



Night Plinths

Maarten van den Bos, Archie Franks, Xiao-yang Li, Sofia Silva, John Thole

16th February – 17th March 2018

Private view 16th February, 6-8pm

narrative projects is pleased to present Night Plinths, a group, painting exhibition featuring Maarten van den Bos, Archie Franks, Xiao-yang Li, Sofia Silva and John Thole. The exhibition is a result of an intermittent conversation starting from the end of 2015; its ideas and themes have since evolved alongside each artist's unique trajectory.

The works by these five painters are brought together by a shared attitude towards their practice: painting as a deeply intimate and psychological act of will. This shared understanding represents an urge to return to the very essence of paint – the intrinsic quality that arises in the movements of the painter's hand, the tangible sensation realized in the material and the balanced unity of form & content. In response to our increasingly virtualized society saturated with images and immersed in digital culture, this new generation of artists intend to make the material and the personal presence of their works much more explicit, through a profound engagement with their preferred approach.

Explored in the works are an expansive range of subjects, motifs and themes gathered from art history. There are provocative human figures, humorous interpretations of the everyday, a brooding contemplation of abstract shapes and the enigmatic relations between the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional. As ancient sculptures ogling from their plinths, the paintings accompany the viewer to the idiosyncratic mythology of these five painters.

The shared fascination of painterly material concedes a link as opposed to rupture between the present and the past. Therefore, the artists are not painting out of nostalgia or misplaced romanticism, but rather out of necessity - an urgency to conjure a material presence and to give their work substance in an increasingly substance-less time.

About the Artists

Maarten van den Bos (b. 1982, Maarssen, The Netherlands. Lives and works in London.) His most recent exhibitions and awards include: *Multiverse*, Academiegalerie, Utrecht, (2016); *Continental Shift: Emerging Artists from Saatchi Art*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2014); *Oriel Davis Open*, Oriel Davies Gallery, Wales (2014); *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2014); *A Small Embassy of Living Painters*, Appels Gallery, Amsterdam (2012); *Best of Graduates*, Ron Mandos Gallery, Amsterdam (2011).

Archie Franks (b. 1986, London. Lives and works in London.) His recent shows include the touring *Jerwood Painting Fellowship shows* (Jerwood space London, Bournemouth University, Cardiff Bay Arts 2016, and Norwich University 2017), solo shows; *Disintegration*, Salon, London (2017); *Nightmares and dreamscapes*, Welcome screen, London (2015) group shows; *Dumb*, Mercer chance, London (2017); *Sampler*, Arcade, London (2016); *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, touring exhibition: ICA, London, Spike Island, Bristol; and awards; *Sainsbury Scholarship in Painting and Sculpture* (2013); *Gordon Luton Award* (2012)

Xiao-yang Li (b. 1985, Harbin, China. Lives and works in London.) Her most recent exhibitions and awards include: *Totem Index*, narrative projects, London (2017); *A Splinter in the Sun*, curated by Tim Stoner, narrative projects, London (2016); *Next Generation*, from Ruth Borchard Collection, Piano Nobile Kings Place, London (2016); *Heads*, curated by Vera Portatadino, Yellow artist run space, Varese (2015); *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, touring exhibition: ICA (Institute of Contemporary Art) London, Newlyn Art Gallery, World Museum, Liverpool (2014-2015); Finalist at *Dentons Art Prize*, Dentons London (2016); *Fellow (stipend)*, Vermont Studio Residency, USA (2016).

Sofia Silva (b. 1990, Padua, Italy. Lives and works in Padua.) Her most recent exhibitions include: *PINK Density*, curated by Humberto Poblete-Bustamante, Clovis XV, Brussels (2016); *You say Monet, I say Manet*, LDD, Turin (2016); *Glorious Abandon*, curated by Shaun McDowell, Dynamite Projects, Redhill (2016); *Vis-à-vis*, curated by Kate Hiley, Galerie Le Cabinet Dentaire, Paris (2015).

John Thole (b. 1979, Banbury. Lives and works in London.) His recent exhibitions include: *Subjective Reality*, SheShan MOCA and Forbidden City Gallery, Shanghai, China (2016); *Jerwood Drawing prize*, Jerwood Space, London, the Wilson, Cheltenham, Sydney Cooper Gallery, Canterbury and Falmouth Art Gallery (2016); *A Bestiary*, Turf Projects, Croydon (2015); *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), London, World Museum, Liverpool (2014); *A New Circle*, Forbidden City Gallery, Shanghai, China (2014).

Image credit: photograph by Xiao-yang Li

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