

It Is Forever Ours

Stefania Batoeva & Goran Chanter

Curated by Swimming Pool, Sofia

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**David Dale Gallery
161 Broad Street
Glasgow G40 2QR**

You might have been here before. The pontoon, rising over a smooth sea, reflections of glaring sun, magnum surface, bliss. Did we ever believe in an aligned past, present and future to entirely saturate our presence? Now, it seems like we are totally fine with having it all ending.

It Is Forever Ours, an exhibition by Stefania Batoeva and Goran Chanter, is an absolute claim on the essences of temporality, control and abuse, knowledge and love. Stretched in all-out elation and all-out capitulation. Only in fantasy may we be able to bear our presence, so there it is – the human incapability to make sense of a cruel, damaged reality. Can we liberate the world and ourselves within it?

At the warehouse in the back of the gallery – it is all broken. After the water has drawn away, the pontoon is a wreck now. Milky white industrial containers block the sight – more trash; dirty, toxic, oddly glowing. The debris drags traces of a time long gone, sediment of oblivion.

Smashed to the ground, a self-portrait of a hero. A dream-play astronaut. A fallen warrior. A polished idol of a time that was a great victory for all. His smoking face is the perfection of a history already decided. Another tender presence. You say: After the apocalypse, what else can one do but to admit to a cyclical nature of humanity and time. Though, it is a flat circle that spins back on itself again and again. I know, you want the romance, violence, love and generosity all to be heightened.

There is that perfect epic here, and it cuts through as the principle of conceptual elevation. The constructed wooden platform, leading towards the glow of the containers, works as a route to absolution; now rendered impassable. Two paintings hanging from above on both sides of the pontoon and facing each other suspend the surroundings in high-rise and dissolve the space to infinity. When the eyes get used to the dark one discovers the shapes of a kissing couple, a radiant heart is laid on her lap, as the nuclear light of the morning hours. In the painting opposite an ash bird is rising over another, higher horizon; in the low – a convoluted figure, an emo, the artist herself.

These are now emotions saved in a time capsule, hibernating selves.

The second space is white and brightly lit; the atmosphere is concentrated and tense. Four black polythene portals are lined up on one side. Here, channelled communication replaces the self-identification at the pontoon. Chanter's billboards are in bright, vivid colours – sharply composed streams of information. They represent wicked relations, driven by conspiracies, where facts are totally diluted, obscured, lending towards the void. It is all in: The newly built Chinese radio satellite to track aliens, the Doomsday Clock graph, Nuclear football, luxury items, upbeat symbols and logos, the infamous bloody gloves of O.J. Simpson that didn't fit, running codes of destructions, Madonnas in blue sleeping bags hibernating in a stasis, weather maps, above all an evading Air Force One. The paranoia of terrorism is coolly visualized within an infectious spread of imagery. A genuinely corrupted system where everything interacts, and all burns.

Batoeva's painting again becomes a field where scenes from a parallel, overlapping world dwell. There are internal logics here, thematic and

painterly, that edge onto current state of affairs, but in a coded, timeless place. Power, Intrigue, Love and Death. The figures reveal themselves slowly, unlocked by the proximity to Chanter's more recognisable sources. They break into fragments and float in the foreground, luring to the depths within. One painting – introverted. And the other a narrative, where a presence, a relation or a feared one troubles.

All works meet around the sense of an indefinable fear. This violence, this urgency should make you run.

Text by Viktoria Draganova

Stefania Batoeva was born in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1981. She graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2014, and lives and works in London. Recent exhibitions include *Devoted Iota Elusion* at Emalin, London (2017); *All Men By Nature Desire To Know*, Bonington Gallery, Nottingham (2017); *EXPORTING MARS REX*, with Isaac Lythgoe, Palermo (2016); *BALCONIA*, with Emanuel Röhss and Yves Scherer, Swimming Pool, Sofia (2015).

Goran Chanter was born in Cornwall, UK in 1990. He graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2014, and lives and works in London. This is his first major exhibition in the UK.

Swimming Pool is a project space in Sofia, founded in 2014. It is located on a rooftop with an empty pool, build in the 1930s. Viktoria Draganova is its founder and director.

David Dale Gallery will present a solo exhibition by Toby Christian at Swimming Pool in October 2017.