

Delphine Hennelly Through Perseus' Shield

25 January - 04 March 2023



STILL POINT (2023) DELPHINE HENNELLY

Huxley-Parlour are delighted to present *Through Perseus' Shield* – Delphine Hennelly's first solo exhibition in the UK – at their Maddox Street gallery. In seven large-scale canvases, Hennelly renders monumental figures in a prismatic palette and heavily wrought, impasto brushstrokes. The exhibition reappropriates the art-historical motif of the mirror as a symbol of self-assured, modern womanhood.

Mining existent cultural and historical imagery, Hennelly's practice is characterised by her use of repetition. Each canvas is realised in its own seductive colour palette, yet at the centre of each composition lies the same motif, woman with mirror, which Hennelly uses as a conceptual and formal structure from which to play out variables. Hennelly uses repetition in this way as a kind of artistic echolalia, with each canvas informing the next in a cyclical, self-referential loop, influenced by the writings of Gilles Deleuze.

The title of the exhibition, *Through Perseus' Shield*, is the title of the first painting in the suite of seven: a kaleidoscopic reworking of a 1485 painting by Hans Memling entitled *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*. The painting crucially reveals the art-historical inception of the project, as Hennelly takes the personification of sinful vanity – a young woman regarding her own reflection – as her point of departure. Hennelly reconfigures and reimagines this objectified female form in order to, as she states, 'emancipate' it.

The title of the exhibition also refers to the mythological Gorgon Medusa and her death at the hands of the heroic Perseus. Inspired by the writings of Hélène Cixous, Hennelly seeks to build spaces in which Medusa could enter the world of her reflection as opposed to being solidified by it, allowing an alternate outcome to the myth in which the male hero, threatened by the autonomy of a female gaze, is denied enacted violence and instead wrests agency to the female protagonist.

Each of the seven canvases depicts a figure standing alone, clutching a single, hand-held mirror. The exhibition explores the particular pleasure, and intrinsic value, of self knowledge. As Hennelly states, 'to imply vanity given to this solitary act of looking feels akin to a form of oppression'. Hennelly pushes against the designation of the mirror, historically the only tool with which a woman could understand her own identity and representation without external influences, as an object of a presumed vanity. Hennelly's figures revel joyfully in their subversive act of uncomplicated and unburdened looking.

Delphine Hennelly (b. 1979) received her BFA from Cooper Union in 2002 and her MFA from Mason Gross School of the Visual Arts at Rutgers University in 2017. She is the recipient of the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Award and her work has been exhibited in the United States, Europe and Canada. Her work has appeared in numerous publications including ArtMaze Magazine, Nut Publication, and New American Paintings. In 2022, Hennelly was a resident artist of Palazzo Monti (Brescia). She lives and works in Montréal.

Notes to Editors

Through Perseus' Shield
Delphine Hennelly
25th January - 4th March 2023
HUXLEY-PARLOUR, Maddox Street

Private View: Tuesday 24th January, 6-8pm
HUXLEY-PARLOUR, 45 Maddox Street, W1S 2PE
Opening hours Monday to Friday, 10:00am - 5:30pm
Saturday, 10:00am - 1:00pm

Additional information can be found online at www.huxleyparlour.com