

Iris Schomaker: Watching the Perseids

18 April - 25 May 2024



UNTITLED (CHESS), 2024
IRIS SCHOMAKER

Huxley-Parlour are delighted to announce a new solo exhibition of work by German artist Iris Schomaker, her second with the gallery. *Watching the Perseids* presents new small-scale works on panel and paper, made over the past year, which continue Schomaker's exploration of the generative tension between figuration and abstraction.

The figurative works in *Watching the Perseids* are anonymous and androgynous; figures with faded out faces, economically expressed using angular geometric forms and rendered in Schomaker's distinctive, monochromatic palette. Schomaker's process of simplifying the human form is one of simultaneous reduction and expansion, conveying only the essential figurative information in a manner that positions her subjects as mutable and universal beings. The enigmatic quality of Schomaker's figures reflects how she develops her subject matter; never working from a single image, she instead locates her subjects within a complex nexus of imagery – photographs, drawings, music, text – amassed as both a physical archive and transitory memories. This new body of work is, unusually for Schomaker, populated by pairs of figures. Two people commune around a chess board, yet the artist still imbues the works with a sense of solitude. Schomaker's figures remain caught up in their own internal logics, which is heightened in her depictions of a horse and its rider. The animal is not necessarily real, but a synergetic energy that strengthens and grounds the figure.

Schomaker's figures lack a fixed visual reference point and only emerge in the process of painting, being better understood as phantasmagorical assemblages of infinite fragments than individual beings. She refers to the people within her work as 'icons' – maintaining a symbolic value that situates them outside of a singular reality. These subjects shift in and out of focus, often foregrounded by the

artist's mark-making process. Passages of dense, dark oil paint are partially layered over skeletal charcoal underdrawing, with defined boundaries between flatness and depth revealing Schomaker's complex working methods.

If Schomaker's subjects find their form through the process of painting, they only become known through the process of looking. Each viewer is invited to commune with her figures and locate a personal narrative within their quasi-abstracted forms. The exhibition's title, referring to the Perseid meteor shower, relates to Schomaker's notion that abstraction offers a unique potential for creative encounters between viewer and image. The natural phenomenon of the Perseids represents a moment outside of our quotidian experiences of time and place, which is at once intelligible but inaccessible and inconceivable. For Schomaker, this confrontation with something greater than ourselves mirrors what she pertains to in her own practice, which attempts to visualise experiences connected to, but ultimately beyond, our own reality.

The exhibition also includes a series of landscapes on panel, rendered in inky blacks and dark greens, Schomaker seeks to evoke the uncanny, other-worldly atmosphere at the transition from the diurnal to the nocturnal. Sitting alongside Schomaker's figurative scenes they work to resolutely assert the connectivity between human, animal and environment – with all subject matter treated with equal reverence.

Schomaker, born 1973, studied at the Muthesius University of Fine Arts and Design, Kiel, before continuing her studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bergen and Trondheim. Schomaker has participated in several national exhibitions, including at the Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, in 2007 and 2010, and at Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt in 2013. The following year she participated at the Mediations Biennale in Poznan, Poland. She previously exhibited with Huxley-Parlour in 2021, with her solo presentation *in secret kept/ in silence sealed*. Schomaker's work is now held in numerous public and private collections, including the Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, Germany and Deutsche Bank collections. She lives and works in Berlin.

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HUXLEY-PARLOUR

45 Maddox Street, London W1S 2PE

Opening Hours Monday to Friday, 10:00am - 5:30pm

Saturdays, 10:00am - 1:00pm

Entry is free

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

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