

CREATIVE **BOOM**

Show Me Yours: New Takes on the Nude

By Emily Gosling July 24, 2019



Bianca Nemelc, *Mujer Y el Agua #2*, 2019, acrylic on canvas, courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery.

The tradition of depicting the nude in an art form is as old as history itself; and a look at the portrayals of the naked body through time reveals so much – about what was considered beautiful.

It's also about the emergence of new tools or art movements (Matisse's cutout forms, for instance; or the Pre-Raphaelites' obsessions with fairy-like women, all translucent skin and flowing red hair).

Now, a new generation of artists is looking at the idea of the nude as a way to explore contemporary systematic social concerns. *Show Me Yours*, the current exhibition at Chicago's Monique Meloche Gallery presents work by three artists, Brittney Leeanne Williams, Jake Troyli and Bianca Nemelc.

Each uses the concept of the nude as an art motif in highly individual ways to explore ideas around issues such as identity, trauma and gender.

These aren't trifling issues – they're important and very, very prescient—but the work on show frequently uses bright colours, playful compositions and interesting crops (we can't get enough to Nemelc's unusual way of displaying framing boobs); meaning the pieces express serious ideas through joyful engagement with the viewer.



Brittney Leeanne Williams, *Blue Desert*, 2018, courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.

The artists showing are all young – none are yet 30 years old – and each explores their subject in refreshing new ways. Williams, who’s based in Chicago, looks at the “potential of the female body to both encapsulate and express a variety of psychological states,” says the gallery, taking an unusual approach to colour by using shades of red in skin tones to subvert what we’d expect from a traditional nude. Her forms don’t show faces, but instead, unusual figurative contortions of their bodies to create an aesthetic that’s at once accessible and surrealist-leaning.

“Acting as an amalgamation of both the artist’s identity, as well as that of her female family members, these bodies serve as communal symbols of hope and love, pain and loss,” adds the gallery.



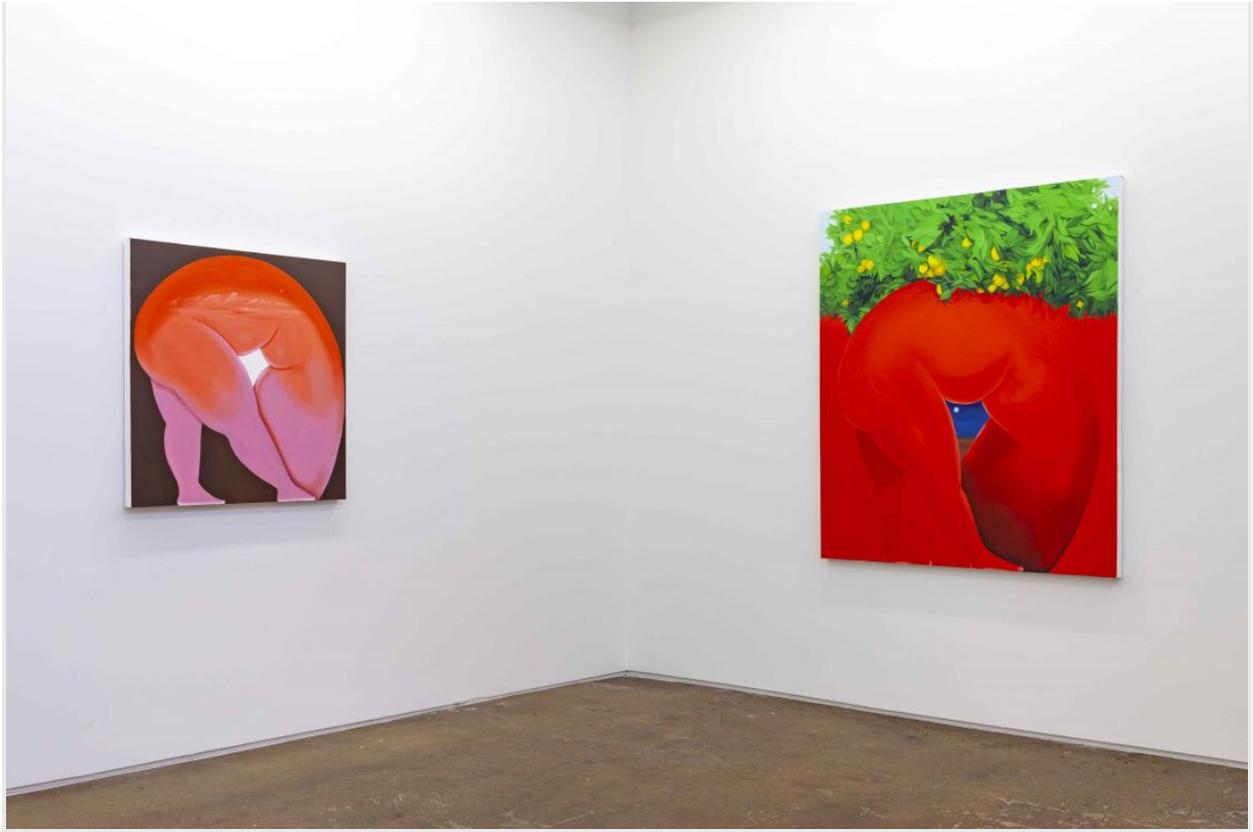
Jake Troyli *The next best thing to Napoleonic*, 2018, courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.

Tampa-based artist Troyli’s approach is the least conventional perhaps of the bunch in his depictions of the nude form, which usually plays second fiddle to a cast of unusual props or wider scenes that draw from the language of classical painting.

His work explores ideas around identity and masculinity through a humorous, occasionally absurdist lens. The gallery says that his work references “the common social practice of code-switching – the practice of alternating between varieties of language” to explore his own experiences as a biracial man when inhabiting different spaces.

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Installation view, *Show Me Yours*, 2019. Courtesy of Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. Photo: RCH Photography.

Back to those wonderful boobs: Nemelc's work is instantly engaging; placing the female form against more traditional, earthy green and yellow tones. Her work's starting point is self-portraiture; though the pieces' outcomes "stand-in for all women of colour through their renderings in multiple shades of brown," says the gallery.

Her work is influenced by the art she saw in her grandmother's home when she was growing up, and her approach is highly motivated by "her own identity as a multiracial woman," the gallery adds. Their large scale aims to create a site in which the viewer can immerse themselves in "a meditative space on culture and heritage."

Show Me Yours is on show at Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago until 17 August 2019.