

On View

See Natalie Frank's Highly Charged New Artworks Filled With Women Taming Lions, Long-Lost Loves, and Tumultuous Dreams

The artist's work is also featured in the new Apple TV series starring Tom Holland.

Natalie Frank has never been confined to the white cube. That's particularly true now for the 43-year-old artist who, in addition to opening a new exhibition of works at Miles McEnery Gallery, just saw the release of two books and a big-budget TV show featuring her fantastical drawings.

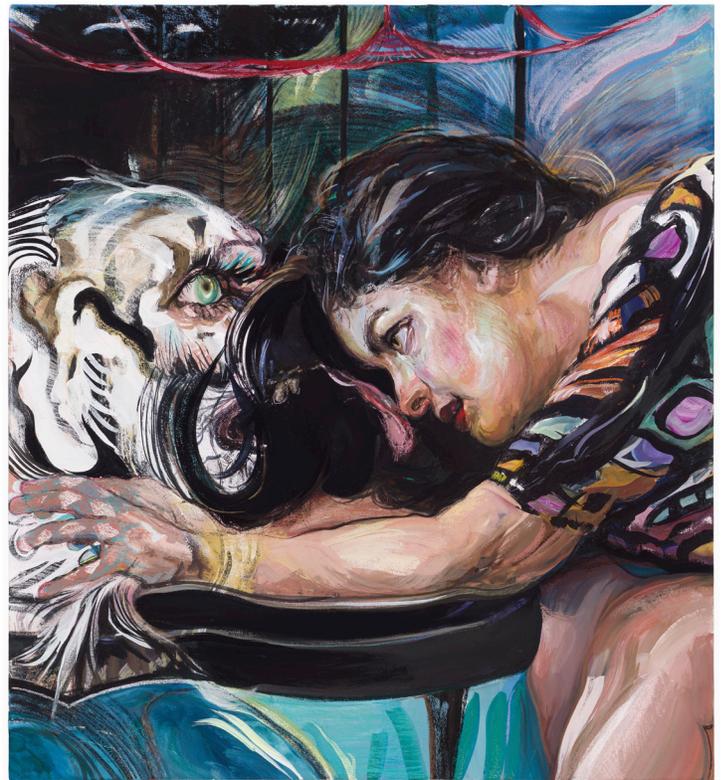
On view at Miles McEnery is "The Raven and The Lion Tamer," Frank's first solo show at the New York gallery. It comprises examples from two recent, related bodies of work.

The first is a suite of expressionistic mixed-media pictures of women with lions. Most subvert the dynamic you might expect: in Frank's world, the cats are docile and the women are wild. In one canvas, a lioness licks the red-bottomed sole of a masked woman whose arms are tied behind her head. Whether the restraints are for safety or performance, is unclear; either way, the scene is charged with a frisson of danger.

Rounding out the show at Miles McEnery are seven gouache and pastel chalk drawings Frank created for a new book on the collected writings of Edgar Allan Poe. The artist draws inspiration from Poe's best-known poem for the series, called *The Raven*, but she departs from typical depictions of the tale.

Instead, Frank focuses on Lenore, the narrator's lost lover. In some cases, she's shown as a bird or a goddess; in others, her form is harder to pin down: Is she a vision? A dream? A memory?

"*The Raven* and *Lion Tamers* series explore the possibilities of losing and commanding control," wrote Jonathan Rider, Director of FLAG Art Foundation, in an essay for the show. "Operating within tense psychological spaces—a mourner's chamber or a ring at the center of a circus—Frank's fantastical images both complicate and exaggerate already heightened emotional states and circumstances."



Woman with Lion I, 2022, Mixed media on canvas, 44 1/4 x 40 in.

“What Frank brings to light through these bodies of work,” Rider continued, “is the glory and tumult, the messiness and complex vulnerability of attempting to maintain the illusion of control.”

The book for which Frank painted those and other illustrations is Poe’s *Phantasia*, published earlier this year by Arion Press. The artist also illustrated a collection of another horror writer’s work: *The Wounded Storyteller: The Traumatic Tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann*, which was released by Yale Books in May.

Eagled-eyed viewers can also spot Frank’s drawings and notebooks in *The Crowded Room*, a new Apple+ miniseries. Tom Holland, the show’s star, plays a New York artist in 1979 who is arrested for a shocking crime—one he swears he didn’t commit.



Raven III, 2022, Gouache and chalk pastel on paper, 30 x 22 in.