

ALICE AMATI

KATINKA LAMPE AND PAUL ROBAS
STANDSTILL

15 NOVEMBER – 21 DECEMBER, 2024

27 WARREN STREET
W1T 5NB LONDON

Alice Amati is pleased to present *Standstill*, a duo show featuring Dutch artist Katinka Lampe and Romanian artist Paul Robas, opening at the gallery on Thursday, November 14th, from 6-8 pm, and running until December 21st.

The premise of *Standstill* begins with an inquiry into our enduring fascination with the human image. Perhaps this fascination stems from our own need to look at what is familiar to us, or as Western Art History might suggest, portraiture has served as a means to explore emotion, identity, and the human condition in a universally recognisable language. But what happens when these subjects—while still representational—are frozen in states of ambiguity? Lampe and Robas' new portraits are caught in this ambivalence; devoid of any clear meaning, they gaze into the void of the gallery space, luring us in, begging us to come closer to their surface. It is here, where the image begins to dissolve into single marks or colour fields, that we can start to grasp what Lampe and Robas are really offering: a question about the very mystery of the familiar, reproduced image.

Paul Robas' portraits, both intimate and elusive, seem to hover on the edge of memory. In this new body of work, faces materialise through blurred layers of paint. The viewer is invited into this hazy, dreamlike space, where the real and the imagined collide. Robas' figures, emerging from a highly textured surface, evoke the sensation of recollections that are fading or being reimagined. These portraits, resulting from multiple manual and automated processes, with brushstrokes and imperfections on the canvas essential to the formation of the image itself, suggest that these individuals are not fully real, but are moulded from many layers of manipulation. It is as if they are suspended between the personal and the universal, their emotions just out of reach. The faces we see are not intended to reveal a clear narrative but instead act as fleeting impressions—haunting and enigmatic—mirroring the way memory shifts and distorts over time. In this stillness, we confront our own need to make sense of the inscrutable, as Robas' figures stare back at us.

Katinka Lampe, by contrast, abstracts her portraits in a different way. Her figures, while realistic, as she works directly with sitters, are not trying to capture the personal character traits of the models, but serve as a departure point to create new and unique images which exist beyond mimetic representation and allow for a multitude of possible interpretations. Leaving her portraits open-ended, Lampe searches for the tipping point between attraction and repulsion, as well as between realism and abstraction, through a non-academic painting process that denies virtuoso brushstrokes and intentionally flattens the picture plane. Her subjects are still, poised and familiar, even when they seem to hide behind alienating light filters. The smooth surfaces of her paintings, where the artist's touch is almost imperceptible, create a polished facade, highlighting the tension between the visual allure of the portraits and their mystery, as associations, narratives and the subjects' emotion are not prescribed by the artist but left to the eyes of the beholder.

In *Standstill*, Robas and Lampe, two artists from different generations and backgrounds, playfully and skilfully ask us to reconsider what a portrait can be. Although they might begin with the same quest, their explorations lead to different routes. While Robas' found and digitally manipulated photos of unknown people are reproduced in a evident painterly manner, where every layer of colour applied to the canvas is visible

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beneath the others, Lampe's representations of real sitters are erased of the artist's touch altogether, veiled to push the images further back into something that is no longer tangible. At last, they reconverge, asking us if it is possible to go beyond the traditional role of portraiture, or if our desire to connect with a recognisable identity will prevent us from seeing what might be staring right in front of us.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Katinka Lampe (b. 1963 Tilburg, Netherlands) lives and works in Rotterdam. She studied at the Academy of Art and Design St. Joost (Hertogenbosch, Netherlands). Her work has been widely exhibited internationally in a variety of galleries, museums such as Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague, NL; Stedelijk Museum Vianen, Vianen, NL; Musée Regional d'art contemporain Occitanie / Pyrenees (Mrac), Sérignan, FR; Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, NL; Museum Van Loon, Amsterdam, NL; Singer Museum, Laren, NL, Museum Jan Cunen, Oss, NL. Her work is included in the collections of 21C Museum Hotels, USA; West Sun Capital Collection, Montreal, CA; Museum Arnhem, Arnhem, NL; APMA, AmorePacific Museum of Art Seoul, KR; Museum van Loon, Amsterdam, NL; C.N.A.P Centre National des Arts Plastique, Paris, FR; Museum More, Gorssel, NL; Schunck, Heerlen, NL; Akzo Nobel Art Foundation, Amsterdam, NL; De Nederlandsche Bank, Amsterdam, NL; ING Collection, Amsterdam, NL; Art Curial, Paris, FR; Frisseras Museum Athens, GR, and Cobra to Contemporary/The Brown Family Collection.

Paul Robas (b. 1989) is a Romanian artist currently living and working in Vienna. He obtained a BFA from the Art and Design University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania (2011) and an MFA from the Academy of fine Arts Vienna, Austria (2018). Recent solo exhibitions include: 'No time to explain', Galleria Solito, Naples, IT (2023); 'Making Truth', Vienna Art Week, Traktorfabrik, Vienna, Austria (2019) and 'Between a rock and a hard place', Projektraum am Schlingerkmarkt, Vienna, Austria (2019). Selected group exhibitions include: 'Le jardin des délices', Galerie Claire Gastaud, Paris, FR (2024); 'A Small Land of Watery Light', Gallery Vacancy, Shanghai, CH (2024); 'Gentle Again', The Shophouse, Hong Kong (2024); 'A Gentle Cruise', JVDW Gallery, Düsseldorf, DE (2024); 'Heady Days', Elektrohalle Rohmberg, Salzburg, Germany (2021); 'Pending Objects 2', NewNow Artspace, Frankfurt, Germany (2021) and 'Pending Objects', Funfzigzwanzig, Salzburg, Germany (2021).

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Alice Amati is a contemporary art gallery established in Fitzrovia in June 2023. The gallery is committed to fostering artists at the early stages of their career by often providing the opportunity for their first solo show in the city and a supportive context for artistic explorations and career development. Concerned with encouraging transnational dialogues around topical questions within society and art, Alice Amati brings together British and International artists through a challenging, experimental and rigorous exhibitions programme. Joining a cohort of young and established galleries in the burgeoning artistic scene of Fitzrovia, Alice Amati operates as a platform for new voices in the contemporary global artistic scene with a strong commitment to research, collaboration and diverse practices.