

Becky Suss

Moving In

14.11.2024

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MASSIMODECARLO is delighted to present Becky Suss's debut exhibition with the gallery, marking her first solo show in the UK. *Moving In* is a visually rich, playful, and deeply personal exploration of memory, domesticity, and the intimate connections between the two. Suss has always been a painter who doesn't merely depict space but reconstructs it - layering her memories, cultural references, and physical objects into new, reimagined environments. Her paintings are like mental maps, dotted with what she refers to as "Easter eggs" - small, seemingly innocuous details that, when pieced together, create a more complex and interconnected narrative.

The title *Moving In* suggests that Suss has claimed the gallery as her own, embracing its cozy, domestic finishes. This setting acts as an extension of her practice, where intimacy and memory collide. Her large-scale interior paintings reflect the sensory qualities of personal spaces while challenging stereotypes of domesticity, particularly regarding women's lives in America. By weaving in personal narratives and charged objects, she crafts a library of often-overlooked female spaces, inviting a closer look at the hidden stories and complexities that lie beneath the surface.

Her pictorial style, which is both meticulous and spacious, allows these personal artifacts - a Finnish book here, a Bertoia chair there - to take on the weight of cultural and familial significance. Drawing primarily from life and inspired by the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art she visited growing up, these objects become integral to her narrative. Whether it's a mantelpiece laden with familiar yet elusive items or a room that recalls both her past and the spaces of iconic literature, Suss transforms domestic interiors into a stage where the personal and the historical overlap.

Suss's fascination with books, both as objects and as conveyors of narrative, adds yet another layer to her work. In this exhibition, she draws inspiration from British authors like Virginia Woolf and Charles Dickens. The inclusion of a first edition of *David Copperfield* transcends mere decoration; it reflects her recontextualisation of classic literature through a contemporary lens, resonating deeply with Woolf's

themes of return and the passing of time and its effects in *To the Lighthouse*. Just as Barbara Kingsolver's *Demon Copperhead* reshaped her understanding of Dickens, Suss invites a fresh reconsideration of familiar spaces and stories. This series of works incorporates visual references to quintessentially British design and art like Morris & Co. and Liberty prints and Vanessa Bell's iconic Hogarth Press dust jackets, grounding *Moving In* in its particular geographical surroundings in London.

In this exhibition, the gallery itself plays an integral role in shaping the narrative. As Suss reflects on her own memories, she acknowledges the impact of the physical space where her work is displayed. The gallery, much like her paintings, becomes a vessel for history and personal connection, creating a dialogue between artist, viewer, and place.

In *Viale Lombardia*, Suss thoughtfully merges the features of the MASSIMODECARLO Milan gallery - originally designed as a house, Casa Corbellini-Wassermann - with elements of a typical home. Aware of the space's domestic past, she integrates personal touches such as memorabilia, books, and even her dog, intertwining memories and creating parallel realities.

The same happens, perhaps to a greater extent, in *Clifford Street*, where Suss pays homage to the building's past as a Georgian home and its intimate scale. She transforms the gallery into a fully furnished living space, complete with a large green sofa, a Noguchi lamp, and a Monstera Deliciosa. Her meta-paintings conceal other works within them, creating a treasure hunt - or rather, a detail hunt - that captivates us as we discover a world akin to our own, both comforting and intricately interconnected.

Her playful, almost cinematic approach to painting - where objects, spaces, and stories are woven together by a mental "evidence board" of invisible strings - invites viewers into her whimsically curated domestic realm of imagined memories. Suss's paintings are maps of consciousness, where geographies, memories, and cultural touchpoints converge. The more time you spend with them, the more dots you begin to connect - and that's precisely the point.

Becky Suss

Becky Suss (b. 1980) lives and works in Philadelphia.

Suss' work explores ideas of intimacy, domesticity and memory. Her large-scale paintings of interiors are holistic representations of the sensory and remembered qualities of space, while her small paintings of objects and books become a library of charged personal items. Devoid of figures, Suss' style uses flattened architecture, exaggerated proportions, and distorted perspective to amplify the tension between fact and fiction, mirror the plasticity of memory, and challenge the importance of truth-value in effective storytelling.

Her paintings often question the stereotypes of domesticity especially as they relate to the lives of women in America. She is fascinated by American culture's dismissal and dependence on homemaking and homemakers, and inspired by her own personal heritage, the generations of women in her family who managed the domestic sphere without recognition. She aspires to elevate these historically female private spaces that have long been dismissed as unimportant, though in reality are places where family and identity are created and defined. She often draws inspiration from memories of her own grandparents' home and, after becoming a parent herself, she has found inspiration through returning to the literature of her childhood and the memories of these imagined narratives.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Becky Suss: The Dutch House*, ICA Chattanooga, TN, US (2024), travelling to: *The Baker Museum*, Naples, FL, US (2024-25); *Cheekwood Museum*, Nashville, TN, US (2025); *Becky Suss/Wharton Esherick*, Fleisher/Ollman, Philadelphia, USA, travelled to: *Wharton Esherick Museum*, Malvern, USA (2018-2019); *Becky Suss*, ICA Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA (2015). Group exhibitions include *To Begin Again: Artists and Childhood*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, USA (2022-2023); *New Grit: Art & Philly Now*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA (2021); *Taking Space: Contemporary Women Artists and the Politics of Scale*, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, USA (2021).

Her work is part of many public collections, including The Alford Collection of Contemporary Art, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Rollins College, Winter Park, FL; Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA; The Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Boston, MA; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA; Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, NJ; Rennie Museum, Vancouver, Canada.