

# Universe, Understood

Evi O. & David Esquivel

APRIL 6 - MAY 4, 2023

In *Universe, Understood* artists (and friends) Evi O. and David Esquivel use a colorful, abstract visual language to make sense of the world we inhabit through contemplative and speculative paintings. The artists will open a concurrent exhibition at Saint Cloche Gallery on April 26th in Evi O.'s hometown of Sydney, Australia.

Between the two exhibitions, Evi O. has created twenty-six paintings, each referencing a letter of the alphabet and inspired by singer Amanda Lear's 1977 song *Alphabet*. In the song, Lear sings "Because time goes on and things are changing in my world, here is a new alphabet for the children of my generation. Of course, all these words have a meaning for me, but other generations might find a different mood to their world." In her paintings, Evi O. reflects on her own observations and understanding of the world we inhabit in this A-Z compendium.

In the painting *Nature Neverland*, verdant plumes of chartreuse and emerald coil around each other, alluding to bountiful shrubbery, while also suggesting a viscous slime or overgrowth of algae. Is the neverland of nature a utopia, or a fool's paradise? The painting *Independent Internet Identity* depicts black and white curves that nestle against each other, never overlapping or intermingling - an apt parable to describe a fabricated online persona's proximity to a true offline identity.

Contrasting Evi O.'s humorous, tongue-in-cheek alliterations, Esquivel's paintings pose tender musings of a world coming into consciousness. His paintings stylize the landscape in contemplation of relationships both personal and universal, meditating on the interconnected nature of our world and the futility of ever understanding the totality of existence.

In Esquivel's painting *The Peace You Gave Me*, two mountainous glyphs stand in opposition to each other, while raking lines evoke the serenity of sprawling farmland. The cobalt obelisk partially cloaks its vermilion counterpart in a maroon shadow, casting a golden light between them. Works such as *Certainty Is A Cruel Thing* and *How We Are* function as indecipherable rosetta stones with their standalone compositions intimating a key to a greater understanding. These same marks appear as captions in works like *Gain of Honesty* and *Gratitude of Experience* while in *A Fear All Our Own* they take on a more sinister tone, drifting ominously across the picture plane, casting shadows in its wake.

In *Universe, Understood*, Evi O. and Esquivel articulate the nuances of life in our universe by ordering visual information into symbols, color codes, and recognizable references. Their systematic cataloging and examination reflects their own experiences while creating a structure through which the viewer can confront their own questions and the chaos of our world anew.