

In Three Acts

28th April – 27th May 2023

Katelyn Eichwald
Oliver Mulvihill
Stephen Polatch
Sophie Ruigrok
Rafal Topolewski



CHANGED, BUT NOT ENOUGH (2023)
SOPHIE RUIGROK

Huxley-Parlour are pleased to announce *In Three Acts*, a group exhibition that presents the work of five international artists and is accompanied by a piece of narrative fiction, written in three acts, by Estelle Hoy.

This exhibition turns conceptually around the number three: a historically magical number that retains a certain hold in contemporary practice. Classic storytelling structure is divided into three acts: the first act introduces characters and the world they inhabit, this is followed by rising action and conflict in the second act and resolution in the third. Exposition, confrontation, denouement. It is this three-act structure that provides the intellectual framework for this exhibition.

In Three Acts is not, however, an exhibition about characters, the portrayal of events, action or conflict. It is about the slippages between those things that artists use to conjure narrative. The exhibition embraces non-linear and fluid approaches to story-telling, placing emphasis on narrative potential, ambiguity, sequence and implication.

The five participating artists present responses to the three acts of classical storytelling structure. Oliver Mulvihill's suite of three still life paintings bear witness to time passing: objects reappear in each painting transformed by time and handling. Each successive composition reveals fruit that ripens before rotting, a singular flower that blooms and wilts, and possessions that migrate into packing boxes.

Katelyn Eichwald and Stephen Polatch each present a pair of works, both of which holds a duality balanced between the intimate and the imagined. The pairings hang in unresolved suspension, leaving space for the viewer to generate their own connections.

Three works on canvas by Rafal Topolewski and Sophie Ruigrok's three works on paper explore the way networks of images interact. Rafal Topolewski's work looks to symbolism and superstition, and how each carries multiple, and context driven, meanings. Ruigrok's triptych presents an evolving, ambiguous sequence where fragmentary and ethereal narratives are played out.

Copies of 'Three Seasons', by Estelle Hoy, a work of fiction based on the works in the exhibition, are available in the gallery.

Artist Biographies

Katelyn Eichwald (b. 1987) makes paintings heavy with narrative possibility. Taking screenshots from television, film and other media as her departure points, Eichwald removes her source material from its linear, sequential context by cropping, reducing and isolating elements. Eichwald balances narrative tension with a sinister feeling of suspense or concealment.

Oliver Mulvihill (b. 1989) playfully disrupts the tradition of still life in his work. His compositions, produced using oil or egg tempera, depict familiar objects treated as characters in a surreal drama. The result is humorously unobjective, yet with a tangible sense of narrative.

Stephen Polatch (b. 1990) dissolves both time and hierarchy of imagery in his intimately scaled work. By employing a wide range of historical references, Polatch denies a chronological reading of his work, allowing instead for multiple epochs to exist simultaneously in each composition. Scenes have their own consistent, if not fluid, internal logic and ontology.

Sophie Ruigrok (b. 1992) takes inspiration from disparate sources including found objects, religious iconography, art-historical motifs as well as her own personal experience and staged photographs. The resulting constellation of imagery coalesces into non-linear narratives, as the minutiae of bodily com unions and intimate, tactile moments are made theatrical, their significance amplified through repetition.

Rafal Topolewski's (b. 1983) work is a personal investigation of dream states and the liminal space between sleeping and waking. Topolewski's painterly investigation of his own private consciousness utilises incomplete repetition and broken sequencing in order to convey disorientation and disrupt rationality.

