THE UNIBROW



DAILY BROWS

The Self-Pulled Strings of Our Own Theatre

AMSTERDAM'S LORIAN GWYNN DEBUTS IN NEW YORK AT JARVIS & WERNER

By Saša Bogojev

ARTIST

Lorian Gwynn

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I have a lot of respect for painters who can let go of control and accept chance and “accidents” as part of their painterly process. About a year ago, I visited Lorian Gwynn’s studio to see early stages of some works from her current NYC solo at Jarvis & Werner. Since then, we've talked more about her process, and I realized this approach lets her both capture unexpected moments on the surface and tap into hidden corners of her psyche and memory.

The Amsterdam-based artist starts with a reference photo, usually a photograph from her personal life, as a future playfield. Once rendered to a certain level, layering of additional paint, turpentine, and the removal of certain parts takes place, shifting the direction of the work into the unknown. From there, the unconscious part takes the wheel, and Gwynn starts collaborating with her tools and materials. This can significantly remove the image from the original reference, as new colors, patterns, missing or added sections might transform it into something very different. An image of a crowd dancing under party lights might shift towards a view of riots under siren flashes; scenes of civic unrest can morph into a festival-like moment; or family and friends' photographs could become a cast of characters in an imaginary theater. As if handling Self-Controlled Strings, she simply responds to the new circumstances and painterly problems.

Looking at the timeline of these works, I can see how the entire creative process IS the work, and Gwynn strives to make that visible in the final piece. Every layer, even the ‘failed’ ones, stays part of the image, giving it not only chromatic or textural richness, but also elevating the work from the earthly into a dream-like sphere. With faces and figures appearing and disappearing between the main pictorial elements, the work opens up for reading beyond its initial starting point, for both the viewer and the artist herself. Coordinated by the hand but deeply tied to the materials’ behavior and pure chance, Gwynn’s paintings result from a loosely controlled process. —*Saša Bogojev*



Orange City, 2026 Oil and acrylic on linen 78 3/4 x 118 1/8 in 200 x 300 cm



Self-Pulled Strings, 2026 Oil and acrylic on linen 78 3/4 x 65 in 200 x 165.1 cm



The hour between shadows, 2026 Oil and acrylic on linen 78 3/4 x 39 3/8 in 200 x 100 cm