

Marvin Gaye Chetwynd
Ze & Per

22 February – 07 April 2018
62 Kingly Street, London W1
Tuesday – Saturday, 11 – 6 pm

In her third exhibition at Sadie Coles HQ, Marvin Gaye Chetwynd will present a series of ten new paintings – wall-mounted structures which explode the distinctions between painting, performance, film and sculpture. The works mark a dramatic expansion of Chetwynd's painting practice, substituting the miniature scale of her long-running *Bat Opera* series for a newly expansive and multifarious format. Each structure envelops themes and references from her performances, transforming their temporal sequences into giant relief compositions.



In contrast to previous projects, where appropriated imagery has spread across the surfaces of an entire gallery, Chetwynd's new paintings condense and compress the cacophonous subject-matter of her larger installations within their borders. In the process, painting itself is envisaged as a kind of static and contained performance, but equally as a fluid entity – something to be reconfigured, re-animated or 'performed'. This idea of fluidity – a freeing of the medium from its typical constraints or specifications – is embedded in the show's title, which cites gender-neutral pronouns (Ze, Per) as symbols of inclusiveness and possibility, at once broader and more precise than traditional usages.

Each work has as its basis a large-scale digital print of an historical composition, relating to a previous performance by Chetwynd – whether the blooming garden fresco of Livia's Villa from the first-century BC (which previously formed the backdrop to the performance 'Here She Comes' at the Royal Festival Hall in 2015), or Richard Dadd's feverishly intricate vision of *The Fairy Feller's Master-Stroke* (1855; a nod to her 2003 performance 'Richard Dadd & the Dance of Death' at Tate Britain). Spreading across wooden panels in the style of wallpaper, these enlarged images are overlaid by sculptural objects, including a monstrous rubbery bat and a salamander, akin to the handmade props and costumes that populate Chetwynd's performances. In several instances, she uses the concept of the diorama (literally something to be 'seen through') as a structuring principle, creating a layered iconography of objects and images.

In certain cases, Chetwynd's combination of panoramic scale and visionary imagery evokes the genre of high Romantic painting – in particular the melodramatic canvases of John Martin (1789-1854); her latest paintings in this respect translate the Gothic turbulence of her *Bat Opera* cycle (begun in 2003) onto an ambitious new scale. At the same time, theatrical conventions are signalled and subverted through allusions to the containing structures of the proscenium arch and wings, or to the formula of the *tableau vivant*.

Chetwynd's decision to extend painting into the realm of performance, and vice versa, has grown out of a long series of experiments – most recently her performance 'The Green Room & Science Lab' in Basel (2017) – in which the backdrop to the action has become a vital component of the live performance, volatile and evolving. In some of her new paintings, objects may be removed from the surfaces of the work in the style of props – transferred from the picture plane into 'real life'. The 'painting' is in this way contingent and mutable – a projection of fantasy into reality, and a springboard for improvisation.

Marvin Gaye Chetwynd (b. 1973, London) lives in Glasgow, UK. She has performed and exhibited internationally, and was shortlisted for the Turner Prize in 2012. Recent solo projects include *The Green Room & Science Lab* and *The Panther Ejaculates*, Art Basel Parcours, Basel (both 2017); *Uptight upright, upside down*, CCA Glasgow (2016); *JABBA, I'M BACK!* and *Cocaine and Caviar*, Bergen Assembly, Norway (both 2016); *Doggy Ma Bone*, Liverpool Biennial, UL (2016); *Camshafts in the Rain*, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany (2016); *The King Must Die*, Edinburgh Art Festival, Edinburgh, UK (2015); *Mega Hammer*, Open House Glasgow, UL (2015); *Hermitos Children 2 / Listen Up!*, Studio Voltaire, London (2014); and *The Green Room*, Nottingham Contemporary (2014). Recent group exhibitions include *Coming Out*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (2017); *Doggy Ma Bone* for Tate Exchange, Liverpool Biennial Tour, Tate Modern, London (2017); *Diorama: Invention of Illusion*, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany (2017); and *Room*, Sadie Coles HQ, London, and Mead Gallery, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK (2017). She is represented by Sadie Coles HQ, London; Galleria Massimo de Carlo, Milan; and Gregor Staiger, Zürich.

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