

NICODIM

Stefania Batoeva *Le Marteau sans maître*

Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest

March 18 – May 1, 2021



Stefania Batoeva, *Le coeur encore*, 2021

“Thus, I am leaving you to your own devices on this bed. I am going out and once again I will write on the door so that, as you exit, you may perhaps recall the dreams you will have pursued on this bed. I will write the following sentence: ‘Jouissance of the Other,’ of the Other with a capital O, ‘of the body of the Other who symbolizes the Other, is not the sign of love.’” — *On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge*, 1972–73, Jacques Lacan

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The act of painting, for most, is an antisocial gesture, to be left to one's own devices with a blank canvas. It is to intentionally Other one's self with a capital O, and wrestle and negotiate with the metaphysical discord between artist and brush, brush and surface. Stefania Batoeva's paintings are snapshots of her ongoing personal psychoanalysis and exorcisms, roadmaps through the relational dynamics between herself and versions of loves and loved ones; the difficult inherent power struggles that distort and take on an unlimited form in her inner world, and come closer to grasp only in paint.

Le Marteau sans maître, or *The Masterless Hammer*, Batoeva's third exhibition with Nicodim, is a series of drawings and paintings which, like the Pierre Boulez composition and René Char poems that inspired them, celebrate the journey of a once-emancipated psychic dissonance occasionally reined into harmony. Recycled, Brobdingnagian frames from the 80s reincarnate to house a series of small-scale, improvisationally arranged drawings that evoke Matisse on a bender and provide blueprints for the paintings. The figures on paper are the vocabulary from which the canvases are composed: the two loosely constructed, Klimt-ian figures in the forefront of "*Lonely woman*," 2021, are vibrant embodiments of the monochrome drawings, their blues and yellows taunt a solitary figure as it slowly emerges from the underpainting; "*Le coeur encore*," 2021, repurposes selected drawn forms and breathes the intentioned spontaneity of Albert Oehlen into a woman pondering a shattered, bright-red heart as it melts and decomposes on a pedestal.

If these works are not the sign of love, then they are at least avatars of the artist as the Other in her struggle to experience it. Says Batoeva: "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."

Stefania Batoeva (b. 1981 Sofia, Bulgaria) lives and works in London. Recent exhibitions include *Winter in Paris* on Artuner (2020, solo), *When You Waked Up The Buffalo* at Nicodim, Los Angeles (2020); *Marc Chagall* at All Welcome, London (2019, solo); *Periods* at ICA, Sofia (2019); *Devoted Iota Elusion* at Emalin, London (2017, solo); *Total Devotion* at Almanac, Turin (2017, solo); *Winterheart* at Ermes-Ermes, Vienna (2017, solo); and *SPEEDING TO THE CORNER* at Nicodim, Los Angeles (2015, solo). *Le Marteau sans maître* is her third solo exhibition with Nicodim.

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Stefania Batoeva

° Born 1981 Sofia, Bulgaria

Lives and works in London, United Kingdom

Education

2014 Royal College of Art, London

2007 AA School of Architecture, London

Solo and Two-Person Exhibitions

2021 *Le Marteau sans maître*, Nicodim, Bucharest, Romania

2020 *WINTER IN PARIS*, ARTUNER, online

Misfortunate Mortals, Medium P at Stödelschule, Frankfurt (with Marsida Rexhepaj, curated by Antinia Lia Orsi)

2019 *Marc Chagall*, All Welcome, London

2017 *Total Devotion*, Almanac, Turin

Winterheart, Ermes-Ermes, Vienna

It Is Forever Ours, two person show with Goran Chanter, curated by Swimming Pool, Sofia at David Dale Gallery, Glasgow

Devoted Iota Elusion, Emalin, London

2016 *EXPORTING MARSII REX*, Stefania Batoeva & Isaac Lythgoe, dreamt by Guido Santandrea, Palermo

2015 *TIA DETH*, two-person show with Adriano Costa, Emalin, London

SPEEDING TO THE CORNER, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles

Club Caligula (with Ilja Karilampi, Leslie Kulesh and Isaac Lythgoe), Supplement, London

2014 *Angela Is Sliding*, Galeria Nicodim, Bucharest

PAUL, Sariev Contemporary, Plovdiv

2013 *Still No Masterplan*, Almanac Projects, London

Selected Group Exhibitions

2020 *Sky-blue and green*, Curated by Ellie Pratt, hosted by VO Curations, London

When You Waked Up The Buffalo, Nicodim, Los Angeles

2019 *Thank You, Mr. Ruf*, Credo Bonum Gallery, Sofia

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- Ford Every Stream*, Galleria Acappela, Naples
Periods, ICA, Sofia
Nome d'us, Shore Gallery, Vienna
Daughters of Hecate, White Crypt, London
- 2018 *Unearthing*, Becky's, London
Entagled Tales, Rupert, Vilnius
The Church Painting Show, Blackwing Studios, London
- 2017 *A Highly Dazed World*, Daily Lazy Projects, Athens
All Men By Nature Desire To Know, curated by Joshua Lockwood, Bonington Gallery, Nottingham
- 2016 *FOLLY*, Emalin at The Dunmore Pineapple, Scotland
With Institutions Like These, curated by Viktor Wang, The Averard Hotel, London
- 2015 *1(um)*, BFA Boatos, Sao Paulo
BALCONIA (three person show with Emanuel Röhss and Yves Scherer), SWIMMING POOL, Sofia
You will find me if you want me in the garden, Galerie Valentin, Paris
My Internet Was Down For 5 Minutes So I Went Downstairs And Spoke To My Family. They Seem Like Nice People, Galerie Jeanroch Dard, Brussels
- 2014 *Got tortilla with butter on phone. Think it's the end?*, Rod Barton Gallery, London
MAJESTIC BATHER, 68 square metres, Copenhagen
Dizziness of Freedom, Bermondsey Project, London
Royal College of Art Degree Show, London
- 2013 *'l'Echappée Belle'*, Kilometre, Grand Palais, Paris
AUTO COUTURE, Automotive Couture, London

Publications

- 2020 *Mura Masa Raw Youth Collage publication*, London
- 2019 *Marc Chagall zine*, All Welcome, London
MANHOLE, London
Time to wake up yet, London