

# ART CRITIQUE

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## ‘Show Me Yours’: exploring the nude figure in novel ways



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

By **Katherine Keener** Published on 12 July 2019 at 14 h 32 min

‘Show Me Yours’ is a group exhibition on at Monique Meloche Gallery in Chicago. The exhibition, which features artworks by Bianca Nemelc, Jake Troyli, and Brittney Leeanne Williams, runs alongside a solo show of works by Cheryl Pope called ‘BASKING NEVER HURT NO ONE.’ Pope’s works explore the nude figure in a novel manner. The artists in ‘Show Me Yours’ take Pope’s vision one step further to look at the nude figure through the lens of society’s systematic issues. Nemelc, Troyli, and Williams use the nude as a base upon which to grapple with issues including trauma, identity, and gender.

Based in New York, Nemelc (b. 1991) works in the show feature the female body. Through fragmentation, she places the pieces of the female form against backgrounds that hark on the natural environment with earthy colours. The lines of the figures create rounded, playful illustrations of the female nude creating a simplified version of the body while celebrating each aspect. Various shades of skin contrast to the bold backgrounds as the woman in each of the large-scale works, which began as a self-portrait of the artist, stand in for all women of colour. Nemelc found inspiration for her works for ‘Show Me Yours’ in the art she experienced in her grandmother’s house, including Fernando Botero and Tarsila do Amaral. Notions of self are thus found in many facets of the paintings, which Nemelc hopes provide a space for meditation.

Williams, a Chicago-based artist, works specifically with the female nude, too, to explore notions of identity but also the potential the body holds. Through unusual palettes and positions, Williams subverts the traditional view of the nude. Her faceless figures explore the potential they hold to both express and encompass different psychological states. Use of negative space in the works further obscures the female figure and at a point, the human figure nearly becomes other-worldly. Through the figures she creates and obscures, Williams portrays herself and her female family members and their shared experiences of hope, love, pain, and loss.

Jumping off from the absurd, works by Troyli, a Tampa-based artist born in 1990, contrast to both Nemelc and Williams' works by exploring notions of masculinity, particularly those of a biracial man. The mood of his works becomes whimsical as Troyli presents viewers with humour-filled scenes that feature his own 'elastic avatar.' According to the press release, his works, and the chameleon-like nature of his self-portrait references code switching or 'the practice of alternating between varieties of language.' Being biracial, his identity inherently straddles the line between one notion of self and another. As he navigates the complexities of identification, his avatar navigates the odd vignettes it's placed in.

The works by each artist work in tandem to present the nude figure in novel approaches. 'Show Me Yours' will be on view at the Chicago gallery through August 17<sup>th</sup>.



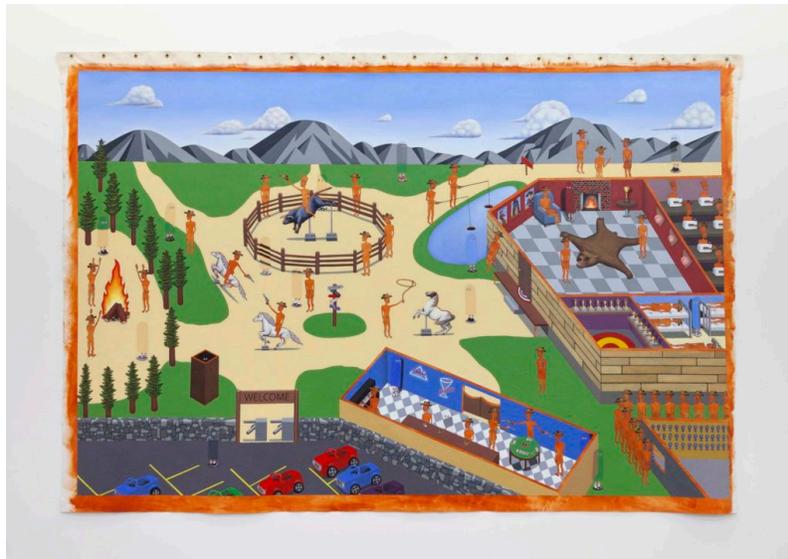
Brittney Leeanne Williams, 'Into Victorville', 2019, oil on canvas, 36 x 36 in. (91.4 x 91.4 cm).

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Bianca Nemelc, 'Mujer Y el Agua #1', 2019, acrylic on canvas, 56 x 46 in. (142.2 x 116.8 cm).



Jake Troyli, 'High noon at Ranchland®', 2019, oil and graphite on un-stretched cotton canvas, 84 x 126 in. (213.4 x 320 cm).