

Mariane Ibrahim presents Miranda Forrester's first solo exhibition in Chicago, titled *Interiorities*. The show is open February 2nd through April 3, 2024 and marks Forrester's first show in Chicago and with the gallery.

As her figures waver between figuration and abstraction throughout her work in *Interiorities* Miranda Forrester paints instability at the edge of presence and disappearance. Her figures are liquid and incomplete bodies made from painterly outlines, tenuous gatherings of brushwork, and quick flashes of color. Like the queerness that they are informed by, they are painted in a language of fluidity, complexity, and mutability. Yet, despite the sense of almost frenetic precarity with the figures are rendered, Forrester's scenes resonate with certain calm and quietude. The Black queer women painted here repose in comfort: they lie in each other's arms, lean on doorways, and lounge on staircases. Taken together, Forrester's paintings orient us towards a world in which Black queer people cannot be neatly defined and delimited but instead revel in the sanctity of their quotidian being and desiring.

Forrester's paintings are faceless, but they do not lack identities. In this suite of paintings, five figures in the artist's intimate orbit recur: her partner, her infant daughter, and three of her friends. For the artist and those in her close circle, the figures are instantly recognizable purely from their shape, outline, and affect. Yet at the same time, they are ambiguous enough that the viewer can imagine themselves slipping into their bodies and living in the scene. Her figures simultaneously index precise individuality and slippery amorphousness; they mark the intimacy that is particular to Forrester's relational life while also making room for the viewer to be touched by their own sentiments of identification and recognition.

Instead of painting her worlds on conventional opaque materials like canvas or wood, the artist opts for polycarbonate, a clear, glass-like material often used in architectural construction. Given this unique material configuration, looking at Forrester's paintings occasions looking *through* them. The built environment of our own world bleeds into what's happening in the imagined world of Forrester's paintings; figures seem to step into our own dimension. The surfaces are windows, transparent openings which allow us to slither in and out of the paintings, which make us intimately linked with the life unfolding on the surface.

Forrester's figures float in realms of open possibility. As they emerge into their unfinished states of being against transparent ground, they invite the viewer to envision Black queer women beyond the entrapments of being easily resolved.

Excerpted text by writer and critic Zoë Hopkins