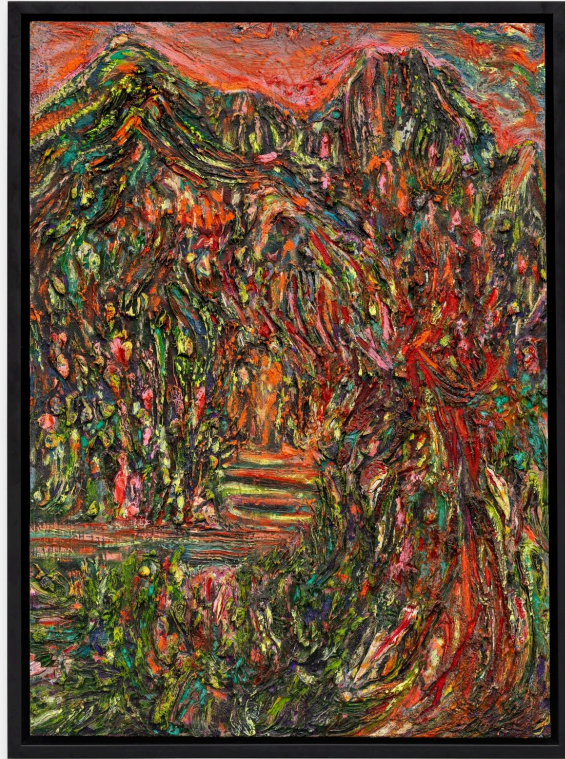


Sherbet Green



Marieke Bernard-Berkel, *Ophélie*, 2024, oil on wood with black wooden frame, unframed: 60.7 x 44 cm; framed: 64.5 x 47.5 cm, photography by Deniz Guzel

Marieke Bernard-Berkel
All the world's a stage
Ft. Tom Bull

Opening Reception: Wednesday 29 May, 6-9pm
London Gallery Weekend Brunch: Sunday 2 June, 11am-1pm
30 May - 29 June 2024

Unit 1, 2 Treadway Street
London, UK
E2 6QW

sherbetgreen.com | info@sherbetgreen.com

All the world's a stage is the second solo exhibition at the gallery from Marieke Bernard-Berkel, featuring new paintings on wood, canvas and fabric by the artist, alongside several seemingly-tar-coated sculptural works from invited collaborator Tom Bull.

This new body of work continues Bernard-Berkel's investigation into landscape painting. Building on multiple canonical references, including expressionism, post-impressionism and psychedelic art, she utilises wild, overabundant colourways and impasto to convey a contemporary lens on the medium. The paintings begin with small drawings or photographs from books of predominantly-European countryside views, which the artist then paints over extended periods of time, layering and distorting them until they give way to new realisations. Equally underscored by her background in set design, the works exhibit a certain theatricality in their built-out, maquette-like forms, and anti-naturalistic palette. The acidity with which she portrays these landscapes captures the sentiment of human subjectivity within a rapid, consuming, modern-day society.

Bernard-Berkel has also invited Tom Bull to exhibit a body of sculptural works as part of the exhibition. In parallel to her own practice, Bull pulls on tangential histories and associations to enact a tension between the language of an idealised rural environment, where he spent nineteen years of his life, and urbanisation. In recent works, he utilises the semiotics of countryside, combining it with materials such as car batteries, plastic cable ties, nitrous oxide canisters, and tar. These deliberately obtuse encounters fuse objects associated with the Shakers, mock Tudor, and cottagecore with matter evocative of the changes to rural life from the 18th century onwards, as well as the emergence of rave culture and the discussion it raises around ritualism and ownership.

The work is also reflective of Bull's interest in personal and collective wellbeing, sharing, with Bernard-Berkel, a criticality of our contemporary condition, intimating the death drive as reflected in global patterns and behaviours for development, treatment of sickness and obsessive approaches to perfection.

Marieke Bernard-Berkel (b. 1988, Laon, France) is a French-German artist living and working in Paris. She received her MA Fine Art from Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2013. She presented her first solo exhibition, *Preludes*, at Sherbet Green, London, in 2022. Group exhibitions include *PRÉSENTATIONS*, Radicants, Paris (2022), *Cloud*

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Point, curated by Nicolas Bourriaud, Paradise Row, London (2022) and *Nils Alix-Labeling: Maison Catabase*, PUBLIC Gallery, London (2022).

Tom Bull (b. 1995, Northamptonshire, UK) lives and works in London. Solo exhibitions include: *Des Bains*, London (forthcoming, 2024); and *Under Cover of Darkness*, E-Werk, Freiburg, Germany (2023). Group exhibitions include: *Alchemical Landscape*, Cob Gallery, London (2024); *Small Hours*, Alice Black, London (2023); *From Transparent Juices*, Lungley, London (2023); *Shallow Haunts*, Kupfer, London (2023); *La Caverna una Casa*, General Expenses, Mexico City (2023); *Disagreements as Domains of Nausea and Elation*, curated by Nimco Kulmiye Hussein, Austrian Cultural Forum, London (2023); *New Contemporaries*, South London Gallery, London (2022); *Ground works*, Studio West, London (2022); *Carry the Day Out in Baskets*, St Chads, London (2022); *Breaking News*, VO Curations, London (2022); *Sublime Rage*, 9 French Place, London (2022); and *HDL*, Xxijra Hii, London (2021).

With thanks to Des Bains, London.

"And if Bernard-Berkel's touch can evoke an Edvard Munch (for the breadth of his brush movements) or a Eugène Leroy (for the density of certain impasto), her painting is devoid of the slightest grandiosity; and above all, it is never rhetorical. For this is not an artist who 'expresses her feelings': on the contrary, she seems to paint to experience them, or to experience them in a different way - implosive, rather than explosive. Marieke Bernard-Berkel does not depict nature, nor landscapes, nor the emotions that a human being would be expected to feel in front of either of these. In her paintings, these three elements are intertwined, as if caught in a kind of spontaneous combustion that takes on the force of a trauma. What her apparently banal iconography signifies is the inability of these imaginary landscapes to coincide with lived memory, hence the need to obsessively excavate them. And her real subject is above all that state of stupor that we can experience in front of the millions of images that surround us, upon which her painting seizes, to then ignite." - Nicolas Bourriaud

For further information, please contact:

Mazzy-Mae Green
+44 (0) 7525786867
mazzy@sherbetgreen.com

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London, UK
E2 6QW

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