

The Silver Cord

06 December 2024 - 18 January 2025



Feral III, 2024
Sholto Blissett

Madeleine Bialke, Sholto Blissett, Damien H. Ding, Tommy Harrison, Asif Hoque, Rachel Howard, Ridley Howard, Sonia Jia, Kathryn Lynch, Marin Majić, Laura Noguera, James Owens, Nina Silverberg, Neil Raitt, Dittmar Viane, Romane de Watteville, Suyi Xu

Huxley-Parlour are pleased to announce *The Silver Cord*, a new exhibition presenting works by seventeen international artists, opening across our Swallow Street and Maddox Street galleries in December 2024. Exploring the role of the fantastical and the imaginary in contemporary painting, the artists included in the exhibition investigate the idealisation of the natural, alternative visual worlds, and the potency of the fictional.

As the title suggests, the paintings in the exhibition explore the metaphysical, presenting mutations of commonplace objects, memory, prosaic normality and the ephemeral or intangible. While their subjects are anchored in reality, the works hover at the boundary between the familiar and the alien. The artists seek to transport the viewer beyond the everyday, constructing proxy realms by transforming our own, and moving beyond the physical restraints of the present. In harnessing the power of the imaginary, the artists present, in myriad ways, an abstracted, augmented, and at times surreal, sensory experience.

In the work of Suyi Xu, Tommy Harrison, Rachel Howard and Romane de Watteville, the artists bring together overlapping and divergent references to create spaces with a familiarity, yet imagined in new ways. Suyi Xu takes as a point of departure architectural and geometric forms that replicate and reform themselves to assemble liminal spheres that speak to the spirituality of the Sublime. Her depictions reach towards the utopic, offeringsitesoftransformationinwhichtheviewerisabletoreconsidertheirengagement with physical space. Similarly, Tommy Harrison constructs his compositions intuitively, responding to configurations that emerge through a prolonged process of mark-making. Borrowing from diverse influences, from the High Renaissance to the present day, his works resolve into uncanny interiors and mysterious landscapes. British artist Rachel Howard draws from the flatness of the painterly surface to manifest spaces that blur dimensional boundaries. Planes of colour, suggestive of drapery, hint at vast interiors and the possibilities of what remains hidden just beyond them. Romane de Watteville engages with an ambiguity of space, suffusing her work with a multiplicity through the collaging of disparate iconography from set designs and trompe l'oeil to typography. Fragmenting each and creating optical puns along the way, Romane de Watteville's layered approach proposes a reinterpretation of the history of visual culture.

While these artists reconfigure the vernacular, the work of Asif Hoque, Ridley Howard and Dittmar Viane edges towards the surreal, in a process of worldbuilding that invites the viewer into alternate realms. Asif Hoque draws from his own experience, marrying Bengal traditions with Western Classicism. In his fantastical worlds mythological figures harmoniously coalesce with ethereal landscapes. Ridley Howard's paintings are imbued with a sense of monumentality, where flatness and vastness are entangled. His figures linger, never quite settling into their imagined settings. Belgian artist Dittmar Viane is influenced by the traditions of the Northern Renaissance; his imagery is replete with motifs that juxtapose and contradict each other in a playful examination of illusion and the absurd.

Narrative plays into the work of Marin Majić, Damien H. Ding, Sonia Jia and Nina Silverberg, often revealing itself in the expression of internal logics and psychologies of isolation. Using an array of materials, Marin Majić creates his richly textured canvases that situate his figures entangled in oneiric expanses. Laden with distilled narratives, his paintings contemplate themes of intimacy, isolation and power. Chinese artist Sonia Jia works with a reduced colour palette to produce evocative paintings that rely on memory and the intimacy of personal experiences to record otherwise overlooked and mundane moments, and locate them within the universal. Nina Silverberg's abstracted, repeated shapes become sites through which the artist explores the relationship between interior and exterior worlds. She looks to generate places of sanctuary, which are at once melancholic and empowering, to proffer mechanisms for coping with our contemporary condition. Brooklyn-based artist Damien H. Ding's work similarly invites the viewer into transitional, revelatory spaces. Often suggestive of the devotional in their scale and framing, his paintings provide an attempt to find stillness and articulate internal emotions.

In the work of Laura Noguera and James Owens, story-telling is revealed through symbolism. Laura Noguera's canvases often return to candles, chairs and snakes in an extended investigation of these icons. The artist's works reject a singular narrative and invite tension through ambiguity and the surreal. James Owens' large-scale paintings collapse temporal frameworks, gathering past and present together to conjure new

narratives. His depictions of natural forms comment on the cyclical nature of time, allowing decay and regeneration to coexist, and in so doing reshaping our perception of both.

In their emphasis of Romanticism and the phenomenological, Sholto Blissett and Kathryn Lynch endeavour to convey something of the transcendental and supranatural in their landscapes. Sholto Blissett's fantastical scenes depict expansive natural environments marked by imagined monuments and topiary that indicate human presence and our impulse to sculpt the natural to our own ends. American artist Kathryn Lynch doesn't seek to render specific locations, rather through a simplification of the formal aspects of her paintings, she reproduces the atmospheric qualities of place. The natural landscape is fertile ground from which Neil Raitt's practice considers the painterly potential of line and form. Celebrating kitsch and the traditions of outsider art, Raitt's highly stylised landscapes depict idealised replicas of the real. Cacti meet ice-capped mountains, sunflowers root themselves in dense forest, as the tessellating elements point to their own artificiality. Raitt invites the viewer to scrutinise the possibilities of artistic production in the digital age. While Madeleine Bialke's landscapes are grounded in the real, she arranges her subject matter into bands of colour; skies appear pink, purple, orange and blue, anthropomorphic trees are built up in thick layers of yellows, reds, greens and other shades that lend her work an otherworldly quality. Her supple forms confer softness to the work, from which we are able to re-evaluate lived experience.

Working across still-lives, landscape and imagined scenes, the artists featured in *The Silver Cord* experiment with the potentialities of the medium and the formal qualities of painting in order to depict their subject matter in ever changing and inventive renderings. They create worlds that negate the restraints of reality and offer us new ways of seeing.

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Private view 05 December, 6–8 pm

HUXLEY-PARLOUR

3–5 Swallow Street, London W1B 4DE

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45 Maddox Street, London W1S 2PE

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

Saturdays, 10:00am - 5:30pm

Entry is free

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