



JUNE

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Doubles

Arthur Laidlaw and Fernando Marques Penteado

curated by Camila McHugh

November 6 - December 11, 2021

Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, 12-6pm

and by appointment

Seeing double or playing doubles or another word for two. *Doubles* pairs new paintings by Berlin-based artist Arthur Laidlaw (*1990, Oxford) with embroidered objects and textiles by Brussels-based artist Fernando Marques Penteado (*1955, São Paulo.) In Arthur Laidlaw's dense compositions, memories and photographs of friends and lovers are transmuted into an almost kaleidoscopic picture plane in layers of oil, acrylic and gouache. These figures are like figments: emphatically present, and yet, somehow receding. They're vaguely unknowable—more drip and line than character. It's like the loss of innocence that is subjectivity: that lonely (or liberating) revelation that you can never know someone completely. You could couch Laidlaw's works in a lineage of anti-narrative figuration. Interrupted gestures and incomplete forms stand like stopgaps to storytelling. Instead it's a kind of grasping. Laidlaw began to introduce the figure into his work in the spring of 2020, after painting buildings for nearly five years. Intuitively, when the city streets (his longtime subject matter) were emptied of people, those people began to enter his artwork instead. In *Doubles*, Laidlaw exhibits paintings and watercolors, but you can feel that he's a draw-er. Amy Sillman's distinction between draw-ers and painters in her 2019 essay "further notes on shape" is instructive: *Dra-wers work from the weeds outward, building up from particulars, inductively, scratching and pawing at their paper with tools the scale of their hands. OR maybe they never get to a bigger picture at all, but move sideways, abductively, from particular to particular. This made drawing itself seem like an activity not founded on logic but made up of contingencies, overflow, stray parts...*

Fernando Marques Penteado, on the other hand, is an embroiderer, stitching the faces of a motley crew of men onto objects like tennis rackets or baskets that he finds in odd shops, or since he moved to Brussels in 2018, at the Jeu de Balle flea market. They could be alter egos or made-up boyfriends. They're often accompanied by funny little biographies. Take *OE, Ólafur Erdurbjörnsson*, (2016) the blue-faced man set into a plastic red basket alongside a book and a perfume bottle: *Born in Reykjavik, Ólafur left Iceland soon after he graduated with a degree in chemistry and picked up an apprenticeship as a Nose [or perfumer] by Jean Claude Ellena, due to his extreme sensibility to differentiate a fragrance amongst nasty odours. In Grasse he became the head of a department dedicated to fruit and spice scents, which works exclusively for Hermès. Of a*

candid nature and humorous spirit, Ólafur always remarks the adamant importance of oral transmission of knowledge in his profession, where silence and tradition was considered one's best companion for an inspired research routine. He praises Arabic literature, especially their poems where perfumes are ubiquitous in their scenarios and atmospheres. He flies frequently to his native country to flush his nose of the urban filth, and to breathe one of the cleanest airs that the world is still able to provide us. A fan of walks and hikes, Ólafur climbs mountains to ease his restless, horny sexual life, effervescent and unpredictable as a volcano, yet longing for a quieter horizon to match his, otherwise, serene temperament. In concert with his inventive literary profiles, Marques Penteadó's embroidered works prod gently at norms of masculinity. Imbued with a subtle homoeroticism, his work is intimately connected to the simple figures and direct language of Leonilson's cloth works. Working in a laborious stitching technique developed while studying at Goldsmiths twenty years ago, Marques Penteadó nods to Anni and Josef Albers' approach to tapestry, as he outlines shapes by back stitching. But Marques Penteadó rarely strays from the figure, as even his seemingly abstract works remain tethered to imaginative fictions. His practice is driven by surrounding himself with an ever-growing cast of characters—and as such, gingerly chipping away at societal constructions of what it means to “be a man” and sewing stories about softness instead.

Fernando Marques Penteadó (*1955, São Paulo) lives and works in Brussels. Selected solo exhibitions include Mendes Wood DM, Brussels (2020); São Paulo (2018); Freedman Fitzpatrick, Los Angeles (2017); Galeria Múrias Centeno, Porto (2016) and A CASA, Museu do Objeto Brasileiro, São Paulo (2014).

Arthur Laidlaw (*1990, Oxford) lives and works in Berlin. Selected solo exhibitions include Vardaxoglou, London (2018); East of Elsewhere, Berlin (2018) and group exhibitions include Efremidis, Berlin (2020); Offshoot, London (2020) and Halle 14, Leipzig (2022, upcoming). He completed his BA in History of Art at the University of Oxford (2013) and his MA in Fine Art at City & Guilds of London Art School (2015.)