

Marenne Welten: Until Someone Finds You

5538 Santa Monica Blvd ▪ June 1 - July 6, 2024



Harkawik is delighted to announce Marenne Welten's third solo exhibition with the gallery, *Until Someone Finds You*. Here Welten continues her exploration of interiors, psychosomatic infrastructures, death and adolescence, returning us to her recurrent point of departure in form and reconstruction.

Named after a line in the 1951 animated film *Alice in Wonderland*, the exhibition occupies a similar disorienting and fantastical dimension. The affective resonances of *unheimlich*, or the uncanny, layer thick onto Welten's canvases. Its density does not bear the weight of the known, as if unearthing primordial meaning or illuminating the shadows of the repressed. The made-visible coagulation of direction and movement is rendered beyond the knowable. Instead, it becomes a near-purely formal investigation. And such an exploration warrants an ambiguity through which all passes,

as Maurice Blanchot notes on death and poetic works. The destruction of the image is also its creation. Repetitious movement between the two points of simultaneous and progressive destruction and (re)construction becomes the means by which the subject formally emerges. Painting's lyrical dimensions become expressive without occupying the status of direct expression. Thus, the painting is not but form while also irreducible to form.

Girl (2024) is the most abstracted of these canvases. While following the same composition and orientation of historical portraiture presented in *Blue Eyes (2024)*, *He Looks Like Him but He is Not (2024)*, and *Landscape (2024)*, *Girl* radically departs from the immediately identifiable. The larger-scale painting bears some likeness to its naming from afar. One begins to make out eyes, an ear, the semblance of a visage, marks of a nose and lips. Here Welten's thick impasto takes on a richer, congealed form. Up close, the strokes ecstatically impress upon the canvas in unimaginable directions—centrifugal and centripetal at once. Paint comes off the edges escaping the assumption of expression's clean containment whether it be the act of naming, painting, or recollection.

Paint similarly drips off of the horizontal shutters in *A Room With Two Views (2024)*, while two figures lie in languished repose in a room crowded with things. Objects include a couch, stool, divan, books, armchair, windows, a screen, foliage and flowers, and squares and rectangles of all scales. As Welten notes, the memory of the parental home functions as an instrument or stage for invention or foundation. At the same time, one is confusedly surrounded by a plentitude of things in which to relate and are “not exclusive to you.” The objects appear to multiply along with the familial histories, traumas and languages they carry.

The painting orients the viewer towards the small screen perched on a stand—empty but for horizontal marks. *A Room With Two Views'* perspective concerns the object of sight, of passive watching while simultaneously warping the immediate perspectival point. It is, in fact, a room with the potential for many views. Like many of Welten's recent paintings, then, the title describes a formal resemblance. Compositional features, like the psychic processes Welten acknowledges, mark the bounded only to defy them. Welten's process is not unlike the shedding of social, cultural, familial and relational identifications by which the subject necessarily surfaces. Such process thus follows the struggle of identity characteristic of puberty—an explicit thematic of the exhibition.

The domestic *mise en scènes* Welten presents are not exceptional. These intimate renderings of interiority, psychically and materially, are what we live with, grow with, mediated aesthetically: the twinned experience of farce and suffering. Rigid structures and architectures of all kinds give way to shaky foundations in a nearly euphoric and malleable collapse. It is precisely this collapse that breathes and lives.

—Perwana Nazif