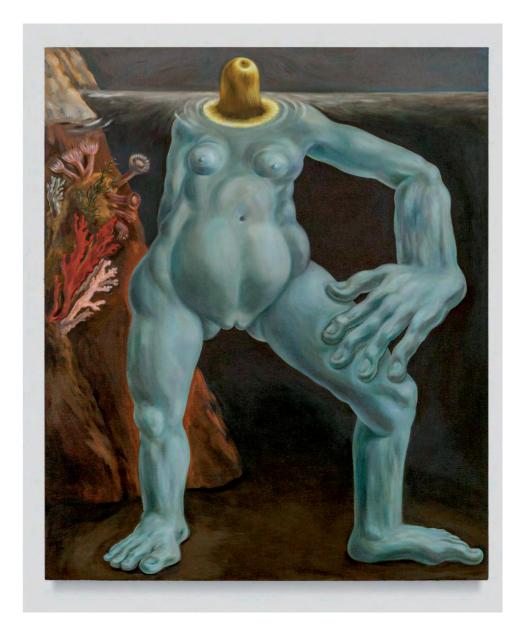
Louise Bonnet, Veiled Nude, Bloated Belly, 2019 oil on linen, 66 x 56 inches, courtesy of the artis and Galerie Max Hetzler/Gagosian

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Gorgon, I was struck by the part where I saw hanging in your house in Silver think of this term! She was more into once Perseus cut off her [Medusa] head. Lake is an older work that has a face with full psychoanalysis and really drew from he threw her body in the water, and her eyes. Why did you end up reducing facial that, but I think our work draws from a blood created coral, because coral is alive features from your figures? and colorful when hidden under water, but BONNET I started painting more POWERS Famously, any time you petrifies above it, where it can be seen. faces lately, actually, because I started see a spider in Louise Bourgeois' work, There was a painting in my Paris show at feeling that whenever it's a bit ambivalent, it's a stand-in for her mother. So, are the

that you are included in the 59th Venice done to her, she might need more agency; metaphorically. But also, why would your Biennale. How did you react when you got an identity or something. Otherwise, eyes kids need to be sentries? I haven't explored the news?

BONNET Just incredible. It was fantastic meeting Cecilia Alemani who curating the Biennale, she really made me feel like we understood each other. I think I heard Nathaniel Mary Ouinn say this once, too, that as an artist you are basically alone in your studio, constantly terrified. You spend your time feeling as if you are about to jump off the high board. So, when something happens where you feel that it is being rewarded, that you are doing something right and you can just keep doing the work, then that's a big relief.

POWERS Why do you have to panic at all?

BONNET I don't think you can make good work that is advancing what you are trying to communicate without being scared. I really would like to know who can make art without being scared. And then, I have some questions for them. Feeling accepted removes a huge weight. It means a lot.

imagine that you being in the Venice Matisse painting with three women and very much a team. We are a team. Biennale could make things complicated a little turtle, their faces are done very POWERS Do you ever pose in front of at home, the competitive aspect...

ceramic artist with a very different POWERS You seem to be working at believe is called your "weenus." practice. We don't really compete in the a bigger scale these days. same arenas. I am the one, in any case, who would get very upset, he's much up more physical space, if they want. who crashed in the Andes and resorted to more zen than I am. But he has work and Especially in the art world. I always cannibalism. In one part, they make socks a project at LACMA—a ceramic project liked that Louise Bourgeois made huge out of the skin from a dead teammates' using clay, ash, and water from all fifty things. You can be in the world and elbows. In the end, you could wind up states and the territories. He is ambitious take space. and super accomplished, it's not really something that figures in our lives.

Max Hetzler that hints at the scene. whether the woman I am painting is sentries in your paintings your children? POWERS Today it was announced doing something or something is being BONNET Yes, they could be,

BONNET When I read the myth of the POWERS The only painting of yours BONNET I wonder what she would



Lorenzo Lotto, Venus and Cupid, 1520s, oil on canvas, 36 3/8 x 43 7/8 in. Purchase, Mrs. Charles Wrightsman Gift. in honor of Marietta Tree. 1986. Courtesy the The Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York

POWERS Louise Bourgeois almost feels like your spirit animal.

or faces suck up too much attention from all those layers yet. Maybe they act as a POWERS Is it hard being married to the rest of the painting. You try to read too buffer against the oblivion, protecting you an artist? Everyone has egos, and I would much into their expressions. There's a against your own mortality. They are also

quickly and are mysterious, abstract, and a mirror for a certain angle of an elbow? BONNET Adam [Silverman] is a sculptural. I wanted that kind of energy. The loose skin around your elbow that I

> BONNET I just listened to that book BONNET I think women should take Alive about the Uruguayan rugby team being someone else's socks.

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