

ED ATKINS

14 SEPTEMBER – 5 NOVEMBER 2022

Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi
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At Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Ed Atkins presents several new, realistic artworks.

The worm is a Computer Generated animation of the artist calling his mother, Rosemary, on the phone. They talk, mostly of Rosemary's relationship with her mother, Nanny Bea, and the inheritance of a perceived unlovability passively instilled from mother to daughter and on, unavowedly, to grandson. This lineage is a worm. The animation is driven by Ed's movements, recorded via facial- and motion capture technologies, and rendered to recall the last televised interview with the British playwright, Dennis Potter. *The worm* is an artificial documentary about insuperable regret and love, figured via a medium whose realism is a spectacular dupe. Realism is an interminable remainder, offscreen. Ed phoned Rosemary on Tuesday, September 20 2020, from a hotel room in Berlin. *The worm* is projected onto an unpainted, empty, Donald birch ply box, whose redolences and characteristics are all overt and deniable. On the wall hang two emptied frames. *The worm* is accompanied by a synchronous soundtrack of incidental music and sound, featuring Ed singing and entitled Love, played in a neighbouring room, where Ed's paintings of his foot and one of his shoes hang. These paintings are rendered in a fountain pen ink tempered with bleach, and worried by coloured pencil. They are both specific — by provenance and choice, at least — and archetypal — by formulaicness and dumb quiddity. The one shoe is not enough and could never fit. The simple algebra of unshod foot + empty shoe remains irresolvable. This kind of unavailable inherence is very realistic.

Voilà la vérité is a short video that reworks a single sequence from the 1926 silent film, *Ménilmontant*, directed by Dimitri Kirsanoff. A woman (Nadia Sibirskaja) sits on a bench in a Paris park in Spring. She recalls images from a now closed-off life. An older man sits down beside her and proceeds to wordlessly share his lunch with her. A new soundtrack of naturalistic sound was performed and recorded by the foley artist David Kamp, along with non-diegetic elements by Ed. Two voice actors, Rivka Rothstein and Héctor Miguel Santana provide the screen characters with new voices that do not speak but do sob and sigh and eat. The film itself has been digitised, cleaned, colorised, upscaled, smoothed, frame-interpolated, focus-pulled, and otherwise re-rendered using a raft of artificial intelligence-employing softwares and techniques. The resulting video is haunted. The title, *Voilà la vérité — This is the truth* — is the only discernible text in the film: a fragment of a headline on the newspaper that wraps the food.

O Rose thou art sick.
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

— *The Sick Rose* by William Blake