

ATRATA

Press release

Likenesses

Nick Mauss & Megan Francis Sullivan

21 May – 29 October 2022

Atrata, La Roche Posay

Atrata is a new site for exhibitions, production and residencies for artists and writers founded by Gil Presti, co-owner of Campoli Presti. Atrata develops its activities on two different venues. The Villa Atrata, located in La Roche Posay, is deeply intertwined with the river Creuse, and the Middle-Age chapel in the neighbouring village of Angles-sur-l'Anglin appears as an enigmatic fragmented architecture. Both have been carefully repurposed to generate sites for viewing art in direct contact with nature.

For its first iteration, Atrata has invited Nick Mauss to create a large-scale work in the chapel, and Megan Francis Sullivan to exhibit paintings from the series 'The Bathers (Inverted)' in the Villa Atrata. The writer Kristian Vistrup Madsen will be staying at the Villa to respond to these works in residence.

Taking its name from the painting in Francis Picabia's Transparences series, Atrata becomes a sign of what lies outside the realm of normal expectations.

Continuing an ongoing dialogue between Nick Mauss and Megan Francis Sullivan, *Likenesses* is the first time their works are presented in direct conversation. Two distinct attitudes pose questions with regard to the orientation of the viewer.

Painting on the underside of sheets of glass that are subsequently silvered, Mauss captures an estranged line inside the resulting mirror—a line that is entangled with the spatial reality of its changeable reflections and a hyper-awareness of one's own gaze. In this process of built-in delays, shifts, and reversals, the work arises as a fluid framing of the field of vision, interposed by layers.

Sullivan's "Bathers (Inverted)" reiterate Paul Cézanne's figural landscape paintings at 1:1 scale in exacting color negative, inciting a strange cognitive reflex: the works oscillate between their rendered inversion and imagined "positive". Not merely analytical takes, they assert a painterly vitality containing both presence and absence.

These destabilizing maneuvers yield a surprising lushness as they locate and then pierce what Hubert Damisch has identified as "a zero that is not synonymous with the original." At Atrata, Mauss' and Sullivan's works converse across two sites – the radically spare Chapelle St. Croix in Ingles sur L'Anglin, for which Mauss has created a large-scale reverse-painted mirrored mural, and the more intimate Villa Atrata, where Sullivan's "Bathers" confront the omnipresent view of the landscape. The works sensitize dimensions of gesture and touch, and, as the poet Susan Stewart has observed, "touch, like dizziness, is a threshold activity—subjectivity and objectivity come quite close to one another."

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Nick Mauss lives and works in New York. His recent solo exhibitions include *Bizarre Silks, Private Imaginings and Narrative Facts, etc.* at Kunsthalle Basel, *Transmissions* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, and *Intricate Others* at Museo Serralves, Porto. His works are included in numerous public collections, including those of the Whitney Museum, New York; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Lenbachhaus, Munich; M+, Hong Kong; Museo Serralves, Porto; and the Long Museum, Shanghai. His writing has been published most recently in October, May, Artforum, and Octopus Notes. This July, Mauss contributes as an invited artist to the survey exhibition of Christian Bérard at the Nouveau Musée National de Monaco.

Megan Francis Sullivan lives and works in Berlin. Solo presentations have included *Begegnungsbilder* at Neuer Essener Kunstverein, *The Unanswered Question* at Kunsthalle Bern, *Privileged Information* at Mathew, New York, and *Click click space space* at Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis. In 2019 she co-edited a book on Jill Johnston's writings titled *The Disintegration of a Critic*, which was presented in form of an exhibit at Bergen Kunsthall. She is editor of S*I*G, a periodical for singular essays.

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