

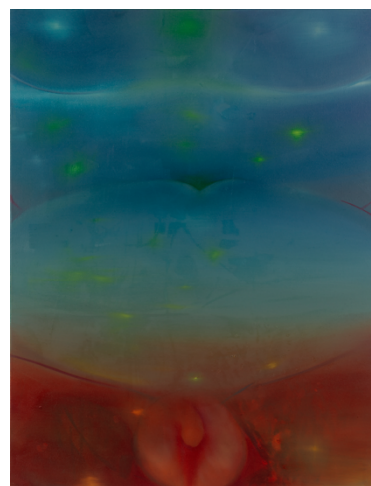
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Press Release

A New Sensation

11 May - 24 June 2023

Galerie Marguo, 4 rue des Minimes, 75003 Paris



Galerie Marguo is pleased to present 'A New Sensation', a survey of contemporary painters based in the United Kingdom, many exhibiting in Paris for the first time. Taking 'Sensation', the 1997 landmark exhibition at the Royal Academy of London, as its point of departure, this exhibition considers the ways contemporary painting practice has been shaped by the vast technological, ecological, and social transformations of the past twenty-seven years.

The controversial 'Sensation' is credited with establishing the Young British Artists (YBA). Energized by the end of an eighteen-year conservative regime and beneficiaries of free arts education in the UK, the emerging artists in media mogul Charles Saatchi's collection were eager to push the boundaries of what art could look like and speak to. The YBAs worked across a wide array of media and shared a desire to confront the viewer with direct, visceral experiences that challenged deeply entrenched social mores: 'sensation' as provocation and spectacle. But a sensation can also be understood in somatic and tactile terms: a psychological, emotional, or physical feeling; the perception of something that happens to the body; an inexplicable awareness or impression.

The artists featured in 'A New Sensation' were either born or came of age in the 1990s, growing up in a rapidly evolving world marked by climate change, the acceleration of time and contraction of space due to advancements in technology, and resurgences of conservatism and nationalism, among other things. Today's reality is hypermediated by the production, exchange, and consumption of images; the fully realized society of the spectacle that Guy Debord warned of, in which "all that was once directly lived has become mere representation".

The collection of works in this survey - which reflect the general revival of painting across contemporary artistic production - evidence an introspective turn that foregrounds the sensorial and allegorical experience of being-in-the-world at a time when everything seems designed to alienate us from it. Working within an expanded definition of the landscape genre, they vacillate exuberantly between figuration and abstraction, while formally negotiating the impact of digital technology on our engagement with reality and our surroundings.

Lydia Blakeley's playful paintings typically draw from popular sources, such as tabloids and social media, often focusing on sporting and pageantry events as metaphors for the more insidious constructs of pedigree and class that underpin English society. **Serpil Mavi Üstün** similarly uses figurative extractions of familiar representations to critique the trappings of social constructs such as 'femininity' and the often (still) heavily gendered view of domesticity. Devoid of figures altogether, **Jill Tate's** meticulous, monochromatic renderings of domestic scenes are laden with psychological charge. Painted from maquettes the artist builds and photographs herself, the non-spaces of 'See Through and Function Room' (both 2023) call to mind the isolation of lockdowns, during which sensorial engagement with the outside world was limited. Like a rejoinder to these weighty yet empty scenes, **James Prapaithong** captures hazy yet extremely specific moments on canvases whose

dimensions mimic the ratios of various screen devices. Like cropped inserts in the film montage of one's own unstable memory, they are wistful and banal, conjuring a longing for shared experiences and connections.

Drawing on his architectural background and interest in the animating force of technology within the evolution of artistic forms, **László von Dohnányi** employs traditional media, such as oil on canvas, to paint landscapes and still lifes that reference the aesthetics of rendering software and 3D printing. von Dohnányi's interest in the concept of remediation -- the notion that all new media borrows and is made up of old media -- resurfaces in **Jamiu Agboke's** practice, albeit sensorially and metaphysically. In his fluid, at times flighty, compositions Agboke seeks to construct a scaffold that links how we negotiate our senses with our ways of perceiving the world around us. Incorporating everything from dream and waking memories, proprioceptive encounters, inherited cultural histories, and experiences born of the digital sphere, his work explores the interconnectedness of all inputs that form subjectivity. **Minami Kobayashi**, with her acid hued figurations, navigates distant, intimate memories through their sensorial, vegetal, and organic associations, resulting in mysterious yet tender compositions. For **Josh Raz**, it is the absence of such interconnected perspectives within society that has contributed to the precarious position of 'reality' today. As in 'Never Known' (2023), an impressionistic night sky -- arguably the only truly shared sight for all mankind -- Raz synthesises, splices, and layers multiple perspectives in his paintings as a way of challenging the authority we tend to endow two-dimensional images with.

Returning to the body, **Li Hei Di's** rapturous abstractions explore the primal impulses of human seduction, intimacy, and desire. In 'As of the fever of early summer groping in the dimness of the subconscious for the memory of the midday warmth' (2023), the contours of a nude torso are suggested in the celestial outlines of a fiery sky, grafting the fleeting carnal experiences of the individual onto the sweeping movements of the cosmos. The enmeshment of the individual and the universal is echoed in the work of **Sophia Loeb**, whose practice is informed by the healing and calibrating force of nature on the human body. In her sweeping tableau, thick clusters of impasto brushstrokes in tropical hues dance across the canvas, mimicking nature's ephemeral, cyclical movements.

Inspired by the landscapes of her childhood in rural Greece, **Sofia Nifora's** meticulous, large-scale paintings and drawings literally situate the viewer "in the weeds", immersed and entangled in the complexities of navigating the disappearances and recollections of certain places, and the griefs associated with migration. Working from a more felt and imagined memory of place, **Freya Douglas Morris** paints oneiric landscapes that are familiar yet estranging. Luscious forests in fauvist palettes evoke an alternative world in which nature has reclaimed its central role. Ecological anxiety belies the work of **James Owens**, whose moody compositions depict scenes of escape, tragedy, and survival, toggling between hope and doom in which nature ultimately triumphs over man-made disaster. Finally, **Georg Wilson's** practice is grounded in reality, informed by the cyclical change of the seasons and concepts of deep time. However, her paintings conjure strange stories, intertwining layers of England's landscape, folklore, history, and customs to create new fantastical narratives, totems and icons and even sensations for what some might describe as spiritually bereft times.

Where the YBAs sought to introduce crude material reality into the rarefied arena of the gallery, the artworks featured in 'A New Sensation' invites the viewer to look inward, sideways, and outward; to not lose sight of the world, beyond, or for, our screens.

'A New Sensation' is organized by Henry Relph, on view from 11 May to 17 June 2023 at Galerie Marguo, Paris. With works by Jamiu Agboke, Lydia Blakely, Li Hei Di, László von Dohnányi, Freya Douglas-Morris, Minami Kobayashi, Sofia Nifora, Sophia Loeb, James Owens, James Prapaithong, Joshua Raz, Jill Tate, Serpil Mavi Üstün, and Georg Wilson.

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Freya Douglas Morris
When everything is summer, 2023
Oil on canvas
170 x 145 cm (66 7/8 x 57 1/8 in)
© Freya Douglas Morris. Courtesy of Galerie Marguo.

Georg Wilson
All Night Awake, 2023
Oil on canvas
160 x 120 cm (63 x 47 1/4 in)
© Georg Wilson. Courtesy of Galerie Marguo.

Li Hei Di
As of the fever of early summer groping in the dimness of the subconscious for the memory of the mid day warmth, 2023
Oil on canvas
100 x 70 cm (39 3/8 x 27 1/2 in)
© Li Hei Di. Courtesy of Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London and Galerie Marguo, Paris.

