

Corydon Cowansage *Separation Anxiety*

kaufmann repetto is pleased to present *Separation Anxiety*, Corydon Cowansage's first solo exhibition in Italy. A new body of works evoke playfully ambiguous anatomical landscapes, straddling the space between biological and botanical imagery. Cowansage's paintings present an array of sensual, biomorphic shapes in a lush and vibrant color palette. The subtle tonal gradations, with heavily contrasted highlights and shadows, imply depth and movement, while the repetition of analogous forms, often arranged symmetrically, confer a sense of dreamy abundance and endless reproduction.

Carefully balancing figurative and abstract elements, at a closer look these exuberant compositions give way to more complex narrative interpretations. The bulging shapes with their enigmatic crevices and folds encode visual themes related to fecundity, procreation and metamorphosis. In *Cocoons*, voluptuously swelling oval forms evoke clasped-up flowers or ripe fruits, capable of generating helical, twisting ropes reminiscent of umbilical cords. The same motif reappears in *Budding* where a tender, pale pink protuberance is unfolding from the embrace of fleshy, pulsating petals. A similar physiological perspective is also taken up in *Gametes*, populated by swollen tadpole-shaped figures, which evoke male reproductive cells. Another recurrent element, the symmetric arrangement of analogous forms, hints at the biological process of cell division, which is the means of growth and reproduction in multicellular organisms.

The artist's interest in ambiguous anatomical landscapes is also evident in a series of swelling, curvilinear shapes that suggest floating pairs of lips. In some works, they are represented as a swarming crowd, deliberately confined to the boundaries of the rectangular surface, while in others the vision extends beyond the constraints of the frame, liberating the motif on shaped canvases protruding from the wall. Giving on the one hand a nod to Surrealisms' fetishized interest in fragmented female anatomy, Cowansage is on the other hand claiming the reappropriation of its eroticized iconography, generating new references and conceptions of femininity. This puts her in the orbit of intrepid pioneering women artists like Judy Chicago and Zilia Sanchez, who employed biomorphic abstraction to transform the female body into a site of resistance, psychic power, and creative energy.

Corydon Cowansage (b. 1985 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) lives and works in New York. She received an MFA in painting from Rhode Island School of Design in 2011 and a BA in art from Vassar College in 2008. She has participated in residencies at the Bronx Museum of the Arts and the Yale Norfolk School of Art. Cowansage's work has been shown internationally with recent solo and group exhibitions in the United States, Hong Kong, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.