



Rike Droescher and Zoe Koke
THE SERPENT'S TAIL

10 October - 18 November, 2023
27 Warren Street
W1T 5NB London

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In *the serpent's tail*, artists Rike Droescher and Zoe Koke draw on ancient references, represented by the *Ouroboros*, an archetypal symbol of a serpent eating its own tail. Traced back to Ancient Egypt, the symbol cycled between various spiritual and mythological traditions, forging a ubiquitous meaning of perpetuity. By questioning linear narratives, the exhibition is a collection of overlapping memories and experiences, doubts and urges. The artists approach the work with a fractal glance on humanity's technological achievements as well as on its fragility.

Blurring timecodes of contemporary and primordial worlds, Droescher and Koke build two distinct scenarios divided by floors in the gallery, where they focus on the human-nature relationship, with its remnants of culture and technology as well as evidence of optimism, grief and destruction. On the ground floor, the artists construct a bright and vibrant environment: Koke's luminous landscapes offer atmospheric optimism, while Droescher's sculptures point to natural rhythms, forces and human mediation. While gleaming apple-shaped ceramic sculptures evoke the biblical tree of the forbidden fruit as the breaking point between eternal and mortal life, Koke's paintings are a hymn to a flourishing nature, dreamscapes of an Edenic primordial world. In the lower floor of the gallery, as if transitioning from light to darkness, Koke's restless landscapes conjure a counterpoint to Droescher's dormant remains of human domination. The artworks engage the viewer, guiding and disrupting their path, by occupying and reshaping the space. Here, nature is sinister, the paintings depict fire and gas, architecture and objects are outlines of an abandoned place of refuge. Thus, the exhibition space turns into an upside-down world where the relationship between humans and nature is characterized by conflict rather than proximity. There is a dialogue between the two fictional environments of the exhibition, wherein they activate an energetic stream of dialectic perceptions and feelings, – asking how human survival and evolution continues to move backwards, as well as forwards, remaining both in flux and unknown.

Across a shifting landscape, the artists weave a tortuous path around questions of humanity – from the mysticism and magic of the primordial era, to the crisis of contemporary times – they ponder the bond between human beings and their surroundings as a continuous conversation about power. Droescher and Koke attempt to reshape and tailor new landscapes and spaces as a matter of bodily experience.

Text developed in conversation with Art Historian Ilaria Monti

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Zoe Koke (b. 1989) lives and works in Los Angeles (US). She holds an MFA from University of California, Los Angeles (2019) and a BFA from Concordia University, Montréal (2013). Past group exhibitions include *Re/flux*, Patel Brown Gallery, Toronto (2022); *Fever Dream*, One Trick Pony, Los Angeles (2021); *Doesn't whine by blue moon*, Ochi Projects, Los Angeles (2021), among others. Selected two person exhibits include *Agony/Serendipity* (2023) and *Made to Look Natural* (2018) at Smart Objects, Landers, CA; and *Forced air: les ventilateurs* at Les Territoires, Montréal (2015).

Rike Droescher (b.1990) lives and works in Dusseldorf (DE). She graduated in 2020 from the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, having studied in the classes of Professor Andres Gursky, Alexandra Bircken, and Peter Piller. Solo exhibitions include *Since The First Branch In The Hand*, Atelier am Eck, Düsseldorf (2023), *If You Call Me I Won't Be Home*, Palatulul Mogosoia, Bucharest (2022), *The Big Murrur*, Moltkerei Werkstatt, Cologne (2022) and *Participation Trophy - Mur Brut*, Kunsthalle Dusseldorf, Dusseldorf (2021). Her work featured in group exhibitions at Kunsthaus Essen, Essen (2023); Muzeul National al Hartilor si Cartii Vechi, Bucharest (2022); Fuhrwerkswaage, Cologne (2022); K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Dusseldorf (2021); Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck (2021) and Goethe-Institut de Paris, Paris (2017), amongst others. She is the recipient of Stiftung Kunstfonds's scholarship (2023), and Art Award for Sculpture of Diaconia Michaelshoven Cologne (2022) and was awarded the Bronner Residency in Tel Aviv (2023) and the Düsseldorf Ministry of Culture's Residency in Bucharest (2022).

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Alice Amati is a contemporary art gallery established in Fitzrovia in June 2023. The gallery is committed to fostering artists at the early stages of their career by often providing the opportunity for their first solo show in the city and a supportive context for artistic explorations and career development. Concerned with encouraging transnational dialogues around topical questions within society and art, Alice Amati brings together British and International artists through a challenging, experimental and rigorous exhibitions programme. Joining a cohort of young and established galleries in the burgeoning artistic scene of Fitzrovia, Alice Amati operates as a platform for new voices in the contemporary global artistic scene with a strong commitment to research, collaboration and diverse practices.

For more information, sales enquiries, interview and image requests please contact: info@aliceamati.com