

Mathias Toubro
In Shape of a Heart

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Re: Not at all what I expected on the inside

Dear [redacted],

Thank you for finally getting back to me. And let me just say that if I used strong language in my first message it's because I expect better from you, as a returning customer. I don't know if you remember my previous order, from 2019? The hammerhead shark. The head was a especially ingenious carved upholstery-foam shell fitted over a hard-hat suspension, with black buckram stretched across the mouth for vision. And I spent years at that aquarium with hardly any repair work. Back then, I had nothing but positive things to say about your work; as my old review will tell you.

But I can't say that that's the case anymore and I am frankly shocked that you are trying to shirk your responsibility in this. We are not going to agree about the wolf. That much is clear. When I told you what happened in May, I thought that I would appeal to what I was lead to believe was a shared spirit - or, an animal nature. Isn't that what your website literally says?! No one who claims to know what it means to become the animal, would question why I was knees on the ground, why I was jumping or why I was pawing. As part of my job, I was trying to get at the real animal inside, not to set it loose but to raise it up. For that to happen the suit and the wearer need to be perfectly conjoined and if I blame myself for anything it is that I took it public without a proper stress test. Who knows if I would have managed had the wolf held up but instead what ended up happening I already told you. Coming undone, in front of all those people, was harrowing. It was like I was stuck there, frozen between animal and human, between what I wanted to be and what I unfortunately was. Like the poet said, life is oftener through realm of briar than the meadow mild. But I don't get sympathy from you and neither do I get understanding.

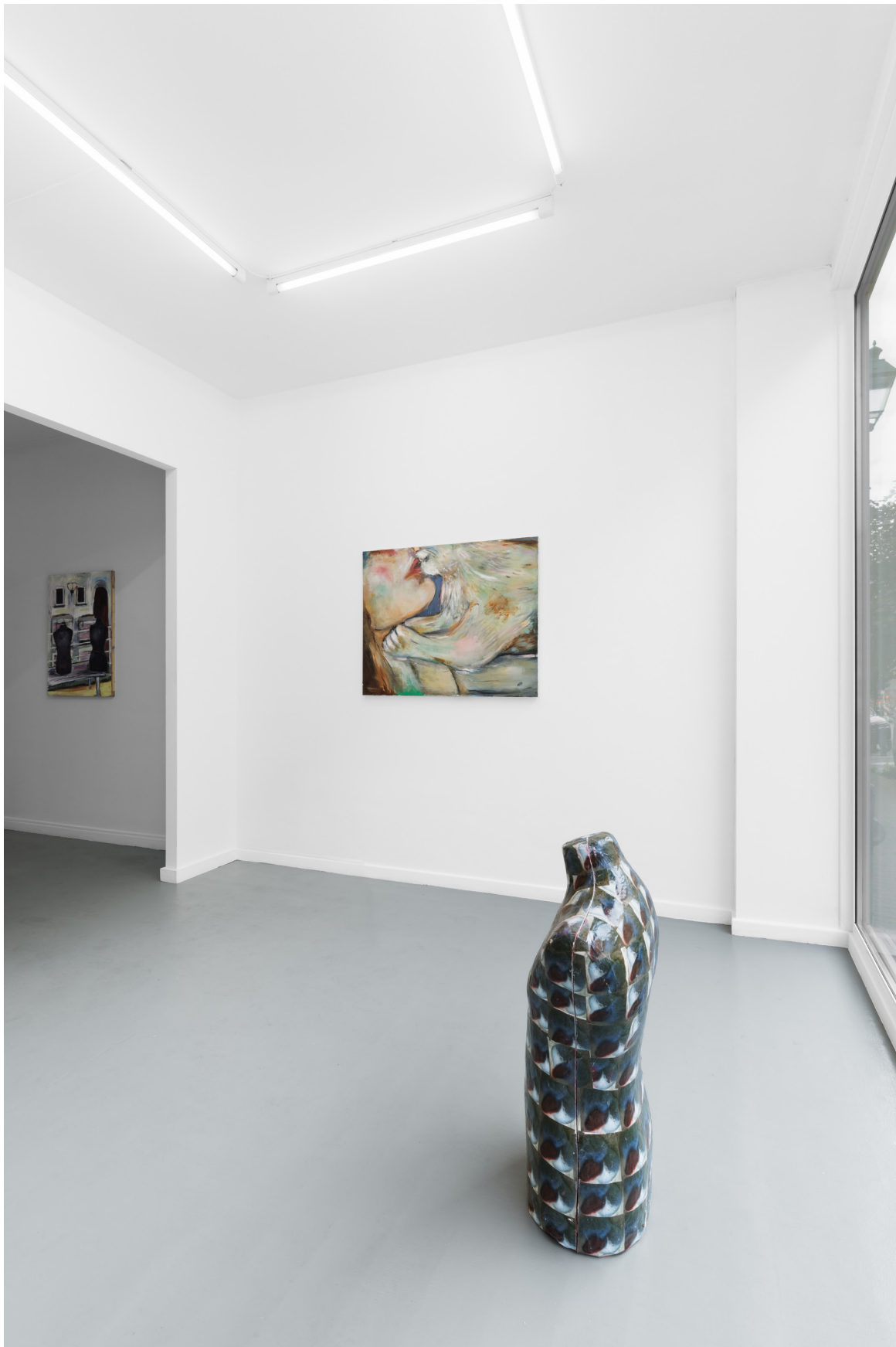
As I told you, the insides of the wolf were not what I believe we agreed upon and not what I expected. Since your reply my suspicions slowly grew. Had you simply up-cycled another animal? A rabbit perhaps? So I got the damn thing out of its box, removed the lining, and turned the entire body inside out. It was all of a whole, hardly any articulating seams at all. More like a jumpsuit than a body and it didn't look like your usual work. I would think that the limbs at least, were made to specifications, but sure enough, right up in there underneath the armscye of the left hand side - I didn't find any professional bar-tack to speak of. It's no wonder the wolf, if that is what you want to call it, came apart. All there was, really, besides the bare minimum of seams, was a bit of stay-tape in the shape of a heart.

— Hans Frederik Jacobsen

In *Shape of a Heart* brings together paintings, sculptures and videos that explore our strange ways of showing affection and the things that merely resemble love. Moving between pets, anatomical figures and bodies inhabited by rooms and passages, the exhibition considers the animal just outside us, and the human just inside the animal. Found digital images are reworked through physical materials and gestures, giving them flesh and friction. Running through the works is a persistent, perhaps inevitably disappointing desire to look inside: to find something more real, intimate or true beneath the surface. Yet opening a body, a sculpture or another person may reveal only more surfaces, seams and constructions—the heart never quite taking the shape we imagined.



Installation view



Installation view

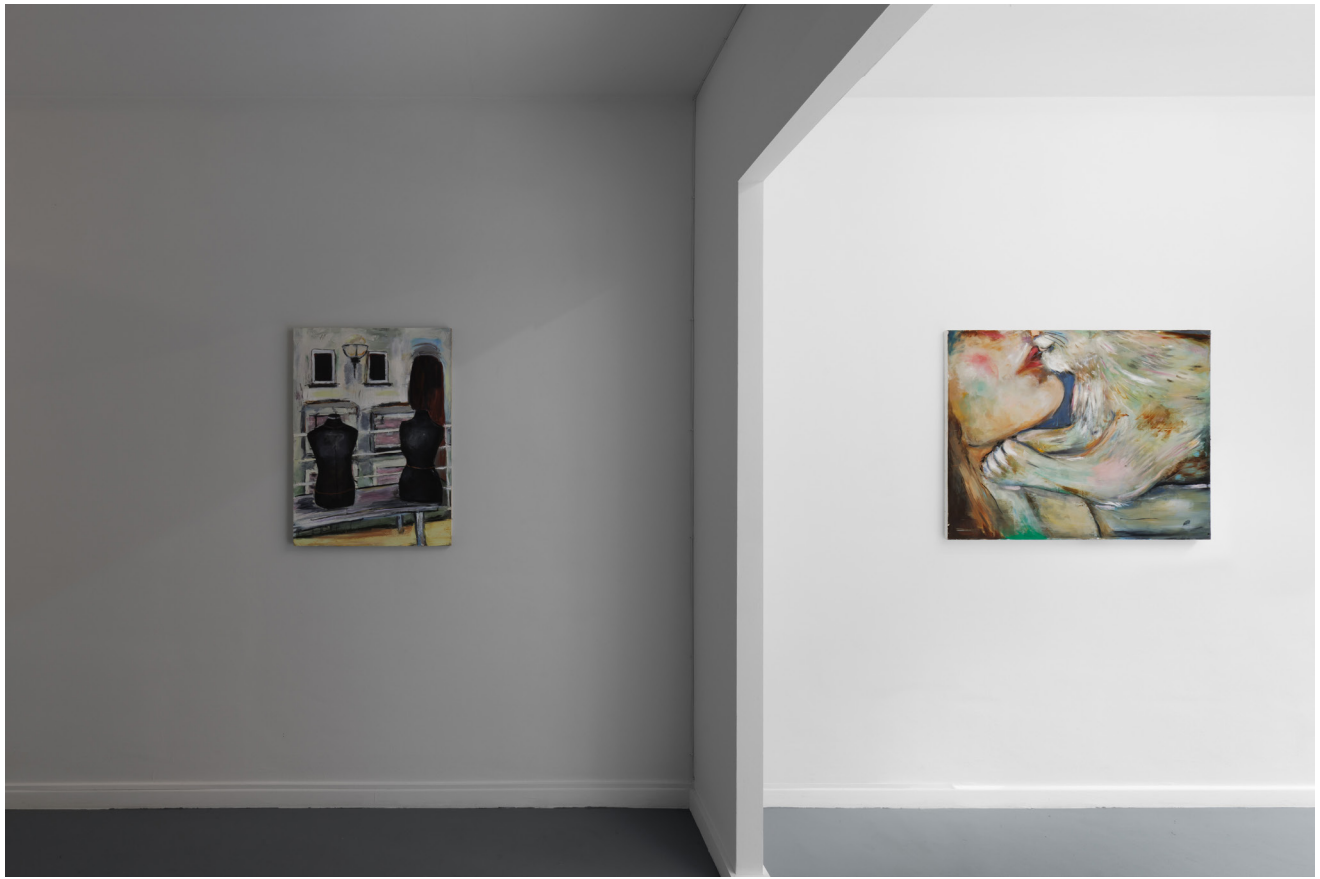


Installation view





Installation view



Installation view



Installation view



Installation view



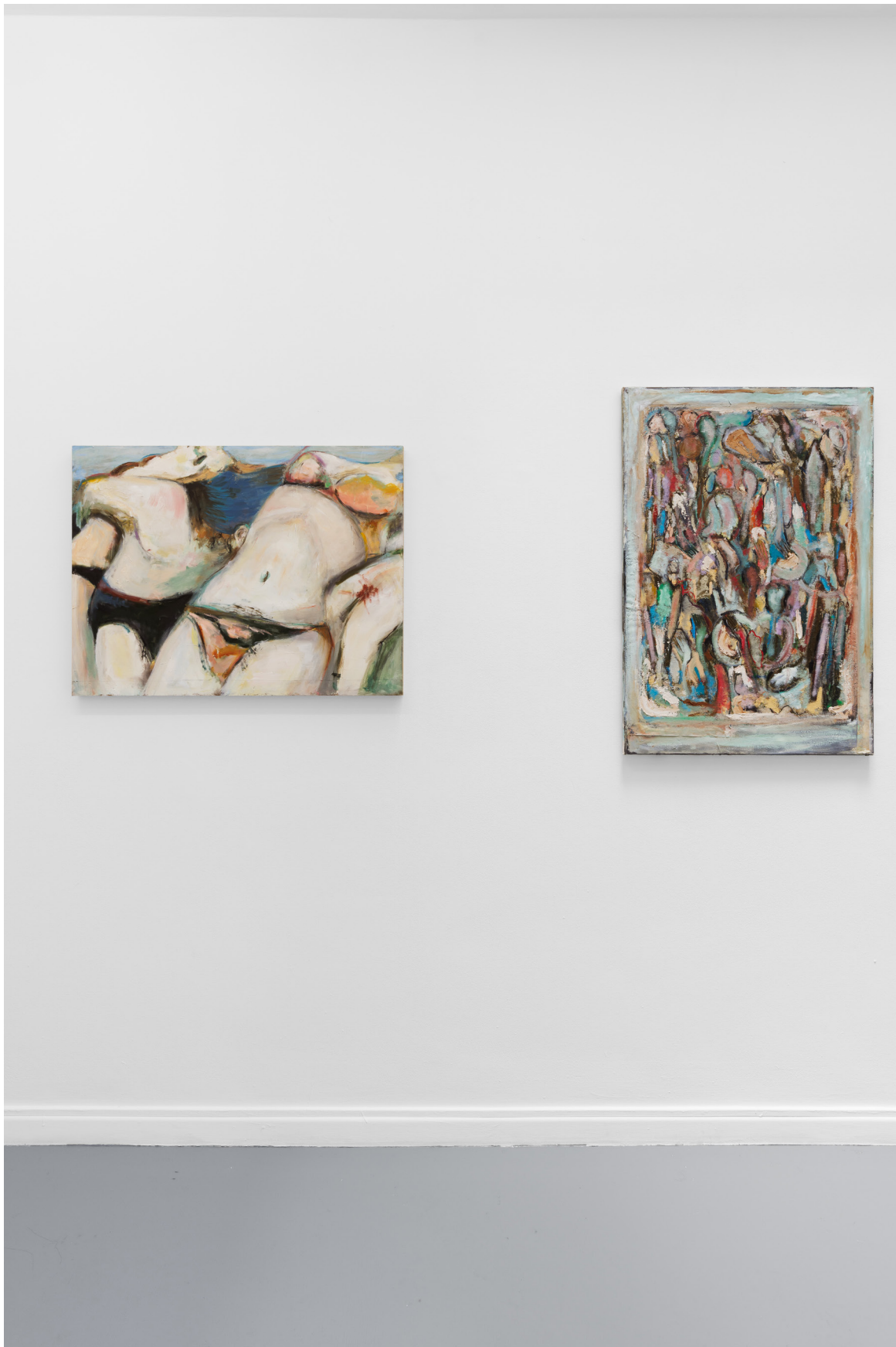
Installation view



Installation view



Installation view



Installation view



Installation view



Yellow Painting
2026
Oil on paper mounted on panel
75 × 100 cm



In Shape of a Box

2026

Paper mache, epoxy, various glues, wooden sticks, oil paint

85 × 45 × 20 cm



In Shape of a Box
Additional view



In Shape of a Box
Additional view



In Shape of a Box
Additional view



In Shape of a Box
Additional view



Soft only on the immediate outside
2026
Oil on paper mounted on linen
80 × 100 cm



heavy breathing

2026

Oil on photo print mounted on panel

84 × 62 cm



Pigeon

2026

Paper mache, epoxy, various glues, wooden sticks, oil paint, acrylic paint, feathers

80 × 40 × 20 cm



Pigeon
Additional view



Internal Liminal Corners/ Certainty is love's undoing

2026

Video

13:07

Edition of 2 + 1 AP



Internal Liminal Corners/ Certainty is love's undoing
Still



Internal Liminal Corners/ Certainty is love's undoing
Still



Internal Liminal Corners/ Certainty is love's undoing
Still



Internal Liminal Corners/ Certainty is love's undoing
Still



Internal Liminal Corners/ Certainty is love's undoing
Still



Kattekongen
2026
Oil, acrylic medium and paper on linen
130 × 90 cm



Sink of Two
2025
Oil, silkscreen and dirt on linen
90 × 61 cm



The animal just inside
2026
Oil on paper mounted on panel
61 × 80 cm



Windy day in the park

2026

Oil and beeswax on paper mounted on linen

70 × 100 cm



Ecorseau

2026

Oil on paper mounted on panel

61 × 31 cm