

Bex Massey

My Deuce, My Double

1st - 18th May 2024

PV Thursday 2nd May 6pm

Seventeen x Gertrude

*My Deuce, My Double* is a solo exhibition of new paintings by the British artist Bex Massey.

Massey presents the viewer with isolated objects depicted in a soft realism, rendered in oil under an even light. Images are presented in relation to each other, two per work, a painted object depicted beside its partner to form a visual echo. In *Daniel* (2024) the jaws of a yawning cat are paired with the fleshy opening of a conch shell. Similarly, in *Cryos 74263* (2024), the image of red jam oozing from the centre of a donut is partnered with the impacted metal grill of a crashed car. Despite this apparent incongruity, subtle parallels in the structure of each image create connections between the paired objects, the contours of the bite-mark subtly follow and match with the folded metal and indentations of the crash.

The image pairings within these paintings encourage allusion to female bodies, building an underlying sexual tension imbued by the artist into quotidian objects. This is further extended by an implied auditory element to the images, the scenes contain the potential of noise, whether it's the moment a fizzy drink explodes or bubble gum bursting - force in one image, release in its partner image.

Massey's previous works and exhibitions have engaged the codes and history of queer culture, along with markers of selfhood and Northern identity. As suggested by the show title, borrowed from Auden's poem 'The Age of Anxiety', these new works derive from feelings of tension and stress felt by the artist in recent months. Massey cites society's persistent, habitual reminder that female + female = incorrect, that existence outside of the approval and verification of the male gaze is inappropriate. Her recent fertility journey with her partner has brought this into sharp focus, and this process is alluded to in the title of each piece, named as they are after the potential sperm donors they have considered. This additional layer encourages the viewer to see the sexual imagery through a reproductive lens.

This is the second of two collaborations produced with the online platform Gertrude taking place at the gallery. To follow Bex on the Gertrude app click [here](#).