

MADELYNN GREEN***MIRROR MIRROR***

Solo Show

English version

Opening: Thursday May 4th 2023, 5-8pm**Exhibition: From May 5th to June 2nd 2023**

In *Mirror Mirror*, Madelynn Green presents a body of new paintings that situate mirrors as sites of literal and figurative reflection; and as gateways for transcending perception. While reminiscing on her solo exhibitions *Dolls* and *Birth of a Star*, both with Almine Rech, Madelynn Green noticed a surprising visual motif threading through her paintings of crowds, domestic scenes and beauty rituals: mirrors. For *Mirror Mirror*, she isolated this motif to create paintings that interrogate the relationship between sight and being seen. How can paintings invite illusion? How do mirrors alter perception? What does it mean to truly see and be seen? Madelynn Green pulls from memory, drawings, personal photo archives and her experiences in Switzerland to craft works that explore the nuanced relationship between reflection and perception via a range of lush, imaginative compositions. All works for *Mirror Mirror* were made during Madelynn Green's four-week residency with Galerie Mighele Shama in Geneva.

Mirrors are ubiquitous. We open our laptops and see our faces in black mirrors. We walk past empty storefronts and surreptitiously check our outfits. While driving, we glance in rearview mirrors to see what we left behind. Mirrors hold significance for nonartists and artists alike. And there are infinite surfaces ripe for reflection. Madelynn Green plays with this reality in *Looking Glass*, wherein a screen's shrunken face refracts against prosecco. This illustrates how often reflections deviate from source images—foregrounding the infinite possibilities of distortion and of self. *Steep Mountain* offers two visages: a snow-capped Mount Rainier and a figure in a side mirror. This intricate arrangement breeds a quiet intimacy between subject and object—allowing us to be both seer and seen. With this broadening of the painting's scope, Madelynn Green asks us to consider the limitations and possibilities of sight. *Mirror Lake* takes us to the Adirondack Mountains, where natural mirrors amplify the vastness of nature, and reminds us that nature was our first mirror. We have long been eager to expand our perceptions: Before mirrors were man-made, prehistoric humans would collect water in vessels to see their reflections.

Beyond nature, man-made mirrors abound in *Mirror Mirror*. The black-and-white still-life *Smoke and Mirrors* sets nostalgic trinkets before a mirror and a family photograph. American physician and poet Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. dubbed the photograph a "mirror with a memory." The mirror and photograph in *Smoke and Mirrors* reinforce the fact that each can distort reality—by forging illusions or by capturing fleetingly pristine moments. And *Reflection* exhibits the depth that mirrors add to paintings. This self-reflexive work depicts the artist drawing a room within a room, calling into question where in this painting the truth actually lies. By considering the complexity of mirrored compositions, Madelynn Green literalizes the illusory nature of perception, ultimately positioning us as both mirror and mirrored.

Paintings can be mirrors. Both are surfaces that reflect broader worlds. And like paintings, mirrors are communicative tools. Placing literal mirrors inside of paintings adds a rich dimension. In *Kerry James Marshall: History of Painting* (2019) critic Hal Foster reiterates

the concept of the “meta-picture”: an image or painting that is self-aware vis-à-vis its inclusion of other images, embedded portraits or mirrors. According to Foster, “The meta-picture foregrounds its own making.” Similarly, the works in *Mirror Mirror* break the fourth wall of the artmaking process; making literal the artist’s conceptual strategies by unveiling the mosaic nature of influence and thinning the line between content and form. Historical examples of meta-pictures include Diego Velázquez’s *Las Meninas* and Édouard Manet’s *Un bar aux Folies Bergère*. The paintings in *Mirror Mirror* stem from this 17th century Dutch tradition of using reflection to widen paintings’ spatial possibilities. The works also spotlight the seductive and illusory nature of paint itself; its rich sheen and texture are nods to the allure of mirrored surfaces.

“Mirror” is a verb and a noun. By exploring the action and the object, Madelynn Green encourages us to more deeply contemplate our connections to the world. Mirrors in paintings also force us to consider what lies opposite a mirror: us. Furthermore, mirrors refract lines of sight, calling to question what is and is not represented. But mirrors also widen possibilities: paintings are housed within borders, but they can carry worlds. The show’s title is a phrase made famous by the *Snow White* fairytale, wherein a mirror was not a static object but a dynamic being. By exploring multiple mirror forms, Madelynn Green asks us to consider our engagement with art, with our surroundings and with ourselves. We cannot escape reflections. They are our laptops, our wine glasses, our framed photographs and our glistening lakes. Mirrors offer infinite perspectives; they transcend, elude, reveal and invite. Mirrors possess strange magic. It is the magic that made Narcissus fall in love with his reflection; the magic that convinced the Romans that a broken mirror meant bad luck; the magic that inspired fairy tales. With her wondrous and singular vision in *Mirror Mirror*, Madelynn Green captures this magic and more.

Leila Renee