

Meliksetian MB Briggs

EDITORIAL



Alex Heilbron's Apophenia

September 26, 2023

The exhibition takes its title from apophenia, an early symptom of schizophrenia in which a person begins to draw connections between seemingly unrelated phenomena. Troubled by a disorder of the altogether essential process of meaning making, the apophenic no longer discriminates between the contingent and the intentional. Alex Heilbron comes to see a “pattern” in the undeniable recurrence or logic within the “wallpaper” or “background” of everyday life. Applied to Heilbron’s work, the symptom suggests an aesthetic preoccupation with pattern, a genre intended to resolve into the background, but instead is the protagonist in her work.

The exhibition is a continuation of Heilbron’s deployment of pattern on the surface of the canvas as a register of cultural ideals of femininity. The exhibition marks a development in her work informed by a technical shift from an entirely manual process of masking to a mixed process incorporating computer-controlled elements.

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Drawing inspiration from her visit at the John F. Kennedy Memorial Plaza and The George W. Bush Presidential Library in Dallas, Texas, Heilbron incorporates associations from ruptures in American history. Her new patterned paintings are contaminated by the fall-out of an event, as in *Depository* and *Expectations and results*, which diagram the Chanel suit worn by Jackie Onassis in the motorcade. Blood is suggestively encoded in twee red icons clustered areas of intensity, proliferating symbols, references, and gestures. See *Apophenic* at Meliksetian | Briggs on view until October 28th.

- excerpted text from Nilo Goldfarb

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“Alex Heilbron’s new body of work is anchored in one of the most controversial historical events of the twentieth century: the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Heilbron invites us to reflect on the ephemera surrounding this event, ranging from public documents to witness statements. Through this reflection, she utilizes painting’s subversive power in depicting and questioning historical truths.”

– Marie de Brugerolle on Heilbron’s work.

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“Movie stars and icons are surfaces to project on. People talked about John and Jackie Kennedy’s faces; which were constructions of rehearsed and expected expressions. The gunman’s second shot shatters this smooth image, Kennedy’s skull explodes, Jackie’s expression panicked. This rupture brings us face to face with reality. Heilbron goes beyond re- enactment or newsreel: she transforms, literally before our eyes, the fleeting images into a threshold to something else. This something else, which takes form on the canvas, is painting in action; moving and oscillating.”

– Marie de Bruggerolle