

KARYN LYONS *DAY FOR NIGHT*



October 21 - November 29, 2025
240 Rue de Rivoli, 4th floor
75001 Paris

Karyn Lyons tells me, '*I think of each painting as a page in my diary.*' Yes, looking at her work is like diving into a narrative. From the first chapter to the last, it recounts the hours spent waiting without really knowing what for, and the rules defied. Climbing out of her bedroom window to escape into the arms of a secret lover, leaving the latest Playboy magazine on display on the living room table, swapping her Mary Janes for a pair of Converse. At heart, break the mould, onto the canvas.

Tell one's own story, Karyn Lyons does it by revisiting girlhood. That age when you're neither quite a kid nor quite an adult. That frightening, malleable and nostalgic period, so full of feelings and fantasies. We often return to it as the main character, nourished by the era we call 'my generation' and our first role models. Anything was possible. Especially stepping out like a Jane Eyre from a Truffaut movie in Northanger Abbey, listening to the Rolling Stones and sipping a Coke while smoking a cigarette on Manet's Balcony.

'*Day for Night*' is the filter of night on a scene shot in broad daylight. The one of imagination that calls up a memory and shapes it under the paint. Thus, Karyn Lyons may not have walked through these mysterious dark corridors, where the paintings on the walls give the impression of messages, mise en abyme towards other fragments of her memory. But just like in the old days, she explores, undisciplined. Her loneliness as a young woman as well as that of an artist, implying the promise of possible futures where everything remains to be built. Expectations worthy of a *Big Rock Candy Mountain*, where innocence and lures will be burdens that must gradually be abandoned in favour of experience. Where psychological states and sexual relationships, encrypted by images and mimicry, will colour the quest for freedom. Where multiple, heavy gazes, judges, protectors, predators, will rekindle the provocative one that leads to independence. In a moment of respite, downcast eyes and bare necks will admit that youth cannot always remain on guard. Karyn Lyons leaves us the choice of approaching her as an accomplice or as an unmasked observer.

« *As young women, we are fed many images of what it means to be a woman and we try many of them out until we mature and discover who we truly are.* »

Karyn Lyons dresses up as different versions of herself to bring us back to our own foundations. If the original idea of what shaped us resembles Gothic novels, our personal references will be our weapons for emancipation. It is through this demonstration of the infinity of our complex combinations that the artist reminds us how our identity is forged. The artist extends this incessant and uncertain process beyond the self to describe her work, painting, where the same rules apply in confidence and fear, disobedience and risk, towards liberation. Stems Gallery presents the exhibition '*Day for Night*' in Paris from 21 October to 29 November 2025.

- Written by Eloïse Duguay