

This Way Murray-Wassink
Sands Murray-Wassink
12 January - 1 March

Since the gallery's inception, I have showcased various aspects of Sands Murray-Wassink's (b. 1974, Topeka, Kansas) expansive practice at different art fairs across Europe. Each visit to his studio/house revealed a new facet of his work that I felt compelled to present, explore, and amplify. After numerous iterations, I realized it was time to bring his work back to the city where he lives and works.

This Way Murray-Wassink marks Sands Murray-Wassink's first solo exhibition in Amsterdam since his arrival in 1994. A queer cult figure within the city's art scene for nearly two decades, the Dutch-American artist is a painter, body artist, writer, and perfume collector whose work draws deeply from intersectional feminist and queer art traditions. Influences such as Carolee Schneemann, Hannah Wilke, and Adrian Piper serve as foundational coordinates for his practice. While Murray-Wassink has oscillated between periods of institutional visibility and quieter phases of production, his body of work has continually expanded, encompassing a wide range of art and non-art objects.

This exhibition centers on Murray-Wassink's identity as a painter, presenting four distinct bodies of work spanning from the 2010s to a recently completed series of canvases. In the first room, a patchwork display of the earliest works in the show surrounds the viewer. Painted on an eclectic array of fabrics, these pieces reflect nearly a decade of production under some of the most challenging conditions of the artist's career. Statements such as "I am going to kill myself," "I'm desolate, I'm desperate," and "I'm afraid my paintings are becoming repetitive" are raw declarations that bear witness to the emotional and material difficulties of those years.

In the second room, large-scale horse paintings from 2018 dominate the space. The horse, a motif recurring in Murray-Wassink's work for over a decade, has typically appeared in smaller formats such as A4 or A3 paper. These monumental pieces are rare within his oeuvre, utilizing their scale to weave multiple ideas into a single composition. This approach contrasts sharply with the artist's more direct and concise works from the last years, offering a new perspective on his practice.

Accompanying the paintings in the second room is a video produced contemporaneously with the works displayed in the first room. The video provides an intimate glimpse into the artist's process, capturing moments of creation and filling the exhibition space with music. The experience is further enhanced by a perfume selected by Murray-Wassink, adding another dimension to the engagement with his multifaceted practice.

The final section of the exhibition features 11 new paintings on stretched canvas, marking Murray-Wassink's return to this medium after more than two decades of working on paper and loose fabrics. Diverse in aesthetics and message, these works stand in a line, evoking the image of figures queuing to enter a club—perhaps a metaphor for the artist's persistent efforts to carve his space within the art world. When met with resistance, Murray-Wassink's response has been to create his own "club," where the rules are his own.

This Way Murray-Wassink offers a profound exploration of an artistic practice rooted in chaos, vulnerability, and resilience. It reveals an artist who has navigated periods of confusion and upheaval while remaining steadfastly true to his vision and methodology. This exhibition is not just a showcase but a celebration of an artist's enduring commitment to his craft and the expansive possibilities of his oeuvre.