

## HESSE FLATOW

### Aglaé Bassens

#### ***Sincerely,***

*"Soon, objects take form and fall into place; in a little while, the vigorous, firm totality appears, and one tastes real pleasure in contemplating this bright, serious painting, which yields up nature with a sweet brutality."*

- Emile Zola, writing on Edouard Manet, 1867

Hesse Flatow is pleased to present ***Sincerely,*** new paintings by **Aglaé Bassens**. For her second solo exhibition with the gallery, Bassens continues her focus on cropped still life compositions.



Bassens' paintings retain the quality of a snapshot, a quick photo messaged to a friend. Her view lights on things that are crumpled, discarded, on the brink of collapse: a broken, half-opened umbrella, a dropped cigarette still glowing, languishing roses drooped over in their vase. Through Bassens' eyes, the overlooked becomes both entrancing and precious. Things that are momentary and fleeting become weighted with significance.

Smoke, shadows, and water are of particular focus in the exhibition. Bassens' loose, graceful brushwork captures her views shifting and flowing - the fluidity of her touch mirroring the fluidity of her subjects. In one painting, pigment separates with the rain on a windshield. In another, a calligraphic swirl of smoke drifts from a just-extinguished candle.

The shifting motifs and scale are typical of Bassens' painting practice, which looks at the see-saw dynamics between the psychological and the physical world. Ranging from brief intimate glances to immersive painted surfaces, *Sincerely,* delves into motifs that Bassens has repeatedly returned to over the last 10 years: windscreens, shadows, fabric folds, empty chairs, flowers.

The works embody the artist's reflections on looking, painting and contemporary existence. Their motifs key into experience, feeling, and personal memory. Bassens' paintings are odes to their medium: its materiality, its history, its transformative qualities. In paintings such as *Uncertainty*, *Laundry Day* and *Staycation*, folds in fabric -- of a discarded umbrella, a marquee -- recall the folds of raw canvas in the studio waiting to be stretched. In *Dated*, our gaze is trapped within a rain drenched car windscreen: the dissolving paint itself is the view. The empty loungers in the landscape titled *Chilled* beckon us to sit and look, to gaze at surroundings breaking down into paint upon closer inspection.

The paintings in *Sincerely,* relay the constant shift of time, love and loss. As the world constantly changes, our inner-worlds adjust; just as the contours of Bassens' self portrait in *Shadow Self* renegotiates the light and surface of its setting. Repeatedly uprooted throughout her childhood, and spending adulthood across multiple countries, flux, transformation and longing have become central parts of Aglaé Bassens' identity. For Bassens, painting confronts the absence and loss of what has been left behind, but also anticipation of the new.

Bassens writes, "Painting feeds a need to possess, to hold on: by making an image of a moment or glimpse, it is mine to have. Each painting becomes a testament to the desire to remember and also the failure to do so: the image shifts, takes on other narratives, breaks free."

**Aglaé Bassens** (b. 1986, Belgium) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Solo exhibitions include *Surface Tension* at Nars Foundation, Brooklyn (2018), *You Can See Better From Here* at CRUSH Curatorial, New York (2018) and *Front Parting*, Cabin Gallery London (2016). Recent group shows include *Fête Galante*, Heaven Gallery, Chicago (2020), *Still Here*, Newington Gallery, London (2019), *Chains*, Central Park Gallery, Los Angeles (2019), *HEADS*, The Java Project, Brooklyn (2017), *Contemporary British Painting Prize*, London (2016), *Biennial Of Painting: The Painter's Touch*, Museum of Deinze, Belgium (2014), *PAPER*, Saatchi Gallery, London (2013) and *Jerwood Drawing Prize*, London (2012). Her work is featured in *New American Paintings No 134 Northeast Issue*, and in *100 Painters of Tomorrow* published by Thames and Hudson (2014). She has a BA in Fine Art from the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art, Oxford University (2007) and an MFA in Fine Art Painting from the Slade School of Fine Art, London (2011).