

## GAZELLI ART HOUSE



© Max Prus, *Disturbance on Dover Street*, 2020 , *Net Lurk*, 2020 and © Adam de Boer, *Waiting*, 2021

### *Curtain Twitching*

Adam de Boer, Khaleb Brooks, Max Prus, & Niyaz Najafov

On View: 15th March - 24th April, 2021

Gallery Opening: 12th April, 2021

Months spent itching to get out and pulling at the curtain seams? ‘Curtain Twitching’ appeals to lockdown sensibilities, of looking from the inside out and of intrigue into the lives of others as ours became suddenly narrower. The exhibition presents four different global perspectives from artists; Max Prus, Adam de Boer, Niyaz Najafov and Khaleb Brooks. ‘Curtain Twitching’ explores the divergent backgrounds of the artists and their worlds, visions and points of enquiries.

Max Prus is an artist based in Norfolk, his works depict scenes of everyday life from his immediate surroundings. The artist boldly captures non-narrative visuals, adding intrigue to the mundane. For example, *Net Lurk*, 2020, from which the title of the exhibition originates draws the viewer into a domestic setting and encourages questions such as who is the lurker? What are they observing from behind their net curtain? *Disturbance on Dover Street*, 2020 has a similar effect, the mustard hued armchairs and wooden stool strewn across the high-ceilinged interior is again void of characters but rich in drama. This piece was painted during Max’s residency at The Arts Club last year. Max’s personal frustrations with the forced domesticity of the pandemic is evident in *Cogs Gears* and *Norfolk High Torque*, 2020 and *Omega Point*, 2020 in which the artist imprinted his palms to capture the mounting tension he felt at the time. The majority of Max’s works presented in the exhibition have been produced during the pandemic (2020/21).

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Adam de Boer's laid back Californian and Indonesian surf series represent an alternate world to Max Prus' net-curtained English East Coast, where dusky pink sunsets and surfer girls dominate his canvases. Adam's sun-soaked works are created using batik wax which is then brought to life with misty, dreamy colours. *Sepak Bola (after Vallatton)*, 2020, and *Berenang di Malam*, 2021, transport observers to a seaside village in Jakarta, while *Afternoon Sessions*, *Waiting*, and *Crashing Wave* are infused with an ethereal quality mirroring how the light catches the waves in the late afternoon on the West Coast.

Niyaz Najafov is an Azerbaijani artist living in Paris, his works draw heavily on memories which are closely associated to Soviet times and reflect the day to day lives of people in a similar vein to Max. The works exhibited in 'Curtain Twitching' feature isolated figures in psychologically charged settings, which echo the sentiments many have experienced during the pandemic. In contrast to Adam de Boer's light-infused beachy canvases, Niyaz presents starker scenes at sea in muted and sombre hues. The same sea is interpreted in a myriad of ways.

Khaleb Brooks' *The tides are changing*, 2020 uses the same motif of water to magnify the artist's motivations which incorporate identity politics, exploring blackness, gender and the differences between memory and history. Khaleb's latest series of paintings which are shown in the exhibition aim to revise the Atlantic Slave Trade. The protagonists of the works are half human, half sea-creatures that embody both African diasporic historical connections to water but also aim to position black queer people as both Olookun legends and futuristic beings.

The act of curtain twitching has realigned the way in which society interacts with the world, building an appreciation for its quiet beauty and teaching the art of observance. In a post-pandemic future the mounting intrigue into others' daily lives will open up conversations with wider communities, leading to greater acceptance of differing ways of life and opinions.

## About the Gallery

Gazelli Art House is a commercial gallery with a wide range of international artists, presenting a broad and dynamic programme to a diverse audience through global public projects and exhibition spaces in London and Baku. Gazelli Art House was founded in 2003 in Baku, Azerbaijan where it held exhibitions with Azeri artists. Having hosted conceptually interlinked off-site exhibitions across London, founder and director of Gazelli Art House, Mila Askarova, opened a permanent space on Dover Street, London in March 2012. In 2017, the redesigned gallery space reopened in Baku, with an ambitious annual program showcasing both local and international artists. Representing artists Aziz+Cucher, Derek Boshier, Khaleb Brooks, Stanley Casselman, Perle Fine, Francesco Jodice, Recycle Group, Kalliopi Lemos, Niyaz Najafov and Giovanni Ozzola amongst others, the gallery has built a consistent and diverse program with artists working in sculpture, photography, painting, video, performance and virtual reality.

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