

# VICTORIA CANTONS

## PEOPLE TRUST PEOPLE WHO LOOK LIKE THEM

11 May - 2 July, 2022

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Flowers Gallery is delighted to announce a solo exhibition by London-based artist Victoria Cantons. This exhibition features a thematic cycle of large paintings, which track the artist's own transgender history, to reflect on issues of identity and what it means to be a woman.

Working from a personal archive of photographs made over a period of more than a decade in the years before, during, and after intensive facial surgery, Cantons' paintings present a record of trauma and healing, alongside a rigorous inquiry into the social constraints surrounding gender politics.

Painted and sequenced non-chronologically, the works weave a story that extends to the present day, reflecting on the vulnerability of the body and the empowering action of physical transformation.

Cantons' paintings are luminous and visceral in their depiction of flesh, capturing the vivid, shape-shifting bloom of post-surgical bruising, and the mottled lustre of theatrically applied makeup. Fading scar tissue, as well as greying hair marks the passage of time within these works, in which there is also a sense of the inevitable invisibility of the aging female body. Cantons describes the importance of accuracy and honesty in the paintings, saying "*I needed to show exactly what this woman has been through.*"

As their titles suggest, the *Transgender Woman* paintings assert a resistance to labels, and Cantons often uses language to explore the freedoms and boundaries of the human condition on her own terms. A series of neon wall works use the form of handwritten text to communicate well-known affirmations. *I am enough*, which features in this exhibition, engages the personal pronoun "I" to generate a positive statement for both the author and reader of the work.

Cantons also explores the intersection of language and performance in a four-minute video titled *Clinging to My Own Beliefs / Belly Button Fuzz*. This work responds to Freud's concept of the superego, using iterations of the question "*What is of...?*" as the basis for an unflinching interrogation of experience.

For more information and images please contact Hannah Hughes: [press@flowersgallery.com](mailto:press@flowersgallery.com)



*Transgender woman No.8, 2022, oil on linen, 170 x 150 cm*



*Transgender Woman No.5*, 2021, oil on linen, 170 x 150 cm



*Transgender Woman No.4*, 2021, oil on linen, 170 x 150 cm

## ABOUT VICTORIA CANTONS

Victoria Cantons (b.1969, British), lives and works in London. She studied Fine Art Painting at Wimbledon College of Arts, UAL; followed by the Painters Studio Programme, Turps Art School, London; and graduated with an MFA in Painting from Slade School of Fine Art, UCL, in 2021. She is a recipient of the Felix Slade Scholarship, Slade School of Fine Art, UCL, and was shortlisted for the Chadwell Award in 2021. Recent group exhibitions include *Tomorrow: London*, White Cube, (online); *Summer Exhibition*, Royal Academy, London; and *PAPA RAGAZZE*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles. Cantons curated the Slade Rooms as part of *LONDON GRADS NOW 2020* and *2021*, Saatchi Gallery, London. Cantons first exhibited at Flowers Gallery as part of the 24th Edition of *Artist of the Day* in 2018.



*Clinging To My Own Beliefs / Belly Button Fuzz*, 2017, single-channel HD video, colour and sound (2 channel, mono), total running time 4 minutes 7 seconds

## NOTESTO EDITORS

Exhibition Opening Hours: Wednesday - Saturday 11am - 6pm

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