



**Jackie &
Brian &
Eartha &
Joan.**

by

**Jaclyn
Conley**

4 June - 27 June 2020
Avenue Louise 430, Brussels

MARUANI MERCIER
PRESS RELEASE

Artist Statement

We seem to need leaders in order to know ourselves. Leaders to look to, made through pictures. Searching through the White House photo archives in the series *All The President's Children*, moving through the Presidential museums and monuments, speaking to the tourists of these places I became more interested in what these presidential figures have become for us than who they actually were. They have become characters for us in a historic and evolving narrative; armatures for us to hang up our own stories. We've always needed these idealized characters to place ourselves; to justify, anchor, to imagine ourselves. Painting is a space for this imagining.

In *Jackie& Brian& Eartha& Joan* I'm continuing an interest in American's self-conceptions, now looking at American pop culture icons of the past who have similarly become mythical figures. Though the images are abstracted and transformed through a process of painting and collage they are seated in a sense of awe and nostalgia.

"Our favorite people and our favorite stories become so not by any inherent virtue, but because they illustrate something deep in the grain, something unadmitted." (Joan Didion)

The paintings in this series are a way of considering the question; who are we supposed to look up to? What have we decided they are for us? They are stories ingrained in our own, guides representing a way to move through the world. The characters in *Jackie& Brian& Eartha& Joan* are a varied cast of lives that are harrowing, triumphant, tragic and beautiful. They represent ideas of the past that we cling to today. We invoke them like saints cards.

Jaclyn Conley is a Canadian born artist based in New Haven CT. Conley has exhibited nationally and internationally at venues including The Painting Center in NY, NurtureArt in NY, Projective City in Paris, Wynick-Tuck Gallery in Toronto, and the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield CT.

Conley has been an artist in residence at the [NXTHVN](#) in New Haven, the [Vermont Studio Center](#) and [The Emily Carr University of Art and Design](#) in Vancouver Canada. Conley has received grants including a Connecticut Office of the Arts Fellowship, a Canada Council for the Arts Visual Arts Project Grant, an Elizabeth Greenshields Award and a Fellowship from the Sam and Adele Golden Foundation. Her work has been reviewed and featured in numerous publications including The New York Times, Canadian Art, Border Crossings, and New American Painting.

Conley is currently an Associate Professor at the [University of Hartford's Hartford Art School](#).

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**Jackie& Brian& Eartha& Joan opens 4 June and runs until 27 June 2020
at MARUANI MERCIER, Avenue Louise 430 - 1050 Brussels**