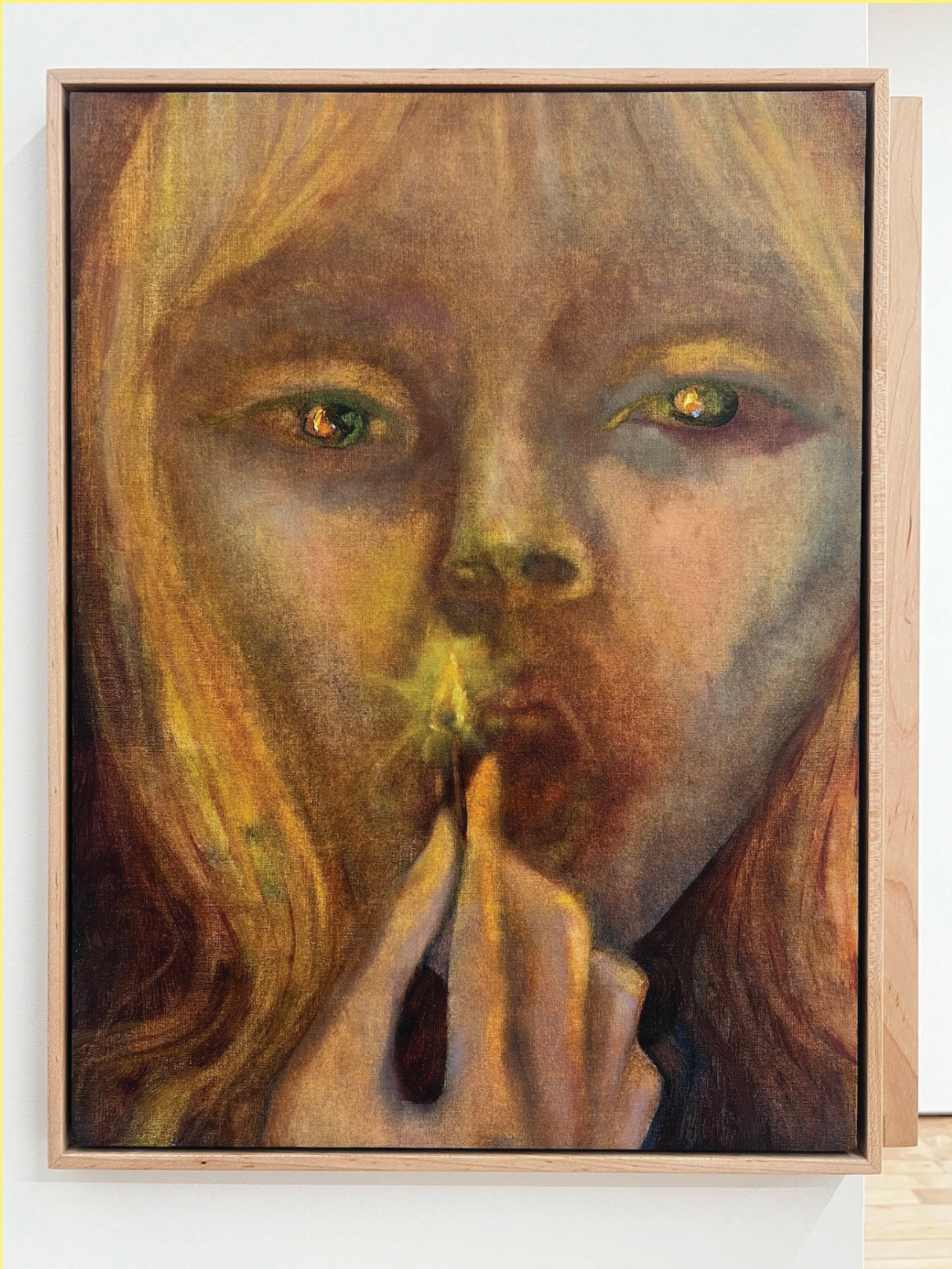


Scratchy and Gritty, Pauline Rintsch's Figurative Work Explores Interiority



Pinch Me Hard and Soft at YveYANG Gallery is the inaugural US solo exhibition for artist Pauline Rintsch, a young German painter who captures the experience of her twenties through small figurative works. Her works have attracted attention for their Balthus-esque compositions and unusual handling of paint, which fluctuates between scratchy and liquid. Rintsch's figures, which she boxes into tight-cropped frames, possess a feeling of existential confusion and youthful dread.

Working with oil on paper, Rintsch's pigments bleed loosely and freely across the page. Yellow and orange base coats become mottled by blotches of crimson and purple, translucent enough to reveal the grain of the paper below. Across many of Rintsch's pieces, the transparency of the color translates into a sense of thin and taut skin. In the moments when Rintsch does build up a thicker paint, such as in the eyes and lit match of Alissa (playing with fire), the effect is compelling. In Alissa, the subject is hypnotized by a flame while the viewer is hypnotized by the glossy and thickly coated reflection in her eyes.





The physical placement of Rintsch's works in the gallery space is odd. The pieces have been clustered together with two in each corner, leaving the majority of the wall space bare. It feels as though the paintings, having heard someone coming, have scurried to the edges of the room to hide. Although this decision emphasizes undercurrents of insecurity and timidity represented by the work, it forces the pieces into diptych pairings. For work that so strongly pursues the feeling of "aloneness," I found the doubled arrangement counterintuitive.



In the back room are Rintsch's ceramics: five small and closely cropped images that have been painted onto thin slabs of glazed clay. In *Untitled*, eyelashes become bleeding streaks of color, and the ceramic takes well to the texture of mottled skin. Leaks of gray underpainting ooze into mold-like clusters, creating an unsettling air. While Rintsch's paintings thrive in their murky fluidity, her ceramics are striking and direct.

Pinch Me Hard and Soft will be on view at YveYANG gallery through August 17th, 2024.