

IT'S NEWS

ART CRITICISM

Drew Dodge lands in the new space of the Palma gallery L21 with 'Enigma'

A prodigious oil work on canvas full of mystery makes up this striking sample of the young Californian artist



Works that make up Drew Dodge's exhibition 'Enigma'.

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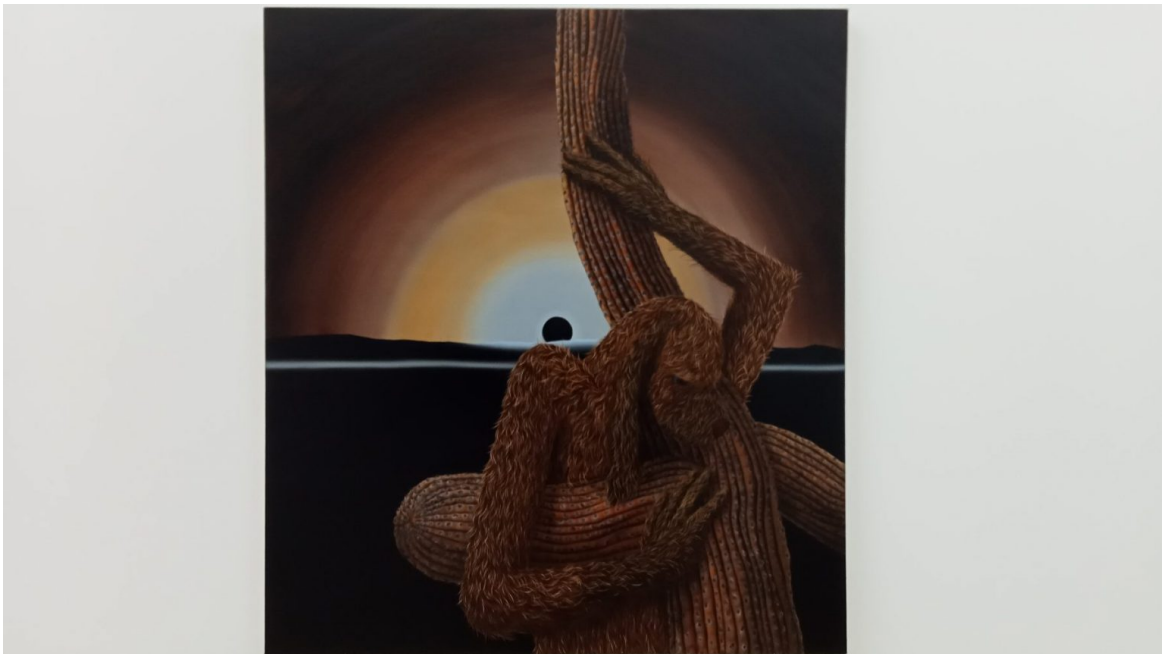
02/03/2022 16:25 UPDATED: 02/03/2022 17:06

The **Palma gallery L21** opened a huge exhibition space in the city center just over a year ago, next to S'Escorxador. This happened without closing its previous space in the Son Castelló polygon, a space that was renamed L21 Lab, in which the artist residences that the firm promotes are located, since it has space both for artists to reside and so that they can work in an ad hoc workshop. In addition, in the general program of the gallery the space of the L21 Lab is also intended for group exhibitions, such as the one currently exhibited there with the exhibition entitled Walking, running, falling, which integrates 17 artists managed by the gallery, among

which the Chilean **Alejandro Leonhardt** or the German **Valerie Krause** stand out.

The space near S'Escorxador is of such a dimension that at the present time it has five different independent individual exhibitions, something truly unprecedented in a private enclosure, and even in an institutional space, since not even, for example, Casal Solleric usually has so many samples coinciding in time. The exhibition spaces are called Room and are numbered from 1 to 5. Today we will focus on what can be seen in Room 5, the **exhibition entitled Enigma, which is due to the talent of the young Californian artist Drew Dodge** (Monterrey, California, USA, 2001).

This is the second solo exhibition of this artist who currently lives and works on the other North American coast, specifically in the city of Providence, in Rhode Island, a city that was also the city of the writer **H.P. Lovecraft** and where he placed the famous immortal god Nyarlathotep. Drew Dodge's first solo exhibition took place in 2021 in Los Angeles, at the Steve Turner Gallery, under the interesting title Wasteland. **That the Mallorcan gallery has bet so much sense of smell and in advance on an artist in full takeoff says a lot about his ambition and ability to discover new promises**, as was already the case with the Hungarian artist **Szabolcs Bozó**, currently totally launched into stardom after his passage through gallery L21 and a prolonged residence at the L21 Lab.



Work by Californian artist Drew Dodge.

In this exhibition the artist, as the gallery's own note says, "uses the enigmatic process of painting to express his amazement at the queer spirit when transmuting into figuration and abstraction. The paintings that make up Enigma, attractive and fascinating on its surface, are built with a limited vocabulary of images that, when placed in different relationships, often unexpected, build disconcerting scenes." The compositions take on a quasi-mystical tinge, very suggestive, since one glimpses the burden of symbology they carry and that little after one enters one will unravel. Without going any further, the repeat images of the Arizona desert, where Dodge was educated, which take us a desolate and inhospitable landscape, **refer to the experience of homosexuality as a non-transferable experience and arduous and lonely transfer**, as well as "the need to face the desire of the dominant culture to flatten the identity of sterilized, noisy and normative ideals," in the words of **Sasha Bogojev**. What attracts attention, in addition to the symbolic charge, is the perfect invoice for the works. Although the technique used in the five pieces that constitute Enigma is oil on canvas, one does not believe, approaching its surface, the thoroughness of the brushstroke, otherwise unfindable, which results in a composition of images that comes closer to photography than painting. **Perfection is overwhelming, to which must be added the success in the organizational structures within the canvases and the exuberance of color**, despite the fact that the work focuses on motifs of an arid world, stripped of the blood of life by the relentless desert sun. We will have to follow very closely the evolution of this interesting and promising artist, Drew Dodge, a name to write down.