

# The approach

## *Le coeur encore*

Stefania Batoeva, Pam Evelyn, Francesca Mollett

3 July – 7 August 2021

Opening preview: Saturday 3 July, 12-6pm

*Le coeur encore* brings together a group of new paintings by London based artists Stefania Batoeva, Pam Evelyn and Francesca Mollett. Drawing broadly on inspiration taken from hydrofeminism, psychoanalysis or the metaphysical (and metaphorical) essence of weather and the natural environment, the works included in this show ultimately find synchronicity through their expressiveness, where form and meaning is loose and ambivalent. The title, taking its name from a painting by Batoeva, perhaps suggests trusting in one's intuition, staying with the abstract and allowing oneself to return again and again to a place of feeling and imagination unencumbered by self-consciousness. 'Le coeur encore' also speaks of the core, the centre or meeting point of body and mind.

Using a process where the outcome is dependent on physical application rather than aesthetic decision making, **Pam Evelyn's** focus is to paint acting from impulse, chance or frustration creating different tensions across the canvas surface that enable her to produce a kind of organised chaos in paint. Her drips, streaks and smudges form a palimpsestic surface where the marks have the capacity to evoke material sensations without lingering on a particular name or fixed meaning. Evelyn maintains a sensitivity to the structures and hidden gestures that may reveal themselves in the work through a process that she likens to "a mist rising". These marks may appear as non-representational forms as well as become visible as more recognisable suggestions of figuration and landscape.

In **Stefania Batoeva's** paintings, boundaries collapse: dreamlike, half-figures seemingly caught in suspended animation merge with their surrounding landscape whilst symbols and shapes appear and dissolve on the canvas surface. Drawing from autobiographical experience and an exploration of the subconscious, Batoeva's paintings can be interpreted as psychoanalytic exorcisms or a purging of that which might lay concealed or suppressed deep within the artist's psyche. She describes her experience of painting as though she were in a relationship with a living being: "I am on equal terms with the painting. It speaks, I speak back, it can be silent or in a deadlock for months, meanwhile I have changed, read something new, found a new set of tools to respond. The painting itself has also changed in that time. I see it differently. It is a love affair and fight." For Batoeva, her paintings become proxies for the relationships/struggles she experiences with loved ones (both people and things) beyond the studio in the outside world.

Influenced by material feminism, **Francesca Mollett** uses paint as a way to connect bodies with bodies of water, asking: "how can I destabilise the boundary between body, water and landscape, begin to 'think with water' as I think with painting?" In her paintings thresholds collapse and fold in on themselves, the material body dissolves and structures liquefy. With oceanic energy, Mollett moves paint across the canvas surface like water; waves of paint chaotically rise and crash whilst elsewhere smooth whirlpools swell and still. Describing her paintings as "abstract interior landscapes" merging bodies of water with underground worlds, Mollett's images appear to drift inwards, connecting deeply with the emotional – mystical, even – and that which is secret or hidden. Light bleeds through the cracks of seemingly subterranean environments, pockets of the canvas glow amid dark shadows and seeping from cavernous depths.

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**Stefania Batoeva** (b. 1981 Sofia, Bulgaria) lives and works in London UK. Solo exhibitions include *Le Marteau sans maître [The Masterless Hammer]*, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest (2021); *Winter in Paris*, Art Tuner (2020); *When You Waked Up The Buffalo*, Nicodim, Los Angeles (2020); *Marc Chagall*, All Welcome, London (2019); *Devoted Iota Elusion*, Emalin, London (2017); *Total Devotion*, Almanac, Turin (2017); *Winterheart*, Ermes-Ermes, Vienna (2017). Batoeva has taught Painting at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, since 2017. Prior to this, she studied sculpture at The Royal College of Art, London (2014) and Architecture at the Architectural Association, London (2007).

**Pam Evelyn** (b. 1996, Guildford, UK) lives and works in London. Recent exhibitions include *Diaries Of A Climate*, Baert Gallery, Los Angeles (2021); *Up Up and Away*, Hockney Gallery, London (2020); *Bad Actors*, Karst Gallery, Plymouth; *Set the Borders on Fire*, Exhibition Laboratory, Helsinki; *A Myth, Amorph*, *A Method*, Althuis Hofland Fine Arts Amsterdam (all 2019) and *Olio*, The Crypt Gallery, London (2017). She is currently studying Fine Art Painting at The Royal College of Art, London.

**Francesca Mollett** (b. 1991, Bristol) lives and works in London. Recent exhibitions include: *Wild Shade*, Informality Gallery, Henley; *Diaries of a Climate*, Baert Gallery, Los Angeles both (2021); *London Grads Now*, Saatchi Gallery, London; *50/50*, Fold Gallery (both 2020); *Sympathetic Magic*, ZONA MISTA, London; *Keyholes* at Brockley Gardens, London (both 2019). Francesca has co-curated a number of shows, including *Dust sheet embroidered snow*, Project Gallery, Arundel (2019); *The Value of Liveliness*, White Crypt, London; and *Smoke gets in your eye*, rural BAES, near Lewes (both 2018). She co-ran and founded 'The Benevolent Association of Excellent Solutions', a set of artist studios and project space in Deptford from 2015 – 2016. She recently graduated from the Royal College of Art, London and is the recipient of the Aidan Threlfall Award (2020). Francesca is curator of the London Arts Board, a disused municipal noticeboard turned art gallery.

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