

True as Good
Alex Margo Arden

13 March - 9 May

True as Good is a solo exhibition of new works by Alex Margo Arden that move through systems of verification, circulation, and display. Across two rooms, painting, sculptures, and photographs interrogate the persistence of objects, mediation of responsibility, and circulation of moral stakes within both the art market and museum displays.

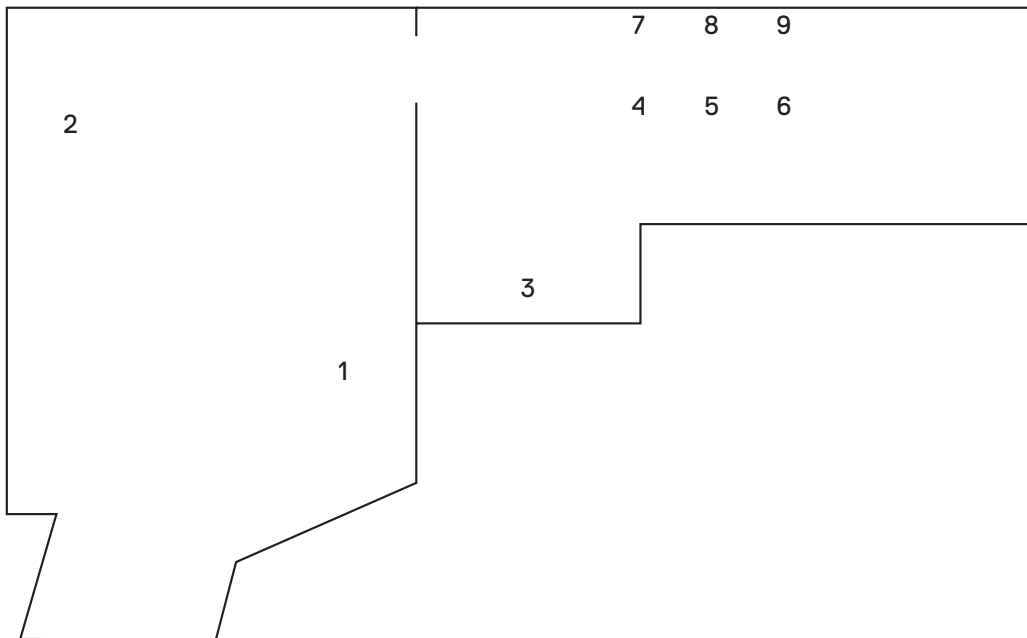
In the first room, a painting by the infamous art forger Han van Meegeren occupies the right-hand wall. Executed in the style of the Dutch Golden Age and signed by the artist, it depicts three women at a market. The work exists in conditional space: unsigned, it could slip into a faux historical lineage; signed, it asserts its authorship and ethical ambiguity. During World War II, van Meegeren's paintings, under the guise of being "Vermeers", entered collections associated with Nazi officials. Post-war, he positioned his forgeries as acts of resistance rather than collaboration, reframing deception as moral strategy. Now, the painting has been re-authored and re-titled *Authorised History* (2026), further complicating conventions of attribution and institutional recognition. This re-authoring implicates Arden in the same systems the work examines. The work operates between van Meegeren's authorship, the contemporary artist's intervention, and the institutional structures that validate both.

Surrounding the painting is a sculptural installation of stained art-handling crates titled *Three Market Women in Conversation* (2026). Normally invisible, these crates bear marks of transport, repeated handling, and archival use. Containing objects that reference the composition of the van Meegeren painting and punctuated by numbered cards, the crates evoke museum systems of cataloguing and inventory. The three women from the painting appear only as implied positions, gaps in space, figures withheld and absent.

In the second room, three mannequin heads, *Exposure [I/II/III]* (2026), repurposed from a military museum display, face three gelatin silver prints, *Flash [I/II/III]* (2026). The prints document a life-size automaton "flasher" from the Sexmuseum Amsterdam, capturing his repeated exposure. The mannequin heads share the same expression – disgust, grimace, pain, anger – but two are bruised and one unmarked. Positioned to look directly at the photographs, the heads stage a silent confrontation. Intended as display surrogates rather than memorials, the mannequin heads nonetheless evoke histories of coercion, conscription, and the ethical complexities of military violence. The gelatin silver prints transform an act dependent on proximity and consent into images that can circulate, be catalogued, and interpreted; through documentation, these ethically charged actions are stabilised and redistributed.

Behind us, we encounter *Reproduction Prohibited* (2026), a postcard rack filled with exact facsimiles of postcards from *Scenerama* (1991), a former exhibit at Madame Tussauds Amsterdam. Reproduced front and back, the postcards show a wax tableau combining fragments from multiple Jan Steen paintings into a single composite arrangement. On the back of each postcard, the text reads “Reproduction Prohibited,” though the image already reproduces a scene that itself reproduces scenes from Steen’s work – a reproduction layered upon reproduction.

Repetition structures the exhibition: three women, three mannequin heads, three prints; numbered cards, re-presented histories, handled crates, reframed attributions. Difference is introduced and managed within systems that rely on similarity. The exhibition demonstrates how institutional procedures – cataloguing, numbering, attribution, reproduction, framing – allow morally compromised objects to remain in circulation. These mechanisms do not resolve ethical problems but distribute and defer them, making difficult histories legible enough to persist.



1. Authorised History, 2026
Oil on canvas, artist’s frame
32.4 cm x 27.5 cm x 3 cm

2. Three Market Women in Conversation, 2026
Art handling crates, rope ladder, wicker baskets, museum display food, artificial flowers, prop rats, wallet, condom, underdress, fabric, plate, spoon, bandage, ribbon, brown paper, paper bag, tape, paint, stain, marker, label residue, leaves, dirt, dust, number cards
172 cm x 256 cm x 327 cm

3. Reproduction Prohibited, 2026
Postcards, display rack
49.7 cm x 36.5 cm x 4.2 cm

4. Exposure [I], 2026
Museum display head, plinth, needle, thread
138 cm x 16 cm x 19 cm

5. Exposure [II], 2026
Museum display head, plinth, needle, thread
138 cm x 16 cm x 19 cm

6. Exposure [III], 2026
Museum display head, plinth, needle, thread
138 cm x 16 cm x 19 cm

7. Flash [I], 2026
Gelatin silver hand print, artist’s frame
61.3 cm x 51.3 cm x 3.5 cm

8. Flash [II], 2026
Gelatin silver hand print, artist’s frame
61.3 cm x 51.3 cm x 3.5 cm

9. Flash [III], 2026
Gelatin silver hand print, artist’s frame
61.3 cm x 51.3 cm x 3.5 cm