

PRESS RELEASE

Sonya Sombreuil

FAITH CRISIS

September 16 - October 28, 2018

Bridget Donahue presents "FAITH CRISIS", an exhibition of new paintings from Sonya Sombreuil.

Sombreuil, best known for her alluring underground streetwear line COME TEES, presents a body of paintings that thread personal and universal narratives of the human psyche, echoing imagery seen in her clothing. Ambiguous figures are layered amidst carefully considered wordage in a fauvist palette, suggesting something like sacred moments of heightened sensation. Sombreuil's paintings have a distorted and discomfiting romantic tenderness, invoking multiple references to music, culture and language that invoke rather than describe.

In "REDUX" the viewer encounters a red figure hunched over contemplatively as fragments of obscure images float around the figure's head. The figure in "REDUX" is reminiscent of Henri Matisse's 1910 painting *Music*, where all the figures are painted red and reduced to musical hieroglyphs. In similar fashion, Sombreuil's painting is a hieroglyph depicting the artist pensively conjuring its brainchild. Images of other paintings, perhaps in incubation, are seen floating around the figure's head in states of inchoate thought. The painting shows Sombreuil's nuanced interest in sublimity and etherea.

Like a film noir play bill, the title painting "FAITH CRISIS" is an arrangement of words and phrases, creating a barely-there spectre of a 6-pointed star. References to films, music and esoteric texts are graffitied around a central figure. The entanglement of words creates a hypnotic marriage of language and figuration. "Dark Passage," "In A Lonely Place," "The World Is Yours," "Such Sweet Thunder," etc...familiar phrases from popular culture, concrete to those who can catch the reference, but not telegraphing any specific meaning to the viewer. Read all together, these texts invoke a mood, even a moodiness, but are intentionally open ended, posing a question rather than an answer.

Sombreuil's paintings are fundamentally rooted in the supreme governing force of the subconscious and its interplay with the history of painting and culture. Approaching and retreating from the subject via both bluntness ("State Your Name") and obfuscation, the essential nature of each painting is unsayable. In the words of The Wailers 1966 track, "Who feels it, knows it."

— *Mario Ayala*

Sonya Sombreuil (b. 1986, Santa Cruz) lives and works in Los Angeles, California. Alongside her production of the fashion label COME TEES, Sombreuil has exhibited her paintings at venues including Big Love, Tokyo (2016); Las Cruces, Austin (2014); Canal Gallery, Holyoke (2013). *FAITH CRISIS* is the first New York solo presentation of paintings by the artist.