

Anna Solal, Arthur Marie
curated by Ilya Smirnov

July 7-31, 2022
with opening reception on **July 7 at 6pm**

I arrived in Paris when Money Gallery's *Certain Times* was still on view at Lily Robert. This was June, and nothing certain was scheduled for the dead season yet. I approached Anna Solal with an idea of doing a real fast production, and she suggested showing *Arena* from her solo at Britta Rettberg in Munich and to invite Arthur Marie with a few paintings, which sounded like a fast and easy exhibition scenario.

I was aware of Arthur's work since around 2016, when my gallery partner Anna Teterkina suggested including his work in the first show I attempted to curate — *Penguin Island* loosely based on *L'Île des Pingouins* by Anatole France. Back then Arthur mailed his piece to New York, but it was probably lost in the mail. Later on I heard someone seeing his piece hanging in the apartment of the gallerist I tried to work with in those days. I hope it's still in good hands.

A roughly dozen layers of gesso is applied on a single canvas and polished with fine grit sandpaper. Then it's pencils and water to even it all out. After finally seeing Arthur's paintings in person, it became clear to me that we should rather pair them with Anna Solal's unexhibited work instead of recycling her solo show material, and to focus on drawing as well. I'd like her work to speak for itself.

Overall there are seven pieces downstairs plus some bonus work in the office. Arthur's procedural note is on your right side when you enter the gallery. Emergency evacuation plan forever: "3 months ago, after making a series of portrait sketches (you've seen some of them), I had in mind to translate them into sculpture. I'm really interested in prosthetics in general, movie makeup prosthetics, wax mannequins that you find in the Tussaud museums, distorted Chris Cunningham bodies, Medardo Rosso et c. et c. At first I wanted to use the mannequin heads only as props for my paintings. It will maybe change at some point but I had this idea to make realistic portraits of mannequins. I like portraits but I wouldn't dare to ask someone to pose for me, it doesn't suit my interests and I find it more appealing conceptually and creatively to play with inanimate bodies/toys. Basically this drawing is a table, I was hesitant about what technique and material to use to make heads. It wasn't easy for me but I had to weigh the pros and cons. It's not a concern for me nowadays but I was stupidly worried about the longevity and the solidity of each te.."

—Ilya Smirnov 2020-07-04 22:23 Paris