

## LA MAISON DE RENDEZ-VOUS

*Glass Man* visits Duddell's in Hong Kong for the opening of *Another Pair of Eyes*, curated by Japanese artist Yutaka Inagawa and featuring works from the collection of Jehan Chu, Michael Xufu Huang, William Lim and Cindy Chua-Tay ↓



UNTITLED (2017) NICK MAUSS, GOUACHE, ACRYLIC, PASTEL ON PAPER, PARTIALLY MIRRORED GLASS, 54 x 74.3 CM ©NICK MAUSS, COURTESY OF 303 GALLERY, NEW YORK

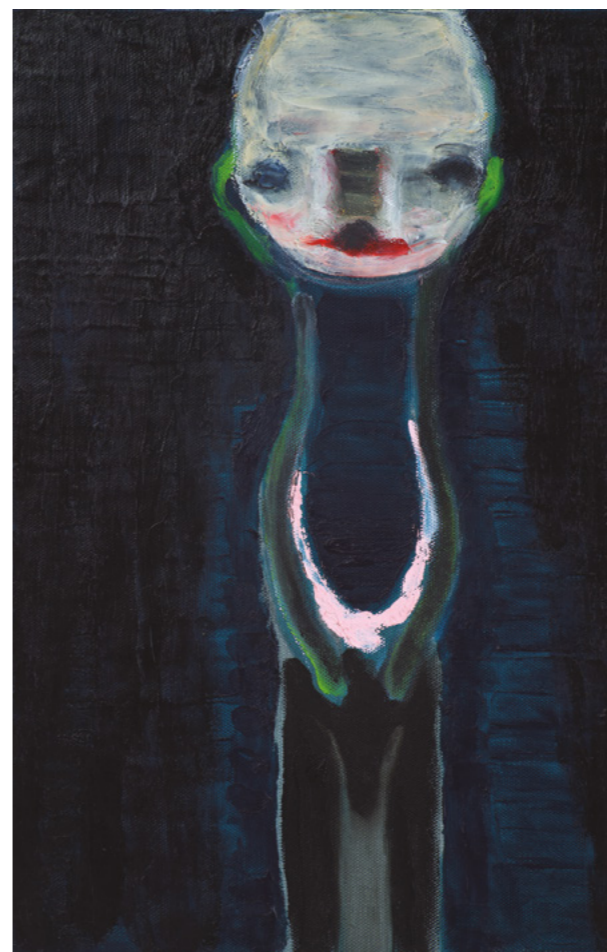
"There is no reality outside the images we see." Godfather to the 1960s school of new novelists Alain Robbe-Grillet proclaimed so, calling less for a howling retreat into the dark of the philosopher's cave, but rather urging a dare-devilish challenge to remain with the picture, where one used to long for the story. You wouldn't go for the cave, either, if there was a villa on offer. As such, *Another Pair of Eyes* shares with the writer's notoriously open ended narrative masterpiece *La Maison de Rendez-Vous* more than just the location, Hong Kong, and at tumultuous times too. It has to be said that Duddell's, founded by Yenn Wong is neither museum nor gallery, but an inspiring culture hub where ideas are shared and developed, and art and people are connecting in a purposefully coincidental way;

and it is a decidedly more classy meeting place than Lady Ava's notorious blue halfway house.

Yet of both holds that time seems to scramble beyond the doorstep, scenes dissolve into each other and art works come to life. Naturally a little bit more literally so in the writer's world, which unfolds over the course of one evening, with the events of that night recurring repeatedly, as seen from the perspectives of different characters. Instead of the novella's shady proceedings however, Duddell's is a cultural safe-house with a year-round art programme spearheaded by some of today's cultural pacemakers. Suffice it to catch the name of Ilse Crawford to be in charge of interior architecture and design to know which tongue of stripped back luxurious refinement is spoken here.

Consequently, the atmosphere is that of an invitation to a great art collector's home, complemented by an in-house Michelin-starred Cantonese chef, 2000 square feet of Garden Terrace, artisanal cocktails and a notion of vintage champagne, each and every detail making the suspense of disbelief just a little bit more delicious when handing reality in to the cloakroom just behind the front door.

Yet the kaleidoscopic journey that curating artist Yutaka Inagawa holds in store would be well worth the visit even without the exquisite surroundings. Just as Robbe-Grillet created an uncanny piece of literature that tackles notions of subjectivity, fictionality and what constitutes a story, Inagawa spins a delightful tale of an artistic encounter of strangers on a train here. Take the near life-size c-prints by Marlo Pascual. The



UNTITLED (2005) IZUMI KATO, OIL ON CANVAS, 39.6 x 51CM, PHOTO: COW CHUN YUEN LAU

artist starts out from found photography and film material when creating picture-based sculptures, addressing the relationship between the viewer and the object as well as the terms of their encounter, twisting the audience's arm visually into an acute sense of place. As if taking a stroll through an open plan cabinet of curiosities, this feels five hundred miles, or three steps, from the geometric cool of Clare Rojas' shapes on linen.

A trace of Popova far from home, and yet the two works talk to each other through the viewer's eyes. Another connection made that would probably not have happened that way in a white cube hang. Much to the contrary, Inagawa joins the loose ends of collecting contemporary art, the direction of a well thought-through restaurant and the curation of an art show and looks upon them



UNTITLED (2016) CLARE ROJAS, OIL ON LINEN, 46 x 41 x 4 CM, COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND KAVI GUPTA, CHICAGO



UNTITLED (2015) MARLO PASCUAL, TWO DIGITAL C-PRINTS MOUNTED ON PLEXIGLAS WITH SINTRA BACKING, 152.4 x 79.8 CM, PHOTO: JEAN VONG

as acts of mapping our world, comprising many-layered structures and sources that draw equally on past, present and future. One of the most convincing arguments for this approach is the ease of the blockbusters in this show when they have to take their place amongst lesser names without the question of a hierarchy or regional belonging even arising.

Naoya Hatakeyama's *Blast*, Nick Mauss's gouache on glass, Dexter Dalwood, a Russian doll souvenir, and studies for a water tab fixture by William Lim, they are all dining from the same table here, so to speak. And there is Cindy Sherman too, and Rachel Whiteread with 24 aluminium switches. *Another Pair of Eyes* is an experiment that calls in external loans and matches them with Duddell's existing elements: paintings, prints, photography, sculptures

and personal objects from private collections are placed together to interact with the dishes, tableware and furniture, all coming together for an immersive cultural experience. The curator describes the process as one of juggling with many elements and aspects, creating a dialogue between artwork and the architectural characteristics and décor. Yet the plot wouldn't be complete without the guests of the house taking on the role not only of mere spectators, but protagonists, bringing their own stories and histories and making them part of the experience. It might be harder than we thought to return back to reality outside the images after all.

OLIVER KRUG

*Another Pair of Eyes* is on show at Duddell's Hong Kong until March 8, 2020