

WILDING CRAN GALLERY



Natia Lemay

Just Short of Contact

February 24 - March 28, 2026

Wilding Cran Gallery is pleased to present *Just Short of Contact*, an exhibition of new paintings by Toronto based artist, Natia Lemay, that explore domestic space as a complex of interiority, intrusion, and recovery.

Throughout the exhibition, the domestic emerges as a site of memory and quiet tension, where intimacy and absence coexist in a state of unresolved proximity. Domestic objects act as vessels and placeholders, capable of holding emotional charge. An empty chair stands in for what is no longer present; a collapsed or broken window blurs interior and exterior. In the work *Saturation*, a figure sits in a vacant room overgrown with dandelions seeping up through the floorboards. The intrusion of the natural world feels like a breach, an infiltration of overgrowth within a space of refuge. Throughout the work, the omnipresence of black absorbs and obscures, slowing perception and holding the viewer's gaze in suspension.

The primary use of black as both material and concept is an ongoing investigation that lies at the heart of Lemay's practice. Through layered glazes and washes, the artist attends to the subtle tonal shifts within her pigments, pushing the viewer to see beyond black. What initially appears dense or enclosed gradually opens, revealing a spectrum of internal hues—blues, greens, browns, purples—emerging

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through time and attention. Among figureless works, such as *Obstruction*, black unfolds as the eye acclimates, moving across a narrowed hallway where passage is both physically and perceptually blocked. Shadows, windows, and traces of a mattress reveal themselves gradually, providing points of access to those who take the time to search for them.

In Lemay's darkened interiors, human figures negotiate with their surroundings, at times swallowed, at times emerging. Connection is possible, but not yet established. In the work *Reception*, a figure leans over the metal footboard of a bed, looking out across an empty chair into a field of weeds and roses; two telephone poles are visible in the distance, against a clouded, dark blue sky. In a departure from the other works on view, the domestic is no longer confined or breached, but opened outward. The collapse of boundaries captures a loosening, a shift in psychological reorientation.

Rather than offering resolution, *Just Short of Contact* holds the viewer at a threshold—an extended moment of looking that resists completion. The paintings do not lead toward an answer so much as they continue to pull, asking the viewer to remain in proximity; to sit in a space between past and future, interior and exterior; to connect with what is unfinished and unresolved. Black, like memory, opens slowly through sustained looking, revealing depth without delivering answers. This sustained tension becomes a form of meditation, an invitation to hold space for surrender, not as an ending, but as a condition of emergence.

Just Short of Contact marks Natia Lemay's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles.

Natia Lemay (b. 1985, Toronto, ON) Selected solo and group exhibitions include *Soft Tissue*, Galerie Nicolas Robert, Toronto, ON; *The Intuitionist* with Xavier Daniels, curated by Charles Moore, 21c Museum, Durham, NC; *TENYEARS*, Wilding Cran Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Yossi Milo Gallery, New York, NY. Lemay was selected for the 2024 Fountainhead Residency in Miami and the 2022 Royal Drawing School Residency in Dumfries, Scotland. She was awarded the Northern Trust Purchase Prize at EXPO Chicago 2024, and her work was acquired by the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, GA. Lemay holds an MFA from the Yale School of Art (2023) and a BFA from the Ontario College of Art and Design University (2021), with a minor in Social Sciences. She lives and works in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Image: Natia Lemay, *Residue*, 2026, Oil on canvas, 40 x 40 inches, 101.6 x 101.6 cm.