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DEBORAH-JOYCE HOLMAN

'Repository of Demonic Grounds / Notation for Subject Appearance'
7 November–17 January, 2026

Repository of Demonic Grounds / Notation for Subject Appearance is Deborah-Joyce Holman's second exhibition with the gallery. Since our debut show two years ago, the artist has held significant solo exhibitions at international institutions such as Kunsthalle Bern, The Swiss Institute, New York, and TANK, Shanghai. While developing their work in video and more recently also film, Holman's painting practice has itself evolved into an important body of work, sharing much of the artistic research in moving images and providing an additional perspective on a conceptual framework built on questions or representation.

The close connection between the two main aspects of the artist's practice makes it appealing to lean into both the connections and distinctions between the cinematic and the painterly. Given that the subject matter of the paintings are themselves based on single frames from film and television, the connection is very immediate. The artist also uses similar approaches in both media, but with very different results. One example is refusal, an important tool for Holman, which has them strip their films from most narrative, and in painting, pick moments where the characters have left the scene or the camera pans away, at times revealing only a fragment like a half open door or an empty chair.

We are perhaps invited to play with semiotics in viewing these works. The set, as a stage in which identity is performed, holds clues to the characters inhabiting this world, particularly as these scenes are frequently domestic. Decorative objects, furniture, fabric throws or Post-it notes... The artist's films appear to do the opposite, where the body is at the center and the camera often lingers on faces, close-up, the nape and back of the ear, observing quiet inaction. However, while Holman is toying with echoes from the 1960s and 70s, alluding to early film criticism and post-structuralist discourse, the work is more personal than that.

Holman finds the source material for their painting in researching narratives that feature queer black women. To paint the environments of these protagonists allows Holman to spend time in these spaces, while the decision to omit their bodies from the image is also where the personal becomes political (to paraphrase the important slogan from 2nd-wave and black feminism) addressing aspects of erasure, representation, and exploitation. The genius of the work is that in doing this, it does not become coolly intellectual, but rather tactile and poetic as the works, uniform in size, unfurl like a filmstrip across the two spaces of the gallery.

Deborah-Joyce Holman (b. 1991, Basel, Switzerland) holds a BA in Fine Art from the Haute École des Arts et de Design in Geneva. From 2019–20, Holman was enrolled in the independent study programme CAMPUS at Nottingham Contemporary. Recent solo shows include 'Repose – Extended Play', City SALTS, Birsfelden (2025); 'Set', TANK, Shanghai (2025); 'Close-Up', Swiss Institute, New York (2025); 'Close-up', Kunsthalle Freiburg, Freiburg (2024); 'Close-up/Quiet as it's kept', TANK, Shanghai (2024); 'Living Room', Kunsthalle Bern (2023); CFGNY at Sculpture Center, New York (2023); 'Love letter', Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich (2023); 'Spill I-III', Istituto Svizzero at Archivio Storico di Palermo, Italy (2022); 'Moment 2' held at schwarzescafé, Luma Westbau, Zurich (2022); 'Beautiful and tough as chestnut / stanchions against our nightmare of weakness', Sentiment, Zurich (2022). Holman's work has been on show at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2022); Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris (2022); The Shed, New York City (2021); 7th Athens Biennal (2021); Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva (2021); La Quadriennale di Roma (2020).

Holman's works have recently been acquired by the Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Kunsthalle Bern Foundation, MASi Lugano, and Lafayette Anticipations, Paris.