

MARGOT BIRD

"KNUCKLES AND COCKPITS"

April 22 - May 22, 2022

Opening Friday, April 22nd 6-8pm

Marvin Gardens is pleased to present "Knuckles And Cockpits," a solo exhibition by the painter Margot Bird. Surprising visual jokes immediately accost you upon entering the gallery space. The subjects of the show title are separated into two themed rooms. Paintings in the first room depict close-ups of the hands and knuckles of friends and colleagues, and the second room features the artist's friends transposed into the pilot seats of fantastical aircraft cockpits. The unmistakable motif within both bodies of work is that of the faces of cats repeatedly painted throughout the surfaces. Springing this immediate feline surprise on the viewers, at times almost kaleidoscopic in density, Bird paints these scenes with a delicate care and curiosity.

In the tight close-ups of the hands, small faces of cats sit in place of the knuckles of the subject, often like rings. Each "knuckle" painting is named after the friend or colleague whose hands are depicted, and the hands are shown performing or holding elements of their respective practices. This painterly take on what could be a photo collage with a sticker aesthetic sits comfortably in the time of meme-culture, and offers a sensitive and humorous reinterpretation of portraiture.

The pilot paintings in the second room turn the volume up to maximum on the cat motif with the proliferating tiny, cute heads staring out of places where ought to be knobs and dials on the instrumentation panels in cockpits. One can imagine Bird painting these canvases with an affectionate smile on her face. As fun as these works are, they become uncanny with any attempt to reconcile them with reality or simulation. Yet even in the realm of the imaginary, did you ever think you'd suddenly be subject to the gaze of 476 cats in one room?