

44 *Ah, This!*

Marietta Mavrokordatou, Polys Peslikas, Sarah Rapson,
George Tourkopoulos
Curated by Helena Papadopoulou

My studies in photography—“reading” and “writing”—began in France when I was already 25 years old. A late diagnosis of an “illness” that I seem to have developed young. There must be many who suffer from the same disease: being photographers without knowing it, tormented for a lifetime by a sensitive eye left unsatisfied, all because they never chanced to take a camera in their hands and gain consciousness of the power that hides behind their gaze. This kind of thing isn’t strange in Greece, where the language of photography is merely mumbled—we can’t really say that it’s articulated. I had to find myself in Paris to learn to read and write photographically!

– George Toukopoulos, excerpt from his text *Self-Presentation*, published in *Zygos*, May–June 1980

[There are joules, jewels, Julys]

Wherever you put a comma in a room, that’s its center. There are commas separating these photographs—like hot neurons or the quick change in feeling when you pass through a slice of shade. Punctuation is more liquid than you think. A walk is one sentence. The photographer places commas as she proceeds, the one she’s capturing pays attention or not at all; the sentence structure of their walk imitates the glowing fog of light it’s in; the commas dilate and become tiny heirs of this pictured friendship, its sleepy conduction through the street. One comma and she is nuanced—nubes, Latin for clouds—one more comma and she is a numen of light that has a tendency for sleep, another comma and arms, legs, and bellies dissolve either from heat or an extremity of glow.

– Penelope Ioannou, excerpt from her text accompanying *Our Misfortune*, Marietta Mavrokordatou’s exhibition at A Thousand Julys, Nicosia, 15 September–18 November 2022.

Am I completely derailed or did the anonymous one-sentence mention of Rapson’s show in New York magazine just turn into a poem? There is something contagious about these moments when Rapson starts editing references not to inflate their meaning and expose their arbitrariness but to suspend perception of the present, when this tiny two-dimensional world starts spinning to transgress into a soft, semi-hallucination carrying you somewhere else, I am thinking while listening to Drake melting his baritone range with the acoustic guitar, reaching out to us one last time before his overdose from antidepressants: “You know that I love you/You know that I don’t care/You know that I see you/You know I’m not there.”

– Pujan Karambeigi, excerpt from *Poets and Artfans*, his review of Sarah Rapson’s 2019 solo exhibition *Sell the House* at Essex Street, New York, published in the December 2019 issue of *Texte zur Kunst*.

His painting, for example, orbits traditional genres (the male nude, the portrait, the still-life) at the same time that it gravitates towards typically homoerotic themes (the man in uniform, the satyr, the erectile phallus). These he approaches with a strong interest in the history of art, especially painting, and with reference to the “greats” of the western canon of his received art education. It is a lesson he has since decentred by conscientiously turning to women artists (to Marlene Dumas and Rosemary Trockell repeatedly), and to examples of artists

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from the supposed periphery—to the Greek painter Yannis Tsarouchis (especially), to the Cypriot painter Andreas Karayian (obsessively)—in the search for aesthetic articulations of (queer) desire.

[...]

I think of the sensuous washes of his brushwork as emulation of the murkiness of the technologically produced surface on the canvas, although I am aware that the liquid layers of paint are a metaphorical reference to bodily fluids—spit, sweat, sperm, tears—and part of his conscious attempt to debunk the significance of skill in painting and deviate from the demand for a highly finished result.

– Elena Parpa, excerpt from her text *Notes on And leaned shoulder against the window*, published on the occasion of Polys Peslikas' solo exhibition at Radio Athènes, May-July 2023