

ARTFORUM

Berlin

Melike Kara

PERES PROJECTS

Karl-Marx-Allee 82

February 13–March 11

Painting is a lonely activity—no two ways about it. But if the canvas could talk, would you want it to be your friend? Cologne-based painter and sculptor Melike Kara fills this gallery with coquettish figure drawings of gender-fluid imaginary friends, toying with the implicit sexuality of nature and human communication for her second solo show, “In Your Presence.” Large paintings in acrylic and oil stick line the walls with a palette of cobalt, salmon, brass, and butterscotch, depicting eroticized group activities immersed in lush jungle settings, as in *If You Say So*, 2016, or in the desert in *Why Do We Feel Words*, 2015. These are combined with tamer domestic still lifes such as *State of Wakeful Sleep (Stilleben)*, 2016, picturing a lone figure holding a living room table arrayed with an apple, a fishbowl, eyeglasses, a wine glass, and a bottle above their head.

Seductive interactions between the characters continue on freestanding Plexiglas panels in steel frames, each ubiquitously titled *[...]*, all 2016, where the dynamic silhouettes are drawn using a brass-colored oil stick. The dimensions of the frames mimic those of the street-facing windows, which Kara uses like storyboards showing a linear sequence of mischievous activities. With frisky fingers and lengthy serpentine tongues that venture forth with the frequency of Miley Cyrus’s own appendage, Kara’s figures poke, surprise, ignore, entice, embrace, or chase after one another. Their tongues, which the artist defines as “thought bubbles,” suggestively tie these figures together. What are they saying, you might ask. Well, that’s the most titillating part, as viewers come in to complete the story with their own naughty fantasies.



View of “Melike Kara: In Your Presence,” 2016.

— Arielle Bier