

Press Release

Catharine Ahearn
Belly- up Dead

26 September – 06 November, 2015

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CHEWDAY'S is pleased to announce the opening of its London Gallery, and the first solo exhibition of American artist Catharine Ahearn in the United Kingdom.

Semi-circular ante-chambers of brown PVC mark the entrance and exit to the unlit space, reducing it to near total darkness, requiring viewers to navigate the exhibition by the means of whatever available light.

Framed in obsidian black plexi-glass, the paintings first appear as monochromes. In the darkness, the edges of their forms dissolve into the environment – their highly polished surfaces reflect the viewer, occasionally offering glimpses of a pictorial image embedded beneath the surface.

Rendered in loose tangles of acrylic and gouache – the images depicted below are appropriated from the covers of pulp fiction magazines. A phenomenon of the first half of the twentieth century, pulp fiction was fantastical escapist fiction for the entertainment of the mass general public. Often depicting sexually charged scenes-- a man fending off attack by killer turtles while draped over his arm is a vulnerable big-bosomed blonde, who has fainted in distress, for example--the covers were used as a device to tap into the unconscious primitive mind of the consumer and encourage impulse purchases en masse.

Ahearn's title describes the strategy of de-sublimation that she has deployed in this series of paintings, in which an art historical form – the monochrome – is emptied out to become an effigy, laid belly up and filled with content. Macho abstraction is bound together with macho fantasy, bated to fight in a feminist hijacking of patriarchal form that ties down and sutures the monochrome to primitive human desires.

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Catharine Ahearn was born in 1985 in Johannesburg, South Africa. She lives and works in Los Angeles, USA. Upcoming exhibitions include Kunsthalle Köln, 2016; Eden Eden, Berlin, 2015; Ramiken Crucible, New York, USA, 2015. Recent solo exhibitions include *No Soap Radio*, Peep-Hole, Milan, Italy, 2015; *Bite into that soft ass*, Ramiken Crucible, New York, USA. Recent group exhibitions include *EAGLES II*, Galeria Marlborough, Madrid, Spain, 2015; *Next*, Arsenal, Toronto, Canada, 2015; *MFA 2015 Exhibition* (Curated by Christine Robinson), UCLA New Wight Gallery, Los Angeles, USA; *TOP COAT* (curated by Roger Herman), The Pit, Los Angeles, USA, 2014; *Nuit Américaine*, Office Baroque, Brussels, Belgium, 2014; *ARSC km15.1 simulation*, Ramiken Crucible, New York, USA; *Chat Jet – sculpture in reflection Part 2*, Künstlerhaus, Graz, Austria; *Everything falls faster than an anvil*, Pace Gallery, London, UK; *Imitatio Christie's (partoftheprocess6)*, Zero, Milan, Italy; *Depression* (organized by Ramiken Crucible), François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles, USA 2014; *Hephaestus*, Office Baroque, Brussels, Belgium 2014.