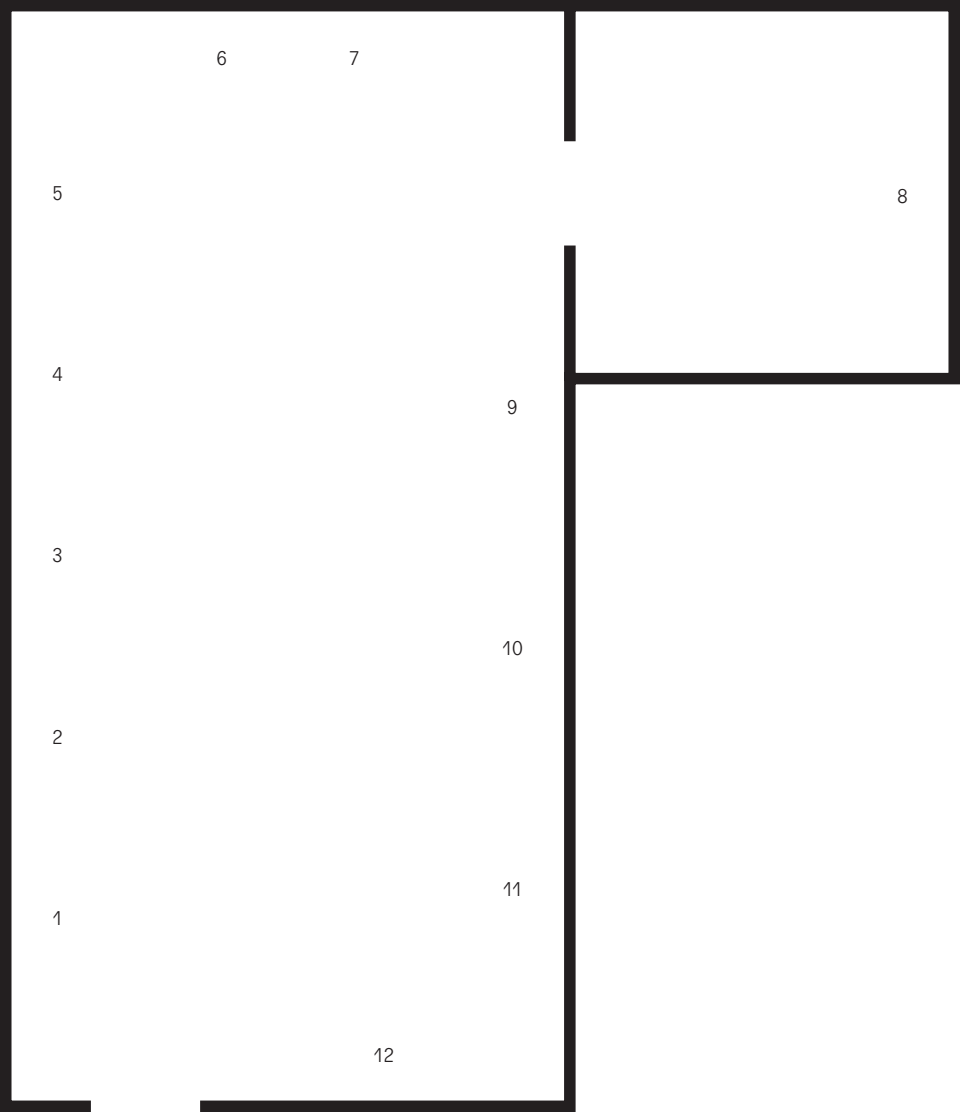


Damian Moppett

Vignettes

February 13–March 27, 2021



- 1 *Little Blonde Head*, 2020, oil on canvas
32 x 27 in. (81 x 69 cm)

2 *Bell and Towels*, 2020, oil on canvas, 30 x 27 in.
(76 x 69 cm)

3 *Untitled (Party with Plant)*, 2020, oil on canvas, 67 x 50 in. (170 x 127 cm)

4 *Lilies (Pink)*, 2020, oil on canvas, 34 x 34 in. (86 x 86 cm)

5 *Small Party*, 2020, oil on canvas, 30 x 33 in. (76 x 84 cm)

6 *Lilies (Indigo)*, 2020, oil on canvas, 32 x 27 in. (82 x 69 cm)
- 7 *Hairdo*, 2020, oil on canvas, 51 x 45 in. (128 x 115 cm)

8 *Man and Woman in Mirror*, 2020, oil on canvas, 36 x 31 in. (92 x 79 cm)

9 *Hand and Head*, 2020, oil on canvas, 42 x 50 in. (107 x 126 cm)

10 *Untitled (Green Swimming)*, 2020, oil on canvas, 27 x 32 in. (69 x 82 cm)

11 *Patron (White Dress)*, 2020, oil on canvas, 50 x 58 in. (126 x 148 cm)

12 *Untitled (Blue Pool)*, 2020, oil on canvas, 20 x 25 in. (51 x 64 cm)

Catriona Jeffries

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Damian Moppett (b. 1969, Calgary, Alberta; lives/works: Vancouver) has long been engaged with the processes and materials of painting and sculpture, and their histories, which he uses for the construction of his own vernacular. In his work, Auguste Rodin and Mike Kelley hold court alongside amateur ceramics and humorous interpretations of classical modernist sculpture. In recent years, the eccentric personal and art historical references found in his earlier works remain significant, but much less overt.

Moppett has an MFA from Concordia University in Montreal, as well as a BFA from the Emily Carr College of Art and Design, where he has taught for over a decade. Recent solo exhibitions include Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver (2016), Simon Fraser University Gallery, Burnaby (2014); Vancouver Art Gallery Off-site (2012); Rennie Collection at Wing Sang, Vancouver (2011); Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver (2010); Yvon Lambert, Paris (2007); Temple Gallery, Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia (2007); Carleton University Art Gallery, Ottawa (2006); and Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (2005). Moppett has also been included in numerous group exhibitions at Griffin Art Projects, North Vancouver (2018); the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (2017); Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton (2016); Satellite Gallery, Vancouver (2011); Vancouver Art Gallery (2010); Witte de With, Rotterdam, the Netherlands (2006); Yvon Lambert, New York (2006); Museum Van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, Antwerp (2005); White Columns, New York; Galerie Kunstbuero, Vienna (2004); Power Plant, Toronto (2002); and Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh (2002).

In *Vignettes*, Damian Moppett presents a focused exhibition of paintings that expand his practice into explicitly figurative paintings originating in the photographic image. These are vignettes both in the intensity of their formal rendering and in the potency of their suggested narratives. They offer a prescient consideration of how social media and advertising use the structure of vignettes to capture our attention and capital, which these works have seemingly little regard for.

The paintings’ sources are both historical photographs from Edward Steichen, Dorothea Lange, André Kertész and Lee Friedlander—ranging in dates from 1917 to 2006—as well as Moppett’s own recent still lifes. While they are well-known photographers, the images themselves are difficult to specify and act as kind of shorthand for the paintings, providing a challenging scaffold to work upon. Any available contextual information must be scavenged from the artworks. Figures are consistently tightly cropped, most with harsh flash, articulating space in relation to the camera and making sharp contrasts with weird shadows—an aesthetic Moppett has consistently revisited since the ’90s. Art historical painting is still present and accounted for here: by painting one of Friedlander’s ’70s art opening photographs, Moppett conjures Philip Guston’s paintings of the same period. Elsewhere, a flashed-out haircut from the era transforms into a haystack of Van Gogh, all while remaining within Moppett’s distinct palette and strangely powerful re-imagining.

Here, the reference images are removed from their time period, not only by adding colour to the black and white originals, but the content itself seems at odds with its almost

fantastical rendering. Moppett accentuates grotesque characters in his emphasis on spatial relationships, colour, and shadow density. These are truly strange paintings depicting off-kilter situations and spaces that connect yet move beyond their source.

Formally, the majority of the works have three or four layers of paintings underneath, which for various reasons were unsatisfactory. Moppett then allows elements of the previous painting to be uncovered in the final work or remain as texture below. Often the image provides an area he is disinterested in painting, and so by leaving the underpainting visible it provides elements that would never be considered—a readymade spontaneity, “a guaranteed accident always available.”