



Vanitas

March 23 – May 13, 2023

UniX Gallery is pleased to present *Vanitas*, an exhibition of new paintings by the French artist Emilie Picard. This will be her first gallery presentation in the US. The show opens with a public reception on March 23, from 6 – 8 pm, and is on view through May 13, 2023.

Emilie Picard's work is uniquely poetic, and reflects universal overarching themes that bridge antiquity, renaissance and contemporary painting. Her interest in the passage of time and the fragility of life can be traced back to the Classical antiquity, when Plato, Seneca, and many others meditated on death and mortality. The Stoic Marcus Aurelius invited the reader to *consider how ephemeral and mean all mortal things are* in his *Meditations*.

Picard's take on the transience of life is conveyed through her elaborate depictions of the detritus weaved in colorful, yet muted background landscapes. Broken toys, hanging electrical cords, deflated balloons, and sun umbrellas are some of her favorite subjects. Sun umbrellas have a particular recurrence in her work – as is the feeling of being bleached by the sunlight that permeates her work.

It connects Picard to the biblical texts of Ecclesiastes with his repeated mention of the sun as the only constant, and the general futility of life.

*Vanity of vanities! All is vanity.
What does man gain by all the toil
at which he toils under the sun?
The sun rises, and the sun goes down,
and hastens to the place where it rises.*

...

*What has been is what will be,
and what has been done is what will be done,
and there is nothing new under the sun.*

Themes of *Vanitas* that originate from this Ecclesiastic text have a long and illustrious past in the history of painting. The collections of objects that emphasized the inevitability of death, the transience of life and vanity of earthly achievements usually consisted of skulls, manuscripts, and various related paraphernalia.

Picard takes this timeless subject and elevates it to the contemporary realm, with depictions of discarded toys, trash, random pieces of clothing and various remnants of human activities.



Broken, rugged, aged and exposed to the elements, objects that can no longer serve their purpose are her main protagonists. The canvases have cracks, gaps, and tears to emphasize the fragility of life and our own eventual physical degradation and disappearance.

Continuing this theme is Picard's sophisticated use of color – giving a notion of once bright, but now slightly washed-out objects that faded over time.

Another characteristic of Picard's work is her preoccupation with light. The intensely worked white backgrounds and thin acrylic paint layers create veils of color and form, allowing the light to reflect from the white surfaces and infuse the works with air and space.

Her paintings serve as a metaphor for the contemporary world – with its brokenness and fragmentation, the wars and public unrest that bring destruction, abandonment, and dislocation. Even far away from the official military zones, detritus has become a familiar everyday sight that many city dwellers witness at the homeless encampments on the sidewalks.

Emilie Picard studied at Centre de formation des plasticiens intervenants HEAR, Strasbourg, at École Supérieure d'Art et de Design Marseille-Méditerranée, France, and VSUP, Academy of Art, Architecture and Design, Praha, (CZ). Her works have been extensively shown across Europe.

Vanitas runs from March 23 through May 13, 2023, and the gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

For more information and all inquiries please contact UniX Gallery at info@unixgallery.com or by phone at 212-209-1572.