

INKA ESSENHIGH

27 APRIL - 3 JUNE 2023
511 WEST 22ND STREET

NEW YORK – MILES McENERY GALLERY is delighted to present an exhibition of new paintings by Inka Essenhigh, on view 27 April through 3 June 2023 at 511 West 22nd Street. Accompanying the exhibition is a fully illustrated publication featuring an essay by Suzette McEvoy.

Inka Essenhigh creates paintings that celebrate the beauty of the natural world as seen through the mind's eye. Rather than outwardly painting the world around her, Essenhigh's ethereal landscapes begin with a sense of place, both imagined and real. She composes her paintings intuitively, painting what's envisioned in her mind. Often skipping preparatory drawings, she starts translating her visualization directly onto canvas with enamel paint. Allowing her to build color and render precise details, the use of enamel results in compositions that lay flat on the surface while emanating a glossy sheen.



Articulating something imagined into something seen, Essenhigh's paintings are a culmination of the surreal and fantastical. Her palette glows with hazy evergreens, electric teals, and auras of magenta. The subjects range from anthropomorphized flora to skittering kittens poised to pounce. Dreamscapes of cascading cliffs and lush forests are framed by tendrilled branches with personified faces appearing out of the mountains and foliage. *Floral Fireworks* teeters on the classical *nature morte*, enlivened by bursts of petals and weeping pollen, while *Flower King* transforms a bloom into a regal monarch towering over a reclining leafed subject.

Splitting her practice between studios in coastal Maine and Manhattan's Lower East Side, Essenhigh's surroundings implicitly seep into her compositions. Mossy forest floors and never-ending estuaries conjure up the serenity of untouched Maine landscapes. A menagerie of dancers gathers in *Rave Scene* while sprightly onlookers eagerly peer past a butterflyed bouncer, reflecting the bustling celebrations of city life. "Liberated from the exigencies of everyday life," McEvoy writes, "Essenhigh's animate and assertively beautiful paintings awaken the senses to the more-than-human world."

INKA ESSENHIGH (b. 1969, Bellefonte, PA) received her Master of Fine Arts from School of Visual Arts, New York, NY and her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Columbus College of Art & Design, Columbus, OH.

Essenhigh has been the subject of recent solo exhibitions at Victoria Miro Gallery, Venice, Italy; Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY; Susquehanna Art Museum, Harrisburg, PA; Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago, IL; The Drawing Center, New York, NY; Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach, VA; Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Kalamazoo, MI; Frist Center, Nashville, TN; Honolulu Gallery, Zürich, Switzerland; and Baldwin Gallery, Aspen, CO.

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The artist has been included in group exhibitions at numerous international institutions including the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, CA; Carré d'Art - Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes, Nîmes, France; Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY; Kunsthallen Brandts, Odense, Denmark; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, NY; Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; SMAK: Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuelle Kunst, Ghent, Belgium; Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom, and elsewhere.

Her work may be found in the collections of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, ME; Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN; Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, Miami, FL; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA; Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY; Tate Gallery, London, United Kingdom; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, among others.

Essenhigh lives and works in New York, NY.

For press inquiries, please contact press@milesmcenery.com

Image: Inka Essenhigh, *Flower King*, 2022, Enamel on canvas, 76 x 62 inches, 193 x 157.5 cm