

PRESS RELEASE**Natalia González Martín*****A change (would do you good)*****13 May – 25 June 2022**

*My soul would sing of metamorphoses.
But since, o gods, you were the source of these
bodies becoming other bodies, breathe
your breath into my book of changes: may
the song I sing be seamless as its way
weaves from the world's beginning to our day.*

— Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

Bringing together ancient and contemporary worlds, mythic stories with popular culture and subtle imprints of her own personal experience, *A change (would do you good)* is a solo exhibition of new works by Natalia González Martín that present the enduring power and symbolism of mythology. Through a reading and reimagination of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* — the epic narrative poem that brings together over 250 myths of Greek and Roman origin — González Martín uses its tales of transformation to explore universal subjects of mutability, love, passion and power. Celebrating the beauty and subtly with which myths represent deeper truths about ourselves and society, these works simultaneously call to attention and subvert the myriad ways in which mythology has been used to establish and uphold patriarchal narratives about the limits of female desire, creativity and freedom.

Spread across two floors of the gallery, 22 new paintings have been made with delicate and smooth layers of oil paint and varnish, applied directly to wood and composed in González Martín's signature iconographic style. Together these works provide a series of idyllic vignettes, filled with visual clues to the mythological worlds they inhabit: from the eternal gaze of Narcissus to the disastrous chase of Daphne and Apollo; from Arachne's prideful artistry and challenge to the goddess Athena, to Pygmalion's self-centred and distorted idolisation of femininity and womanhood. A series of classical myths in which women are regularly — if not exclusively — on the receiving end of the Gods. They are hunted, objectified, abused and transformed into beasts of all kinds; used historically as a series of didactic tales for the limits of female pride and desire, or the virtues of femininity, chastity and muse.

Following Ovid's progressive depiction of his female subjects as evolving multi-dimensional characters, González Martín traces the iconic symbols that relate to each tale through an allegorical world of animals, spiders, flowers, fruits and fabrics. Set against depictions of women that not only illustrate their legendary metamorphoses, but also signs of their physical torment at the hands of the Gods — with grazed knees, exposed scars and tears visible admits their paradisaic worlds — the women in González Martín's paintings are made further real and relatable to a contemporary audience through details of grey hair, stretch marks, wrinkles and moles, sublimating the mythical fascination with transformation to the inevitable and humble reality of our ever-changing bodies. In turn, calling to attention and questioning the shifting commercial and social attitudes towards beauty, figure and female agency.

Taking its title from Sheryl Crow's 1996 eponymous album, *A change (would do you good)* affirms and celebrates the inevitability of this change, rearticulating the myths of *Metamorphoses* through González Martín's own contemporary lens. Framed within a halcyon skyscape, a shifting horizon from dawn to sunset embeds each work in a perpetual cosmic cycle, at once gesturing toward the sacred and divine as well as accentuating the transient position of her subjects and their mythical fates. It is a world that unfolds through intricate and subtle narrative works that nevertheless retain a level of ambiguity and mystery, allowing for the revelation of hidden and personal meanings, symbols and references; for as the writer and mythologist Marina Warner once wrote, "Every telling of a myth is a part of that myth, there is no Ur-version, no authentic prototype, no pure account."

Natalia González Martín (b. 1995, Montejo de la Sierra, Madrid) lives and works in London. She completed her BA in Painting at City & Guilds of London Art School (2017). Her work has been featured in a solo and two-person exhibitions at Steve Turner, Los Angeles (2022), Galerie Sebastien Bertrand, Geneva (2021) and Quench Gallery, Margate (2021) as well as in group exhibitions at Lawrie Shabibi, Dubai (2021); Hannah Barry Gallery, London (2021); Collective Ending HQ, London (2021); and Guts Gallery, London (2021).