

MAMOTH

Brittany Shepherd *Deliverance*

24 September – 29 October, 2022
First Floor, MAMOTH
3 Endsleigh Street, WC1H 0DS



Distinct from the Girardian snob, who slavishly desires only that which is desired by others, the fetishist heeds the call of a genuinely spontaneous impulse that is indifferent to external mediation. Remote from the cerebral desires of the vaniteux, the fetishist-as-artist pursues gratification not through passive, mimetic consumption, but through the creative act of automatic transfiguration, a process that sees the mundanities of everyday life – wearing a raincoat, spilling chocolate syrup or traipsing through a muddy field in woefully inadequate footwear – imbued with limitless erotic potential by the fetishist, and limitless poetic potential for artist Brittany Shepherd.

In *Deliverance*, Shepherd takes her fascination and sense of kinship towards fetishists partial to protective rainwear, or all that is Wet and Messy (WAM), to its logical conclusion: in her process of painting images culled from anonymous fetish websites and forums, the artist renders herself the subject matter, the fetishist's next muse. She gets messy with Payne's grey pudding, sap green splatter, raw umber ooze, and pewter puddles – equal parts ecstatic and melancholic.

The visceral transgression of the painter's mess is made all the more intense in its sharp contrast to the other means by which she honours the fetishist's perception – the clean, sterile medium of digital video. This contrast parallels the contradiction fundamental to the WAM fetishist's online endeavour, in which access to unknown pleasure is mediated by the computer and video camera – devices so antithetical to the wet and messy that they would perish if subjected to the same treatment as the subjects they record.

The artist and fetishist each render notions of consent irrelevant amidst a transformative process so automatic and internal as to do away with the distinction between public and private, which is already becoming a bygone concept online. Any scene from daily life is fair game for the fetishist or the artist, whose respective transformative perceptions prefigure the nature of the digital image online.

Shepherd's visual lexicon and perceptive sensibility are the threads that unify her decades-long, multi-disciplinary practice, forming a direct line from the paintings featured in *Deliverance* to the resin and silicone casts of domestic objects that featured heavily in previous exhibitions, and her ongoing photo and video practice. Through daily travels in person and online, Shepherd transfigures what she sees along the way, leaving behind a mannequin, an errant, long-fingered glove, a crimson-red lip print, a disembodied limb, all connected in their treatment by the same perceptive eye, mutually alluding to the unknowable lives of others that one can only ever be partially privy to through brief, serendipitous moments of contact. It is in the employment of motifs that the artist's obsessional nature – a nature shared with the fetishist – is most explicit.

As the fetishist interrupts the infinite procession of images online through their creative appropriation, Shepherd's practice of reification slows down images she has thoughtfully selected from the obscure websites and forums to which they have been exiled by a censorious webspace. In doing so, she continues the cycle of new life that is the nature of images, and that is the source of their deliverance.

- Jessica Baldanza

Brittany Shepherd (b. 1988) lives and works in Toronto, ON. She received a BFA from Ontario College of Art & Design University. Shepherd will present a concurrent solo exhibition at In Lieu (forthcoming), Los Angeles, CA and previous selected exhibitions include 'Waltz of the Mired', tilling, Montreal QC, 2021; 'Façades', at Bunker 2 as a part of Scotiabank Contact Photography Festival, 2018; 'Not Too High, Not That Low', Division Gallery, Toronto, 2018; Solo exhibition, Roberta Pelan, Toronto, 2016; 8-11 Gallery, Toronto, 2016; Cooper Cole Gallery, 2016; Site-specific window vinyl at 8-11 Gallery in Toronto Two-person exhibition with Abby McGuane, 2016.

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1. *As You Wish*, 2022

Oil on panel

61 × 51 cm (24 × 20 in)

2. *The Dance*, 2022

Oil on panel

76 × 61 cm (30 × 24 in)

3. *Cloak*, 2022

Oil on panel

61 × 46 cm (24 × 18 in)

4. *Good Luck*, 2022

Oil on panel

46 × 61 cm (18 × 24 in)

5. *Split*, 2022

Oil on panel

46 × 46 cm (18 × 18 in)

6. *The Path*, 2022

Oil on panel

61 × 76 cm (24 × 30 in)

7. *Glow*, 2022

Oil on panel

61 × 51 cm (24 × 20 in)

8. *Penance*, 2022

Single-channel video,
colour, sound,

9 min 45 sec

Edition of 5, 2 AP

9. *Purge*, 2022

Oil on panel

61 × 51 cm (24 × 20 in)

10. *The Hunt*, 2022

Oil on panel

61 × 46 cm (24 × 18 in)

11. *This Little Light*, 2022

Oil on panel

46 × 61 cm (18 × 24 in)

