

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Pierre-Alexandre Mateos, "Jill Mulleady," *Flash Art*, Summer 2016

FLASH ART

REVIEWS

Jill Mulleady

Gaudel De Stampa / Paris

Behind a thick door off Quai des Grands Augustins, the Paris gallery presented a new series of works by Jill Mulleady in a space that was once the annex of Lapérouse, a historical restaurant renowned for its *parties fines* in the nineteenth century, and later as the playground setting of Yves Klein's anthropometric experiments. Thus, it is a space haunted by a ritualistic physicality that obliquely reflects Mulleady's universe, in which languishing bodies seem possessed, ecstatic or emaciated under the influence of obscure gravitational pulls.

In one painting (*It's funny how the colors of the real world only seem real when you watch them on a screen*, 2016), an indolent human form is draped gibbet-like on a computer in equilibrium. Enthroning an overly green Arcadian landscape and fantastic creatures, the inert body dominates docile corpses and bestial assaults: Bosch's *The Garden of Earthly Delights* meets Octave Mirbeau's *The Torture Garden*. A dimorphic self-portrait (*Selfportrait*, 2016) presents the artist's face in a languorous cohabitation with a snake that evokes a pair of red lips, perhaps those of Elizabeth Short, killed as a macabre tribute to Man Ray. A third painting (*Sex Murder*, 2016) depicts a contorted body falling from a bed. Sliced open from chest to hips, an army of eupatrid eyes are revealed under glabrous skin.

Bodies are here traversed and overwhelmed by uncontrollable intensities. Not frankly neutralized, not totally libidinous, they are devoured by hermetic celebration, guided by desires that become fatal. Other enigmatic scenes occupy the floor, like the large chainmail that covers a transparent ball and, a few meters away, a coiled candlestick that suffuses the space with esoteric symbolism. The ensemble could be read through the lens of Luciferian authors Pierre Klossowski or George Bataille, who both developed a mystic realm of the body beyond societal restrictions: Dionisiac and sadistic, ready to be offered and exalted into the black Sabbath of an unavowable community.

by Pierre-Alexandre Mateos