
Darius Airo: Mickey's Mirror

Curated by Joshua White | WhiteBox.LA

Abigail Ogilvy Gallery | Los Angeles

1923 S. Santa Fe Avenue, Los Angeles, CA

Opening Reception: May 25, 6:00 - 8:30 PM PST

May 25 - July 6, 2024

Abigail Ogilvy Gallery x WhiteBox.LA present *Mickey's Mirror*, a solo exhibition of recent paintings and pastels by Darius Airo. Airo's latest works are vibrant abstractions featuring monolithic cartoon characters depicted on tables and abstracted through internal mirrors. Airo utilizes rhythms and content as compositional tools, creating an autobiographical alphabet rearranged according to mood or space.

The images explore the collapse and explosion of elements such as the monolith, mirror, and table, with the characters serving as symbolic and self-referential figures that shift formally within their environments, reflecting mood and space.

In a recent essay, Terry R. Meyers explores the significance of Airo's visual choices: "Not made with any audience in mind, done, as he told me, as if he were in some type of trance (no planning, body over mind, etc.), [Airo's drawings] establish and build upon a form that he was literally taking personally, roughly defined as a Mickey Mouse statue on a pedestal, presented as an icon. For Airo, this icon is himself. To be clear, this is not the same thing as saying these once-private drawings are self-portraits. Airo's identification of them as mirrors is key: they function more like self-contained reflections of something he sees himself as instead of anything he might

actually be or look like.

We are multitudes, after all.

Mickey Mouse himself is anything but singular, even if Airo has made it clear that his self-identification is not specific to the character's resolutely identifiable face and form. The connection is in the eyes, a thread that weaves through cartoons in general, nonetheless it's hard to argue against Mickey being the GOAT (Airo called him a "monolith"). In particular, Airo has been most influenced by cartoons like "Rocko's Modern Life" from 1993-96, and "CatDog" from 1998-2005. Both series rely upon qualities of line, shape and color that manifest in Airo's work. Note the word "Modern" in the title of the first, reinforced by what comes off stylistically in the episodes as an homage to 1950s "space age" nostalgia for the future. In the case of the second, the title character's ability to be two disparate things in one malleable body is a role model for Airo's icon who, beyond any cartoon, is a FaceBody, dominated by two eyes and often standing on PedestalFeet. Fully fleshed out characters, their witty titles anchor their personalities: "hiram clarke hustler," "juice box enjoyer," "legs that kill," "martini gazer," etc."

Darius Airo (b.1995, Chicago) lives and works in Chicago. He received his BFA from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago in 2017. Airo has shown work internationally in exhibitions in Chicago, New York City, Los Angeles, Amsterdam and Paris. Mickey's Mirror is Airo's third west coast solo exhibition.

Joshua White is a Los Angeles based photographer specializing in the documentation of art and architecture. After a ten-year stint as Architect Frank Gehry's in-house photographer throughout the 90's, Joshua went freelance in early 1999. Joshua has photographed the vibrant international art and architecture scene for the past three decades and has contributed to hundreds of books and periodicals

for artists and architects ranging from Richard Serra to Rem Koolhaas, Jeff Koons and Charles Ray to Takashi Murakami and Renzo Piano.

In 2023, White was awarded Top Architectural and Fine Art Photographer by Art News Magazine. Recently, White has begun curating art shows in Los Angeles with his gallery project WhiteBox.LA and has curated shows for Darius Airo, Curt Lemieux and artists Jim Mooijekind and Tim Biskup.

Joshua White lives in Los Angeles and works locally and internationally.

Abigail Ogilvy Gallery is a contemporary art gallery with locations in Boston and Los Angeles. We exhibit contemporary art with a heavy emphasis on concept-driven artwork by emerging to mid-career artists located across the country and internationally. The gallery primarily focuses on paintings but also exhibits a range of other media including photography, sculpture, mixed media, digital prints, drawings, and much more. Owner Abigail Ogilvy Ryan founded the Boston gallery in 2015, and in Fall 2023 the gallery program expanded to a second location in Los Angeles. The gallery is committed to exhibiting the strongest work from both local and international artists.

Abigail Ogilvy Gallery's new Los Angeles gallery will provide a platform for new perspectives and education through independent curation and artist partnerships. The collaborative approach upends the traditional gallery model and aims to enhance the careers of artists, curators, collectors, and other art world professionals, both emerging and established. The gallery program primarily features guest curators in order to share diverse perspectives and voices with the Los Angeles area and the greater art market. AOG x LA is now open to the public.