



Lydia Baker: *Sonnet*  
October 26 – December 7, 2024

Massey Klein is pleased to present *Sonnet*, a solo exhibition of new paintings and drawings by Lydia Baker. The exhibition will be on view from October 26th until December 7th. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, October 26 from 6–8pm. This is the artist's second exhibition with the gallery and her first exhibition of paintings. For press inquiries or questions regarding works available, please email [info@masseyklein.com](mailto:info@masseyklein.com).

*The second half of my life will be water / over the cracked floor of these desert years.*  
— Joyce Sutphen, "Crossroads"

*Sonnet* is a discovery and a personal r/evolution. Whereas the drawings in Baker's debut solo exhibition *In Between* (2022, Massey Klein Gallery) depicted a sharply focused, somber world—small and distant female figures were often shown navigating difficult terrain on their own, despite their proximity to one another—the paintings in *Sonnet* realize the artist's fantasy: a once-sought utopia, now discovered. The painter's surrealist eye takes on a softer glow, as if gazing through a foggy, winter window to look upon the warmth inside a family home.

"I have an image in my mind, where I am forehead to forehead with my partner; we're sometimes asleep or just paused momentarily, taking each other in. Our bodies create a shape that holds everything," the artist writes. Unlike the third-person drawings set in Baker's anthropomorphized landscapes, these first-person paintings bring two female figures to the fore. *Sonnet's* protagonists become a cistern in which expansive, romantic love runs to reservoir. Emotional security, previously depicted as elusive and ephemeral, can now be captured (seen most directly in "A pool of our hopes and dreams," where the composition and color overlay impress certain intimacy, and gesture toward multiplicitous futures).

Each painting is a crucial component of the whole *Sonnet*, fourteen pieces in which the two women traverse an array of environments and imaginations together: ovum both literal and figurative in "Bird nest inside a flower" symbolize the birth of family, and also the creative ideas of artistic muse; arched, layered bodies create a haven in "Forming a window for previous selves," protecting the children they once were; and "Daughters and cells flying side by side" casts the figures into a speculative future of queer reproductive possibilities.

An obsessive color theorist, Baker continues to challenge her palette in her latest exhibition, drawing inspiration from painters like Lisa Yuskavage and Matthew Wong. With *Sonnet*, Baker employs jewel tones across textured surfaces, favoring a range of blues and ochres, to create new visual harmonies and vibrations. The effect is both dreamy and visceral, sensual and cerebral.

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Lydia Baker (b. 1990 Virginia) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Baker received her BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2013 and MFA from the New York Academy of Art in 2020, where she was awarded the Merit Scholar Award (2018-2019) and the Post-Graduate Chubb Fellowship

(2020-2021). She has been awarded numerous artist residencies, including the High Line Nine x Sugarlift Residency, NYC (2021); the Saltonstall Foundation Residency, Ithaca, NY (2021) and the Vermont Studio Center (2023). Baker was also awarded the IEA Art Heals Grant (2020) and NYFA's City Artist Corps Grant (2021).

Her works have appeared in print and online with publications like West Branch, The Wick, New American Paintings, FAD, Artnet, Juxtapoz, Art Maze and Artsy. Special projects have included David Zwirner's PLATFORM Pride Curation, in partnership with Gayletter (2024), and their 2022 November Selection. Recent group exhibitions include CHARTA, Fortnight Institute, NYC (2022); *A Suitable Accomplishment*, Trotter & Sholer, NYC (2023); The Drawing Stall Fair, Monopo New York, Brooklyn, NY (2023); Future Fair, Massey Klein Gallery, NYC (2023); and *Aura*, Wilder Gallery, London (2023). Solo exhibitions include *In Between*, Massey Klein Gallery, NYC (2022), London Art Fair with Wilder Gallery, London (2023) and *Sonnet*, Massey Klein Gallery, NYC (2024).