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KATJA SEIB
HAPPY ENDINGS DON'T BORE ME
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Press Release

dépendance is pleased to present 'Happy Endings Don't Bore Me', Katja Seib's first solo exhibition at the gallery.

In her paintings, Seib presents entanglements of observational reality and illusion. She renders a material world that centers on human subjects, while encouraging traces of memory and projections of psychology to interrupt these scenes. Her works arise from a cache of mental images and photographs, which altogether form uncanny compositions, rich with narrative and symbolism. In the paintings, everyday objects and quotidian acts are enveloped by a surreal illogic of dreams, creating narrative ambiguities and conjuring slippages between reality and fantasy. Symbols and subjects recur throughout the works, demonstrating a continued exploration of female sexuality and subjectivity.

Often painting on raw hessian and non-traditional surfaces, such as patterned textiles, Seib urges an interplay between surface texture and brushwork, and in doing so, allows these textiles to perform different roles within a picture. She combines the real-life object with the painted image, in such a way as to parallel the interplay of reality and fiction in her paintings.

Symbols and subjects recur throughout the works, demonstrating a continued exploration of human psychology. In the diptych 'a man is a wolf to another man (Homo homini lupus)' Seib evokes a world that is alternately luminous and nocturnal, tedious and surreal. The work presents us with two figures seated at a table and by the window, surrounded by elements such as a flowers, a cat, a black hand and a spoonful of pasta. The motif of the shadow figures appears here and in other paintings, looming as external forms to the main figures, embodying various strands of meaning.

In 'falling in love what a joke that was', female sexuality and intimacy are examined through the representation of interior and exteriors. A girl is sitting by a window under the moonlight, covered by a transparent fabric which creates a split scene – a structure in many of Seib's paintings. Reality and fantasy merges into ambiguously: the girl is surrounded by translucent figures that seems to be 'sewn' into the painting. Animals such as a moth and a deer appear as potential symbols, just like a moon that resembles the one of Georges Méliès'.

In 'Medusa in vein' the artist depicts the Greek myth of Medusa. Seib's version of the mythical figure is blue-scaled and melancholic. According to the myth, those who gazed into her eyes would turn to stone. Here the figure is looking into the mirror - perhaps performing suicide - while the tears from her eye and her pearl necklace becomes as one.

Included in the exhibition are a series of smaller works, made on identically-sized square canvases. Not without humour, these works are painted in a looser style than the larger canvases. 'l'enfer c'est les autres' quotes Sartre but also refers to the 'Hell O There' neon sign from the Hollywood movie 'Batman Returns'. 'All the people inside my head - I don't know which one I like best' presents us which figures who wear precious stone in their eyes, and refers again to a Greek myth regarding death - in order to cross the river Styx, the dead have to pay with precious stones, in order to avoid being stuck between life and death. The famous Hollywood sign appears here to symbolise wealth and glamour, which we can't take with us in the afterlife.

Katja Seib (b. 1989, Düsseldorf, Germany) studied at the Fine Art Academy of Düsseldorf. She currently lives and works in Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibitions include 'Dear diary' at Sadie Coles, London and 'chasing rabbits' at Château Shatto, Los Angeles. Her work was part of the acclaimed group exhibition 'Made in L.A. 2020: a version at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles.