



Sydney Vernon: *Sydney Vernon*

September 15 - October 27, 2023

Opening reception: Friday, September 15, 5-7pm.

Sydney Vernon © onna Tiede, 2023.

Kapp Kapp is pleased to announce the opening of Sydney Vernon's self-titled exhibition. Vernon's second solo permutation in New York and her debut with Kapp Kapp expands upon the artist's intricate vernacular rooted in personal and generational histories, folklore, and fictionalized architectures. Presenting a suite of new works on paper, the first major body of work the artist has presented since 2020, Vernon's unique approach to the page, vis-à-vis pastel, colored pencil, and ink, refines her ongoing transmutation of self and narrative.

Many of Vernon's paintings begin with vintage portraits of her family, images of cousins' weddings or games of musical chairs, which the artist has collected thoroughly over the years on behalf of many generations. Vernon fixates on a central narrative, sometimes mirroring the point of reference directly or isolating one figure or one gesture. From the initial marks on the page, the "truth" of Vernon's narrative is already expanding; as Vernon patches silhouettes from movie stills or magazine spreads amidst her composition, she entwines events of culture and history with personal narrative.

Akin to the famous diptychs of Lorraine O'Grady, one of Vernon's heroes, the connected narratives, in Vernon's case collaged, reflect truths between the personal and historical. Where O'Grady's parallel images imply and reflect a connectedness, Vernon's articulations instead invoke just one truth, a history composed of myriad consciousnesses. In this way, the boundaries of Vernon's painted conceptions are inherently blurred. Where some paintings lean toward one pole of representation, interpolating from family history, others veer toward complete myth, interpreting figures like Tina Turner and Dionne Warwick, who Vernon consistently returns to, where they appear just as rooted in memory as images of her family.

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Take *Kitchen Table*, a recent ink and pastel composition, where Vernon's focus shifts to three central figures seated around a family dining table. The painting's surface is bisected, with two connected panels, isolating one of the central figures to their own panel, where Vernon detailedly renders the figure's face and body in greyscale gazing off beyond the page, nearly looking directly to the viewer. Vernon's other two figures, rendered abstractly, one in motion and one in shadow, fade both into their setting and themselves, as if a blurred manifestation of Vernon's retraced memory. Beyond the look of familiarity given by Vernon's isolated figure, there are elements of pattern, motifs of leaves and trees, and attention to surface that imply a connectedness and narrative beyond the truth of the initial reference. Vernon's approach to truth imposes memory and history alike, appropriating from the personal and popular culture with a shared integrity, creating an imperceptible layer of consciousness.

Sydney Vernon's self-titled exhibition will be on view through October 27.

Sydney Vernon (b. 1995, Prince George's County, MD) lives and works in Baltimore, MD. Vernon earned her BFA at The Cooper Union, New York. Recent exhibitions include, 125 Newbury, New York; Luce Gallery, Turin; Deli Gallery, New York, and Sargent's Daughter's, Los Angeles.