

CHAPTER NY

For immediate release

Rene Matić

Baby

September 5 – October 25, 2025

"The truth is the light and light is the truth."

— Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

Chapter NY is excited to present *Baby*, Rene Matić's second solo exhibition with the gallery. In a significant shift from their representational photography documenting their community, Matić debuts a new series of silkscreened canvases that push into abstraction for the first time, using their own shadow as subject. This body of work marks a more introspective and symbolic approach to questions of identity, visibility, and care, creating space for the artist to reflect on their personal relationship to both Blackness and whiteness.

The title of the exhibition, *Baby*, stems from something Matić's mother once told them: as a child, they would refer to their shadow as their "baby", a gesture of early care and protectiveness. Matić, who was born to a white mother and a Black father, now reconsiders this recollection as a metaphor for self-mothering, particularly in relation to their Blackness. In the shadow, they encounter their Black body for the first time—not as objectified or projected upon, but as something tender, autonomous, and seen. This early act of naming also reveals a perhaps unconscious hyper-awareness of the violence historically and systemically inflicted on bodies like theirs, and the instinctive need for protection and preservation. Matić's work suggests that within shadow, within opacity, one can mitigate the violence of exposure and prioritize care.

Rooted in a continual search for love, Matić's practice spans photography, sculpture, writing, and sound, often honoring lives and intimacies that exist in the in-between. With *Baby*, this exploration becomes more vulnerable and self-reflective. Referencing Carl Jung's concept of "shadow work"—the process of exploring and integrating the unconscious part of the personality that contains repressed instincts—Matić uses their own shadow to confront and care for the parts of themselves previously left unexamined. Captured spontaneously with an iPhone, these images mark fleeting moments of recognition in the world: "There I am." Their shadow becomes a proxy, offering refuge from the gaze often imposed upon racialized and marginalized bodies.

Inspired by time spent in the darkroom, where images are created through chemical interactions of light and dark, Matić began to reflect on whiteness and Blackness not only as social constructs, but as alchemical forces. The silkscreen process itself becomes symbolic—black ink scraped across a white surface, echoing the friction and interplay of identity, perception, and self-recognition.

The exhibition also draws influence from Andy Warhol's abstract, silkscreened shadow paintings, *Shadows* (1978-79), as well as from ongoing discussions around shadow, opacity, and the politics of visibility. Artists such as Glenn Ligon and Kara Walker have reflected on the ambiguity of Warhol's source imagery and the lasting influence of this body of work. With no visible origin, the shadows invite speculation, granting the absent body or object a kind of protective opacity. For Matić, this opens a

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visual and conceptual framework through which to explore their full self. The shadow is worth preserving not because it reveals, but because it conceals and protects. It is a body without flesh, yet it confirms the presence of flesh—absence that proves existence.

Rene Matić (b. 1997, Peterborough, UK) lives and works in London, UK. Matić have been shortlisted for the Turner Prize 2025, nominated for their recent solo exhibition *As Opposed to the Truth* at CCA Berlin. The Turner Prize exhibition will open in September 2025 at Cartwright Hall, Bradford, UK. They have also had solo and two-person exhibitions at Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; Chapter NY, New York; Arcadia Missa, London; Martin Parr Foundation, Bristol; Kunstverein Gartenhaus, Vienna; South London Gallery, London; Studio Voltaire, London; Quench Gallery, Margate; VITRINE Gallery, London; among others. Their work was included in the *Coventry Biennial 2023*, Coventry and Warwickshire; and group exhibitions at Tate Britain, London, UK; Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York; Two Temple Place, London; The Whitaker Museum & Art Gallery, Rossendale; Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry; High Art Arles, Arles; Sadie Coles HQ, London, UK; The Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK; Hayward Gallery, London; The Hepworth, Wakefield, UK; bold Tendencies, London; Schlossmuseum, Linz; Saatchi Gallery, London; and Black Cultural Archives, London among others.

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