

**AIR DE PARIS**

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**MONICA MAJOLI.**

*Black Mirror / 1*

Air de Paris is delighted to be hosting Monica Majoli's third solo exhibition.

Monica Majoli is a cult artist. She produces few – very few – works. She works in series, for which she develops specific techniques. She made a name for herself in the early 1990s with a series of small oil paintings depicting homocore scenes and details of her own body, such as a scratch on her wrist or the bare nape of her neck. These minutely detailed works took several months to complete, as they were painted in a technique borrowed from Rubens, with multiple layers of binder and colour that gradually reveal the depths of the motif. Her full-length self-portrait with a dildo *Untitled (round)* (1993-1995), for example, took two years to complete.

Our second exhibition of Monica's work featured scenes that were less sexually explicit, combining gouache and watercolours to create delicate forest scapes, with men kneeling beneath the autumn trees, their hands bound and their faces hidden by balaclavas. These drawings – in a variety of sizes, from small to very large – represented ritualised sadomasochistic scenes, forming a striking contrast with the floating, ethereal setting, as if representing the state that the practitioners wish to attain. This period lasted ten years.

From California, Monica now brings us portraits of women, their profiles drawn in close-up in coloured pencil, forming a chiaroscuro effect on the sheets of black paper. These incredibly polished nocturnal portraits, drawn from memory, are as much paintings as her Black Mirrors – the title of this series. As Monica herself admits, "The otherworldly half-image that is reflected by black mirror coincides with both the internal state of desire and a crisis in belief in representational painting. In these works, the surface itself holds the fetishistic power, rather than the act depicted.»

It goes without saying that it would be wrong to overlook the self-reflexive dimension of these rare and special drawings and paintings, which are fully part of figurative art, while setting out to challenge it. Or at least to question their own psychological and affective aspects – in a word, their fetishistic dimension. In the art of Monica Majoli, the figurative mode is not intended so much to represent an image as it is to uncover the urges driving imagery. Motifs are not the sole object of her fetishism.

*Monica Majoli was born in 1963 in Los Angeles, California, where she lives and works. Her works have been acquired by some of the greatest American collections, including the Judith Rothschild Foundation, MoMA (New York), the Whitney Museum of American Art (New York), The Hammer Museum (Los Angeles), and The Getty Research Institute (Los Angeles). She took part in the Whitney Biennial in 2006.*