

Will Sheldon

The Sleepy Château and the Wounded Soldier in the Summertime, Chapter 1

28 August - 28 September 2025
Villa Atrata, Angles-sur-l'Anglin

L'Estropié, Chapter 2

6 September – 4 October 2025
Villa Atrata Palais Royal, Paris

The Sleepy Château and the Wounded Soldier in the Summertime and *L'Estropié* are the two chapters of American artist Will Sheldon's exhibition. Conceived during his summer residency at Villa Atrata, the show features a new series of paintings and is presented simultaneously across our two venues: the first chapter is on view in Angles-sur-l'Anglin, while the second is in Paris.

The title *L'Estropié* is a darkly humorous reference to Will Sheldon's own convalescence during his residency. While recovering from a knee injury, he was inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's *The Oval Portrait* (1842) and Honoré de Balzac's *The Unknown Masterpiece* (1831). Mirroring Poe's narrator, who also suffers from a mysterious wound, Sheldon draws parallels between these two texts, his own temporary physical limitation, and his experience making this body of work in France. In both stories, the pursuit of perfection becomes an obsession: Poe's painter drains the life of his wife into her portrait, while Balzac's master relentlessly chases an unattainable ideal, ultimately collapsing under the weight of his own ambition. Seeking to transcend the natural beauty of their model, each artist is haunted by an image they cannot render. The act of creation consumes both subject and artist, becoming a destructive force at the expense of life itself.

Reflecting on his own experience of enforced passivity under anaesthesia, Sheldon depicts languid figures and shadowed faces, suspended between torpor and tension, as if caught in an eerie stillness. Draperies, gestures, and gazes appear frozen, recalling the immobility of statues. The characters seem bored with the time they are living in, yet their fantasy world appears to float between past and present. The images read as timeless iconography: they evoke traditional painting and Gothic-inspired aesthetics, while incorporating contemporary elements such as artificial lighting reminiscent of television screens or electric bulbs. Having previously worked exclusively with the airbrush, and then with oil, Sheldon now combines both for the first time, merging the historical resonance of oil painting with a modern, mechanical tool. While oil anchors the canvas in classical tradition, the blurred, misty effect created by the airbrush enhances their contemporary appearance.

With these two exhibitions, Sheldon meditates on passivity, vulnerability and obsession. His canvases explore the fragile tension between life and art, stillness and movement, creation and destruction.

Will Sheldon (b. in 1990, Hong Kong) is an American artist who lives and works in New York. Working across painting and drawing, Sheldon is deeply influenced by subculture and fantasy aesthetics. His rich, phantasmagorical world features mysterious characters, hollow-eyed dolls, stormy seas, monochrome figures, empty interiors and imaginary landscapes, often rendered through a disorientating, undulating, and unsettling fever-dream-like vision.

Selected exhibitions: *Season of Miracles*, Heidi, Berlin, 2024; *Thirst of Silence*, C L E A R I N G, Los Angeles, 2024; *Will Sheldon: Drawings*, American Art Catalogue, New York, 2023; *Raffaella*, Company Gallery, New York, 2023; *Luxury Loneliness*, Weiss Falk Galerie, Basel, 2022; *A Maze Zanine*, Amaze Zaning, A-Mezzaning, Meza-9, David Zwirner, New York, 2022; *Mystic May*, The Community, Paris, 2021; *Trouble after Dark*, Team Gallery, New York, 2020; *Crocodile Tears*, curated by Cassidy Toner, SALTS, Basel, 2019; *The Untamed*, curated by Taylor Trabulus, Karma International, Zurich, 2019; *My Deep Secret*, Arcadia Missa, London, 2018; *To Let Things Slide*, curated by Alana Alireza and Kristina Lovaas, Lovaas Projects, Munich, 2017; *Teenscape*, Schloss, Oslo, 2017; *Prick Up Your Ears*, curated by Taylor Trabulus, Karma International, Los Angeles, 2017.