

Soshiro Matsubara

Sleeves of Desire

17 May – 31 August 2025

DORTMUNDER

Soshiro Matsubara's exhibition *Sleeves of Desire* explores the nuances between different forms of desire and their relation to the *Other* as an entity outside the personal realm, separated through time and space. The artist translates those thoughts and phantasies into an atmospheric spatial composition, subject to the changing daylight, that stages his works alongside found objects, antiques or reappropriated papers and drawings, moving from the inner to the outer, from the romantic couple to narcissistic self-reflection.

The title refers both to the sleeve of desire and to its cover—*sleeve* in the sense of a *record sleeve*: the outer appearance of capitalism's melody; a desirable surface made for sale; a visual of consumption that also carries a deeper, unresolved emotional charge. While Matsubara addresses not only the affinities between desire, eros, and death, the exhibition is also reflecting on the appropriation of desire by capitalism—its constant stimulation, its obscene self-serving function without mystery. The belief that consumer goods might fulfill human dreams has long numbed everyday life with commodity fetishism. As philosopher Byung-Chul Han (*1959) argues in *The Agony of Eros* (2012), desire has become narcissistic, opening the door to a deep depression rather than enabling the playful, erotic exchange with the *Other*.

In *Sleeves of Desire*, Matsubara creates an immersive space through large-format fabrics, painted on-site, and a multipart series of drawings on found paper, antiques, and ceramic objects. The space evokes a sense of being inside one's own body: sound-absorbing materials and oxblood-red curtains make the windows appear like closed eyelids, reinforcing an atmosphere of introspection. The overall scenography follows desire as what Han calls a "placeless utopia of the wholly *Other*."

Drawing on numerous art historical references, Matsubara engages with the uncanny gap between representation and the represented: a doll, posed seductively and reminiscent of Édouard Manet's *Olympia* (1863), lies damaged, her foot severed, on a cardboard bed in an antique vitrine—a kind of glass coffin.

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Echoes of European fin-de-siècle painters such as Gustav Klimt (1862–1918), Francis Picabia (1879–1953), Fernand Khnopff (1858–1921), and Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867) emerge in the drawings, as well as references to Austrian painter Oskar Kokoschka (1886–1980), who famously commissioned a life-sized doll of his former lover Alma Mahler (1879–1964) to relive their time together. The exhibition evokes a longing for this era, poised at the threshold of a new age: in Vienna, where Matsubara lives today, psychoanalysis first turned its attention to eros, formulating concepts of desire that would later inform advertising and marketing.

In *Sleeves of Desire*, Matsubara establishes a tension between here and now, then and there; between object and subject; between the exhibition as a situated environment and the outside world. Between a bygone era and the present—desire, longing, and impossibility. The exhibition becomes a confrontation with the erotic pull of the past, echoed in the works on display: found artworks from flea markets and antique shops are completed with Matsubara's own drawings. Second-hand vases become torsos for ceramic heads—a hybrid between artwork and everyday item, decorative object and representation of the human body. It is an attempt to merge with a past moment, a gesture of the Other, a touch of the unknown as an object of desire. A visualization and objectification of the proximity between eros and death.

*Soshiro Matsubara (*1980 in Hokkaido, Japan) lives in Vienna. He studied oil painting at Tama Art University in Tokyo and at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. His works have been shown at MOCO – Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome (2021), Haus am Waldsee, Berlin (2023), and FRAC Lorraine, Metz (2024). Sleeves of Desire is Matsubara's first institutional solo exhibition in Germany. A limited-edition artist's booklet will be published on the occasion of the exhibition, designed by Jonas Herfurth, Ten Ten Team, and risograph-printed by Dortmund-based collective Unterdruck.*

Curated by Rebekka Seubert
Curatorial assistant: Linda Schröer
Artist Assistant: Yasuaki Hamada
Installation: Robert Fernys
Assistance: Michael Broschmann

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