

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART**María Fragoso**

Stare at the figures in this young Mexico City-based painter's fantastic show at the 1969 gallery and you may have the unsettling feeling that they're staring back. Fragoso's gender-indeterminate subjects are surrounded by figs, pomegranates, glossy conch shells, and snails trailing slime. In "To Mouth," from 2020, one masked couple is awkwardly entangled on their hands and knees, their bodies glowing in supernatural shades of pink. In "Seeding," clear fluid drips from the parted lips of crimson-gloved twins. Thirteen drawings accompany the six paintings on view, revealing another aspect of the artist's vision. Here her symbolic lexicon is isolated and distilled: swans, fruit, ceramic vessels, and ornate portraits are rendered in red colored pencil on white sketchbook paper. Fragoso nods to several historical styles—the smoldering nudes of the European Renaissance, strains of Surrealism, Mexican devotional paintings—but her lush and grotesquely erotic vision is entirely her own.

— *Johanna Fateman*