HUXLEY—PARLOUR

3—5 SWALLOW ST
LONDON W1B 4DE

Long Summer
Madeleine Bialke
17 November 2021 - 15 January 2022



VERDICT, 2021

Huxley-Parlour are delighted to present *Long Summer*, a solo presentation of 14 new paintings by New York based artist, Madeleine Bialke. It will be Bialke's first UK solo exhibition, and her most personal exhibition to date.

The paintings in *Long Summer* take imaginative departure from Bialke's time at her family's cabin in the Adirondacks during the first summer of the pandemic. Recovering from Lyme Disease, and drawing on the "dark underbelly of 1950's nostalgia" from the locally inspired movie, 'A Place in the Sun', Bialke renders these familial woodscapes in sickly, sallow, apocalyptic hues. In several paintings, (*Three Sisters*, T*wo Augusts in a Row*, and *Cliffhanger*) cold blue 'figures' seem to reject any external visual warmth, as if they have contracted a mysterious disease.

Bialke's paintings are largely unpeopled, choosing instead to centre organic forms: 'lozenge-like' leaves, fulsome, rounded bushes, and insidiously anthropomorphic foliage. Here, Bialke subverts an anthropocentric perspective, undermining the mainstream assumption that the natural world be seen primarily as a resource for humans. This can be sensed in Bialke's eerie compositions, which not only shore stillness and movement against one another, but in which people and trees uncannily mirror one another's postures in a tender gesture of mutual recognition. Here, sickness is a pervasive and totalising theme.

Bialke's work relates to the flat, empty planes of artists such as Edward Hopper and Grant Wood, and in particular the work of the Group of Seven - a group of Canadian landscape painters working at the turn of the century. Whilst all of these artists probed the relationship between society and the environment at the waning of the industrial age, Bialke's work brings these ideas into a contemporary context by reading syntheticism and toxicity into organic forms. Here, Bialke creates an art that comments on the anthropocene. Underlying serene, empty planes, *Long Summer* poses quietly alarming questions about climate, industry, and our collective fate.

Bialke received her BFA in Studio Art from the Plattsburgh State University of New York, Plattsburgh, later undertaking a MFA in Painting at Boston University, Massachusetts. She has exhibited widely, including solo shows at Harper's Books, New York, Deanna Evans Projects, New York, and Visions West Contemporary, Denver. Bialke was the Artist-in-Residence at North Western Oklahoma State University in 2018, and was awarded the John Walker MFA Painting and Sculpture Award in 2016. She lives and works in, Brooklyn, New York.

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