

Danielle ORCHARD

Juxtapoz,

Page Turner: Danielle Orchard Channels a Literary Past @ Perrotin, Paris

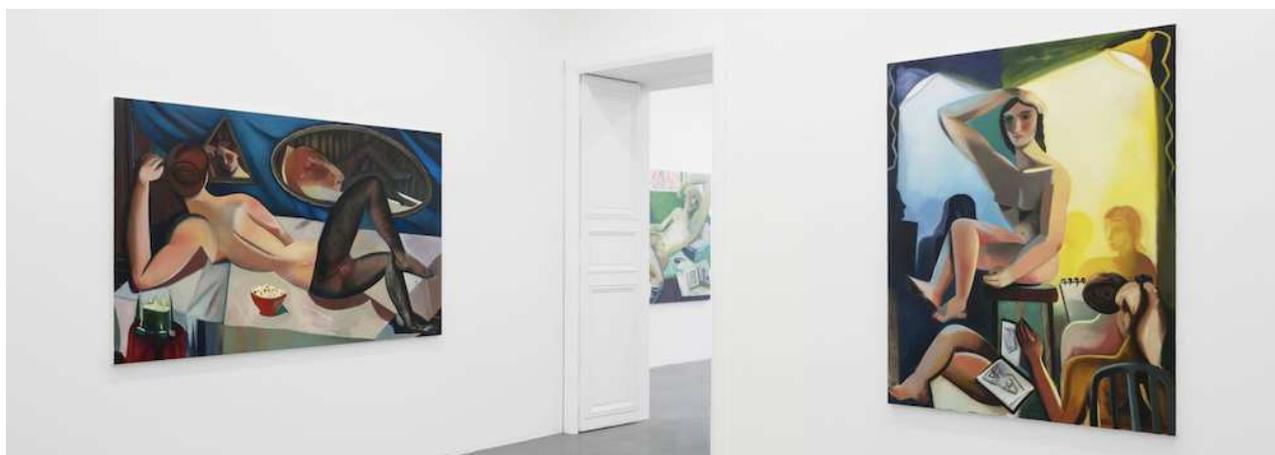
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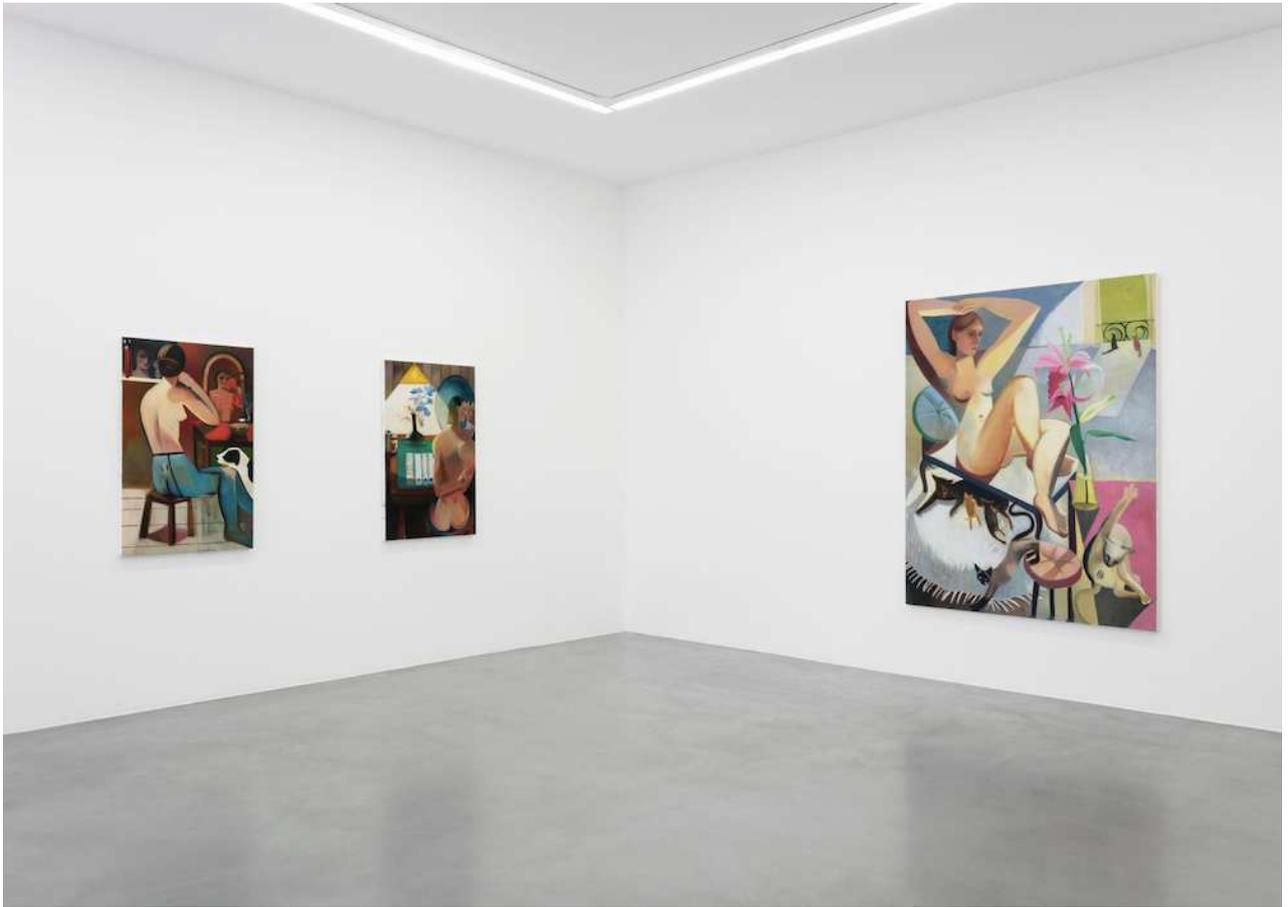
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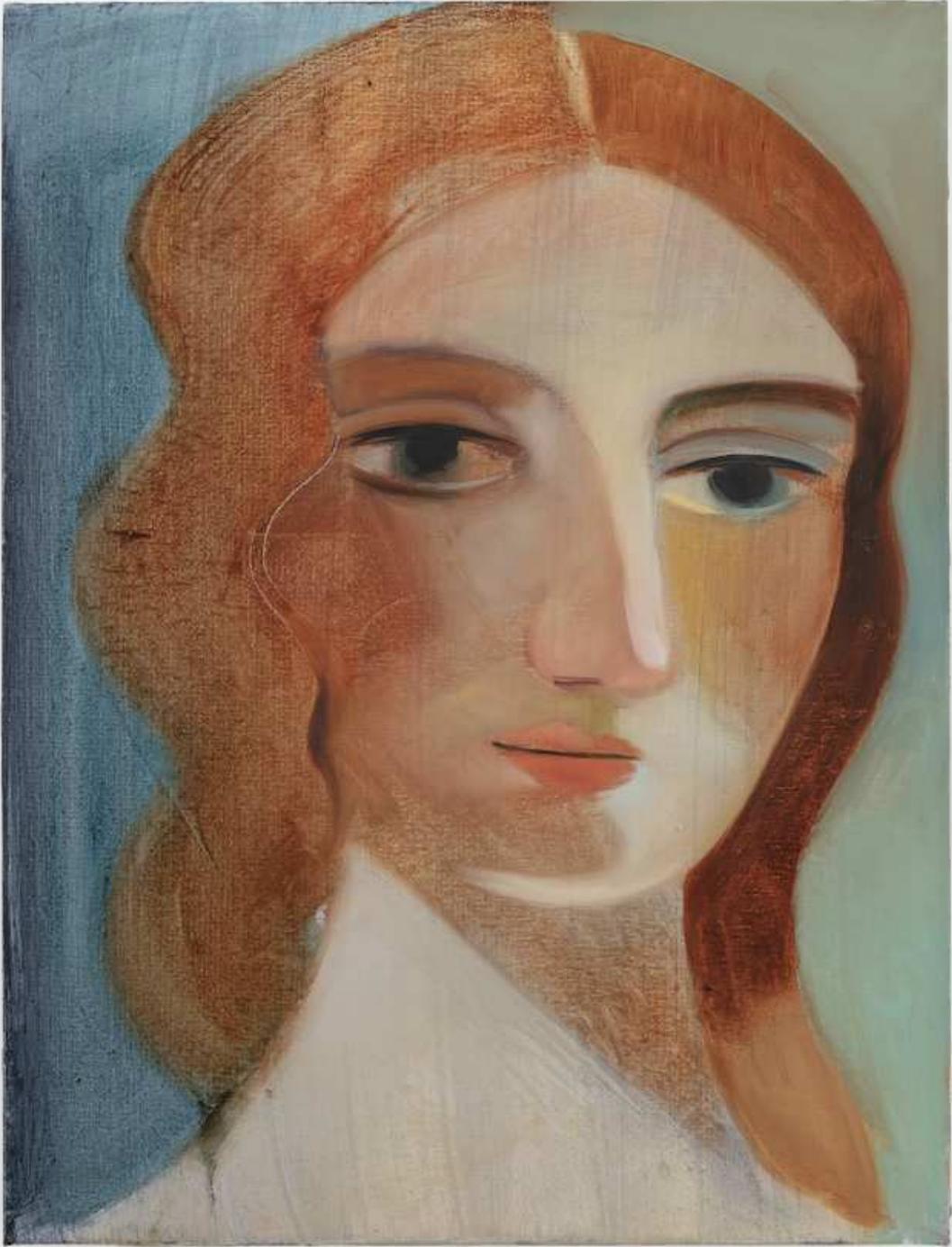
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Perrotin, Paris September 03, 2022 - October 08, 2022





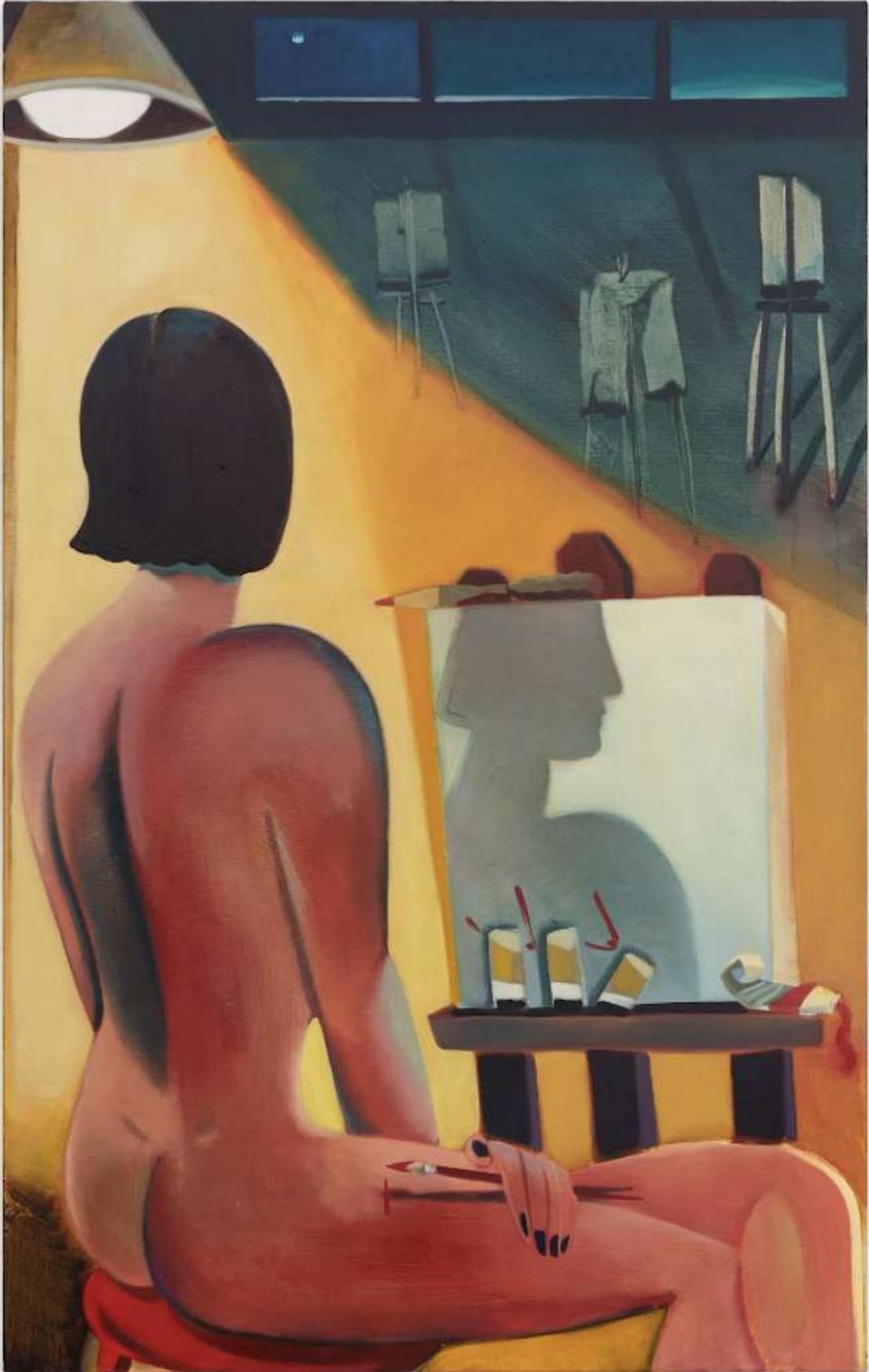






















Perrotin Paris is pleased to present *Page Turner*, the first solo exhibition by American artist Danielle Orchard at the gallery. On this occasion the artist presents a group of new paintings and charcoal drawings. In the words of Balthus, “I always feel the desire to look for what is extraordinary in ordinary things; to suggest without imposing, to always leave a little touch of mystery in my paintings.” These words inhabit Danielle Orchard’s latest work, where the everyday meets the strange, the domestic meets the eternal. Her oeuvre regularly summons the history of painting, from Cézanne to Picasso, from Bonnard to Matisse, whether through stylistic references to the multiple perspectives of analytical

cubism, or through the recurrence of subjects. From an imaginary museum to a reclining odalisque that Orchard revisits with the gaze of a 21st-century artist – the paintings in the exhibition Page Turner echo, in a conscious and direct way, the master of young girls, cats and suspended time.

In the painting *Lessons*, Orchard evokes her intrigue with Balthus's young model, suspended in a solitary and suggestive reverie originally found in *Therese Dreaming* (1938, Metropolitan Museum, New York). Here, Orchard imagines her to be older, engaging in a pictorial exercise of transposing a young ingenue into another female stereotype, thus questioning the place of a woman – model, artist, spectator – in the history of painting. The title of the work itself highlights the embedded references and dialogue with the old masters: Balthus himself looked to Piero della Francesca or Derain, claiming a heritage to better invent the novelty of his own universe. In a similar vein, *Cheating at Solitaire* evokes Balthus's *The Card Game* (1948-1950) and through it Caravaggio's *Cheaters*, thus underlining the way in which Orchard's characters evolve within a "space of memory", where the various genres of painting intersect, from genre scenes to still life, as well as the nude.



Omnipresent and displaced, timeless and abstract, the nude appears in the familiarity of everyday scenes. These nudes, unusual and singular, explore the representation of the female body through daily activities which, although domestic, nonetheless acquire the status of intimate "ceremonies" or ordinary rituals, as evidenced by *Women's Work* (2022). In this work, the artist plays with movement and form, to twist reality and distort context, representing a naked woman with a hieratic and monumental presence, hanging her laundry in a garden. The bluish tones, the geometry of the construction, the

ghostly transparency of the clothes, the ogival shape of the opening in which another female figure is inserted in the background, all give the work an allegorical and sacred character.

Through these undressed bodies and recurring scenes of feminine intimacy, the artist further resurrects the question of voyeurism in the history of painting, raised by the classical iconography of *Diana at the Bath* or *Susanna and the Elders*, stagings of a forbidden gaze. In a work with Golden Age overtones, *Yellow Bathroom*, three figures are caught in the intimacy of a bathroom and in the simple banality of everyday gestures. Transcended by sunlight, does the figure represent one woman at different stages of an intimate routine or three women each embodying one phase?

If Orchard's work is made up of pictorial references, cinematographic allusions also appear, notably the evocation of Hitchcockian classics such as *Window on the Courtyard*, giving its title to the painting *Rear Windows*. Questioning again the gaze and the position of the viewer, between the foreground and background scene, both painted without hierarchy, a cinematographic narrative and tension is intentionally created. *Shaving*, where a swirl of blood spirals around the model's feet recalls the shower scene in *Psycho*, alludes ambiguously to a more diffused violence of the small, seemingly ordinary drama of menstrual blood or, as the title suggests, the slight cut of a razor. More generally, the close-ups in Orchard's work have a cinematographic quality: *Lint* gives an account of a means of approaching the subject, of entering privacy, of seizing an instant in the continuum of an action. The scale of the canvas here induces a fragmented vision of the body, a threat in the intimate hours and objects.



Environment often becomes the subject, as physical habitation and imagined viewership lend themselves to embracing room for chance and mishaps in Orchard's work. Playing on a subtle balance of light sources and contrasting color tones, *Balance* depicts a nude class based on a live model, a classic moment in the artist's training. Orchard knew life class well, both as a student of fine arts and as a model in the class itself, alternating roles, between looking at and being looked at, drawing and drawn. She describes how she then "projected herself into the position of those who were drawing her." Drawn from another studio scene, *Three Ghosts* evokes the solitude of the artist's work, surrounded by the presence-absence of three of her artist friends represented by the three easels. They float like so many voices from the past that inhabit the studio, like a ghostly presence in a suspended time. At the same time on her own easel, the light draws the contours of a self-portrait in a projected shadow that recalls the myth of the origin of painting told by Pliny the Elder, highlighting how the subject of her work is ultimately none other than painting itself.

Indeed, whether Orchard paints women, genre scenes, still lifes or interiors, it is above all painting that the artist embodies, in an everrenewed attempt to identify the way in which the image shapes the narrative. Making her canvases a place of exploration, Orchard questions the motifs and genres of painting, pushing the viewer, as for Danielle Orchard "painting is not made to find answers but to ask questions." These questions are just as much opportunities to continue her uninterrupted conversation with art history, creating the conditions for a new dialogue between the past and the present, the formal and the subject.