

KENDALL KOPPE

**FRANCISCO G.
PINZÓN SAMPER**

***By Vital Means: Songs in
the Key of Spirulina***

18 May — 22 June 2024

In the run up to the opening of this show, Francisco and I met online to talk about the work they planned to show with Kendall Koppe. Our conversation coalesced around their desire to play freely with colour and the idea of surface tension – of surface as a tension, as a liminal state, a threshold between the private reification of everyday life and an invitation to share in those moments that become archetypal. Ideas of the infrared, ultraviolet and bioluminescent act as tacit, immanent energies permeating the field that Francisco defines, seeking intuitive, emotional methods for finding planes of equivalence between situations, objects, people, print, culture, memories, places: the impression of cloisonné and woodcuts; Art Nouveau typography; patterns of koi in water; details derived from Manga, myth and maybe Aubrey Beardsley; Acid Pucci; Tropical Modernism; swipeable Aquarian holistics, and the sincere persistence of faith in sympathetic magic. It's full throttle, decorative excess. Francisco speaks of the creation of their images as horizontal – your approach, as a viewer, is to glide through the layers.

A self-confessed anti-painter who paints, Francisco strives to achieve a certain level of visual vibration and is attuned to anything that might interrupt that. When they choose which substrates to work with, they pointedly avoid canvas - pulled tightly over wooden stretchers, canvas becomes a trampoline, bouncing under pressure, asserting its texture, necessitating bulky corner folds that interrupt any possibility of trance. Trusting the substrate to facilitate colour play - to hold colour as it bleeds, blurs, blushes, delineates, gestures and saturates - the image can maintain a degree of casual autonomy. Painted or taped edges and wooden blocks project paintings from the wall, creating distance and suspense. In the work on show in Glasgow, Francisco's preference is for works on cardboard, paper and aluminium, or on the base of upturned cookie tins. Modest and stoic, hard, smooth surfaces are patient and can be believed.

In some way, with these variables in mind, Francisco organises the picture plane like Margiela organises his silhouette – as the 'everything in between' a set of fixed points.

If Margiela's silhouette is held in tension between the shoulder and the shoe - 'The shoulder gives you a certain attitude and the shoes, of course, give you a certain movement' – Francisco recognises that ambition and similarly attempts to conjure attitude and movement through 'everything in between'. This makes *Untitled (Erotica)* (2023), with its wrinkled, infra-thin mirror, something like a portal for *By Vital Means: Songs in the Key of Spirulina* – fleetingly, you too exist 'in between'; you too are assimilated to the surface. Through the portal, your body is permitted to perform as connective tissue between *Shoe Sculpture* (2024) – a pair of graphically painted clogs – and *Mom Skirt* (2023) - an A-line garment bearing patterns that recall origami paper. The truth in Francisco's painting is your performance.

The implication of frames in *Untitled (Erotica)* - the symbolic and sympathetic substitution of its shoes for yours - is an experience that primes you to encounter the depiction of other human figures as a step towards the construction of a mise-en-abyme that recurs through you. In *Peace Frog* (2024) and *Figure* (2024), Francisco uses carefully positioned limbs and averted eyes to entreat you to see yourself through the images and symbols that the torsos play host to. The impression is that these bodily forms are in some way sculptural, not unlike the kind of muscular, Atlantids you see holding up the lintels as you pass into the grand foyers of colonial-era courthouses, banks and other important buildings.

Dispersed through the presence of marble dust, the notion of Classical statues connects *Peace Frog* and *Figure* to *Anne Truitt's Studio* (2024). In watercolour, Francisco weaves between Truitt's simple, clean columnar sculptures of pure colour in order to voice her in a space from which she is figuratively absent. Charlie Porter includes images of Truitt wearing paint-spattered clothes in his book *What Artists Wear*.

'She was an extremely messy painter,' said Alexandra Truitt about her mother... 'Everything was covered in paint, the clothes, the studio floor... She would dip the paintbrush in the bowl. She would lift it up as it headed towards the sculpture: drip, drip, drip, drip, drip. And then she'd hit the sculpture with paint, and then paint over that again to smooth it down.'

Truitt's jackets and trousers, in shades of green and beige, are covered in smudges and stains that could be mistaken for mould or algae, and is this flat, slow growing life that Francisco invokes to bring Truitt back to her studio. In her own words:

'I slowly came to realise that what I was actually trying to do,' she wrote, was to take painting off the wall, to set colour free in three dimensions for its own sake. The was analogous to my feeling for the freedom of my own body, as if in some mysterious way I felt myself to be colour.'

Truitt's spirit, then, performs as connective tissue, giving rise to symbolic body maps on the faces of *Catalina* (2024) and *Itziar (Reflexology Make Up)* (2024).

On a personal note, for me, *By Vital Means: Songs in the Key of Spirulina*, channels the decadent, tremulous spirit of 1890s, pulling it through more than a century's worth of keyholes as peacock feathers, colour changing smoke and vapours. When Francisco and I talked, they mentioned their enthusiasm for Macintosh's watercolours. Stylistically, coincidentally, it seemed entirely natural that should be the case. It brought to mind a story I cherish from *Instant Whip: The Textiles and papers of Fraser Taylor 1977-87*, an exhibition held at Glasgow School of Art in March and April of this year. Commenting on the smudges of beautiful bright neon pink on a preparatory painting, Fraser said they were bleed-through stains, because the work had entered the archive bearing the marks of water damage from the time of the first fire at GSA. Everyone who hears that story resonates with the poetry of it and senses aspects of their own history through the perfectly imperfect surface.

Fiona Jardine, 2024

Martin Margiela: *In His Own Words*. (2019). Directed by Reiner Holzemer. Germany, Belgium: Reiner Holzemer Film and Aminata Productions
Porter, Charlie. (2021). *What Artists Wear*. (2021). UK: Penguin

Kendall Koppe is delighted to present *By Vital Means: Songs in the Key of Spirulina* by Francisco G. Pinzón Samper. This is Pinzón Samper's first solo exhibition at the gallery and the UK.

Pinzón Samper (b. 1997, Bogota, Colombia) lives and works between Paris and New York. Recent solo exhibitions include: *They and Night*, Thierry, Goldberg Gallery, New York; *L'Avancée*, Fondation Pernod Ricard, Paris; *The Flying Patters of DJ Soul*, Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York; and *Sweet Honesty*, galerie l'inlassable, Paris. Pinzón Samper was also included in group exhibitions at Exo Exo, Paris; Galerie John Ferrère, Paris; 1969 Gallery, New York; Galerie Cécile Loiret, Vannes; Late Works, London; and Delphian Gallery, London.

Fiona Jardine is an artist and writer who holds a teaching and research position in the School of Design, Glasgow School of Art. She has produced written responses to artworks, exhibitions and practice for artists and designers including Joanne Tatham & Tom O'Sullivan, Laura Aldridge, James Rigler, Nick Evans, Erica Eyres and Elizabeth Price, co-curating Price's recent exhibition, 'Underfoot' (2022), with Panel and The Hunterian, University of Glasgow.

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