

# HEIDI YARDLEY



## GLITTERED IN THE CAVE

16 MARCH TO 2 APRIL 2022

## SATIATING DESIRE

In the works of Heidi Yardley, enigmatic subjects wrestle with inner worlds.

Heidi Yardley has a thing for tarnished glamour. Not the glowing perfection of the digitally enhanced promotional shoot or the golden age of Hollywood, but the tell-tale signs of the body leaking through the glossy veneer. In her oil paintings of female figures, closely cropped in various interiors, this is reflected in part in the muddy tones she is inevitably drawn to, adulterated colours that recall the print technologies of 1970s magazines. This is no coincidence, as Yardley collects books, catalogues, and magazines from this time, using them as analogue source material for the collages she then scans and modifies before transforming through paint. She admits a certain romantic soft spot for the 70s, the decade of her birth, when her family was still together and her mother was in her prime: she was a big fan of proto-feminist movie stars like Jane Fonda and Brigitte Bardot and shared that passion with her daughter. Alongside her mother's accumulated paraphernalia, Yardley also collects the classic soft porn of the era, *Penthouse* and *Playboy*, whose cheesecake centrefolds she reimagines as shrouded, enigmatic subjects wrestling with their inner worlds.

Yardley has observed the continual incursions of her matriarchal heritage in her current painting series, as she processes her recent bereavement. An example is the figure in **The colours of Chloe**, 2021, scanned from one of the luscious film catalogues her mother had kept from the original screening many decades prior. Another is a childhood object of fascination, her mother's fox stole, that appears in **Foxtrot**, 2021: it lies slack in one corner of the composition but resonates in the swirl of caramel fur that obscures the slim, fashionable woman's face.

A swatch of fur also covers the sitter's eyes and breasts in **Chloë**, 2021, while flowing black, brunette or copper hair stands in for the faces of the figures in the other works. Yardley is seduced by the liquidity of hair and fur, and clearly relishes the process of rendering these enticingly tactile materials in paint. The paintings draw us in to touch, but the slightly sickly palette and the psychological intensity of the figures combine to ward us off, rendering us intruders into intimacies beyond our understanding.

Fur and hair are, of course, loaded signifiers, particularly when meshed with the female form. Yardley plays with these long-standing associations – sexuality, animality, fetishism, memento mori – well-aware of her debt to the Surrealists, in particular the women who complicate the misogynist stereotypes associated with the movement.

In the paintings of Leonora Carrington and Dorothea Tanning, for example, hair serves to assert personal power or open a portal to another psychic dimension. Toyen and Kay Sage veil the faces of their female subjects with hair so that their crowning glory becomes less object of the gaze than affirmation of self-satisfied desire.

Yardley's extraordinary **Femme en Fourrure** is a direct homage to the quintessential Surrealist object, Meret Oppenheim's fur teacup. This larger-than-life painting of a fur coat, with its heavy folds and undulations coupled with phallic architectural touches, is delightfully excessive, perfectly bringing together the artist's concerns: nostalgia and secrets, female sexuality and the veneer of glamour, and the materiality and pleasure of the painting process.

Jacqueline Millner for **Art Collector**



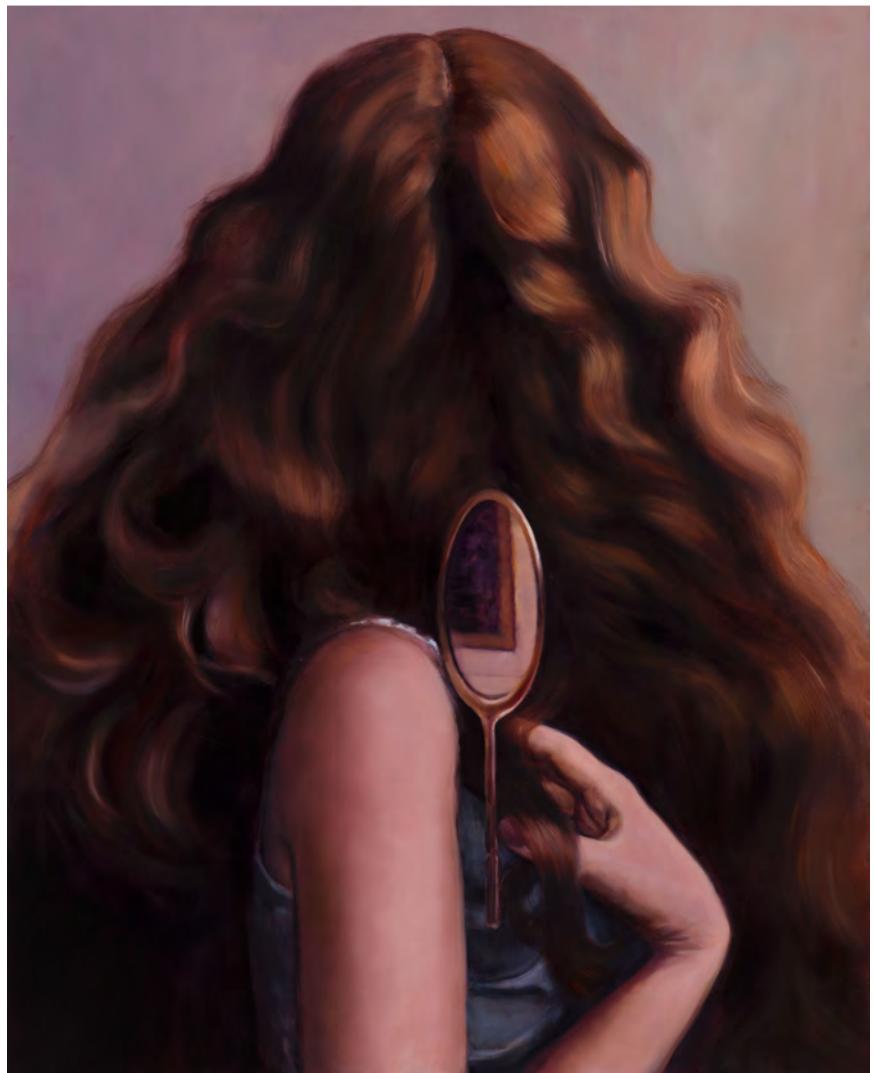
**HEIDI YARDLEY**

*Femme en fourrure*

2021

oil on linen

170 x 117 cm



**HEIDI YARDLEY**

*The door*

2021

oil on linen

144 x 116 cm



**HEIDI YARDLEY**

*Drenched in a lonely vase*

2021

oil on linen

140 x 110 cm



**HEIDI YARDLEY**

*Psychique*

2021

oil on linen

140 x 110 cm



**HEIDI YARDLEY**

*Stivale*

2021

oil on linen

154 x 75 cm



**HEIDI YARDLEY**

*Coral handled dagger*

2021

oil on linen

56 x 51 cm



**HEIDI YARDLEY**

*Somnium*

2021

oil on linen

56 x 51 cm



**HEIDI YARDLEY**

*The colours of Chloe*

2021

oil on linen

56 x 51 cm



**HEIDI YARDLEY**

*Foxtrot*

2021

oil on board

58 x 42 cm



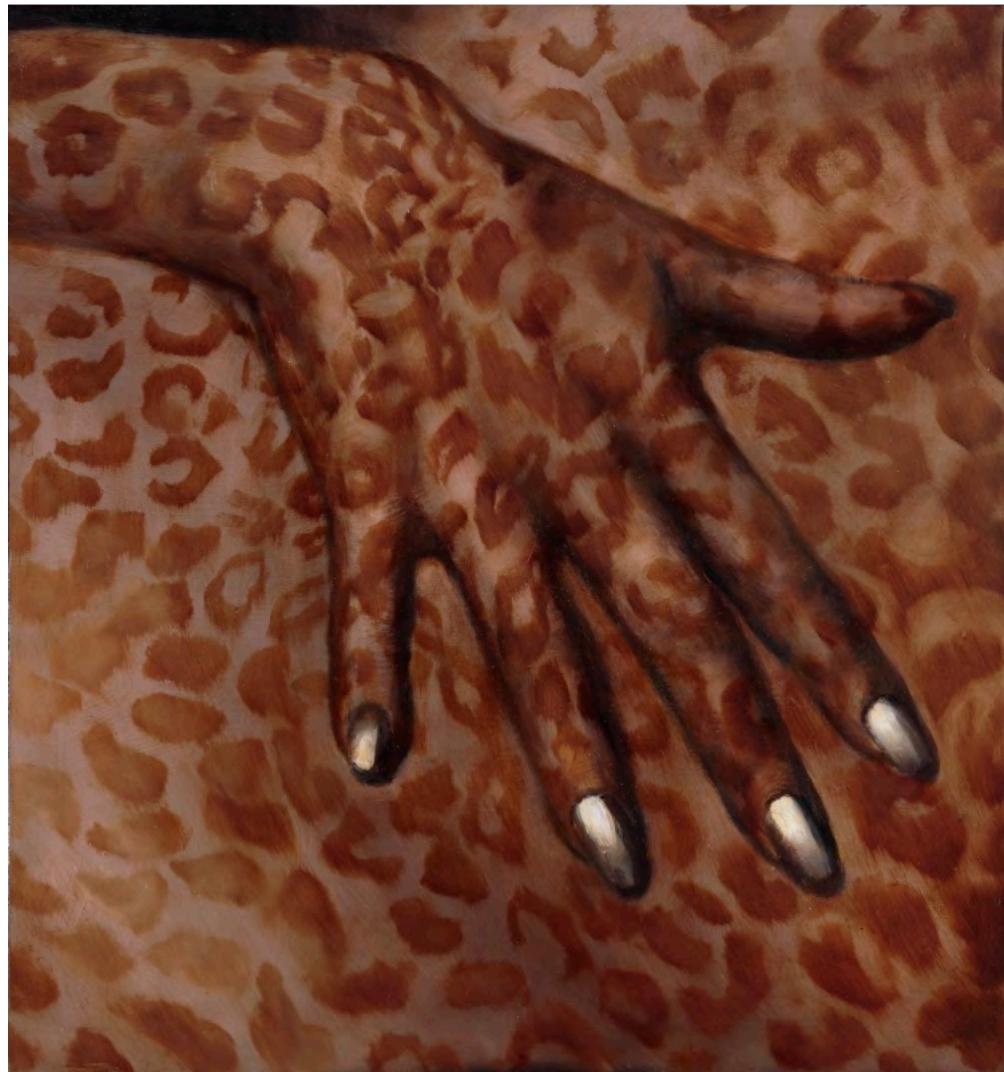
**HEIDI YARDLEY**

*Forest in the axe*

2021

oil on board in custom frame with green fluorite crystals

50 x 38 cm



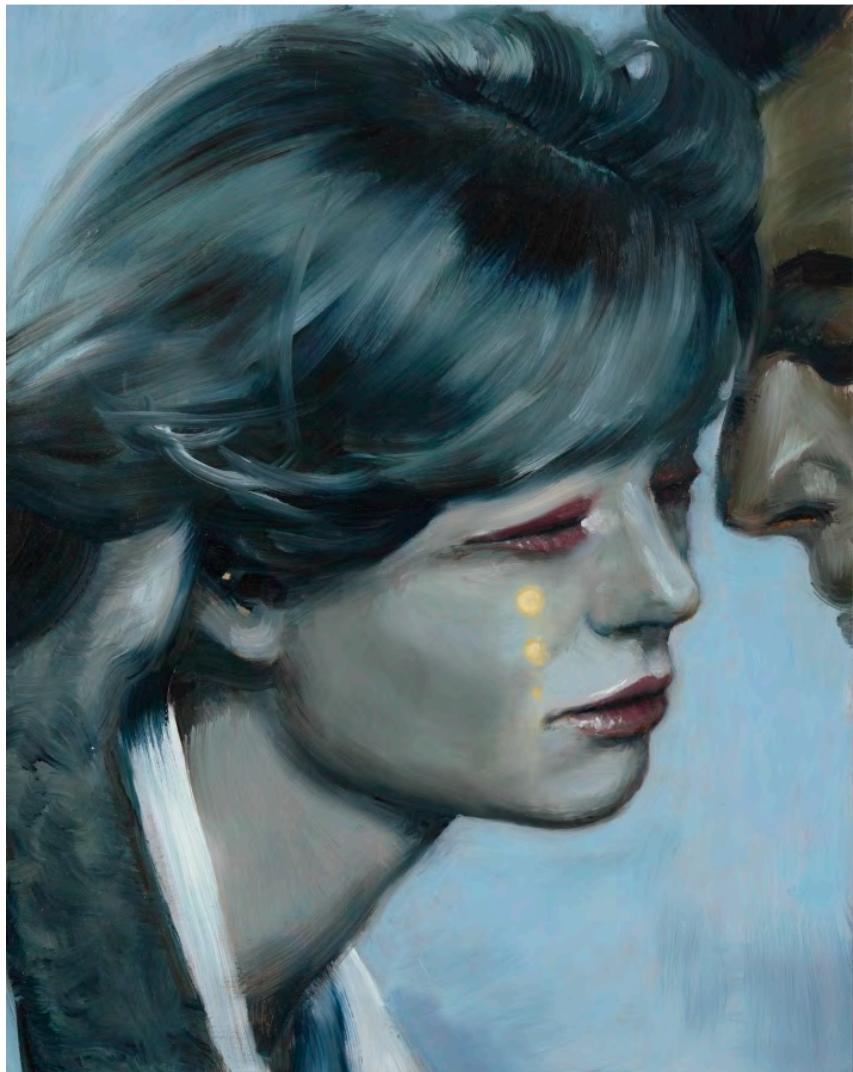
**HEIDI YARDLEY**

*Creeper*

2021

oil on board

38 x 35 cm



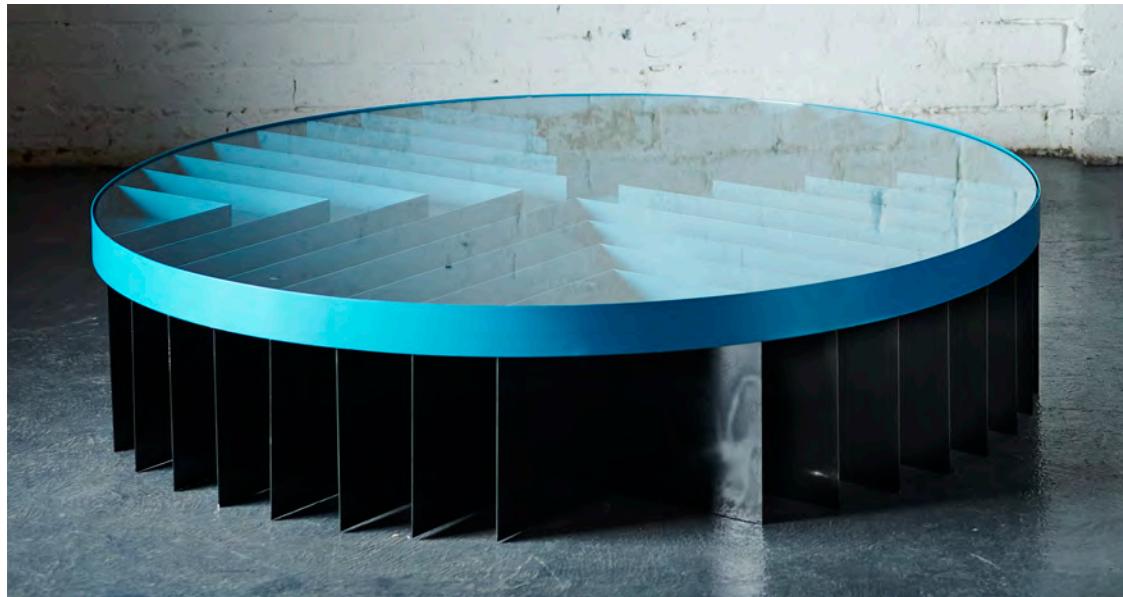
**HEIDI YARDLEY**

*Lovers are strangers*

2021

oil on board in custom frame

38 x 30 cm



**DANIELLE BRUSTMAN**

*'Crossroads' coffee table*

2018

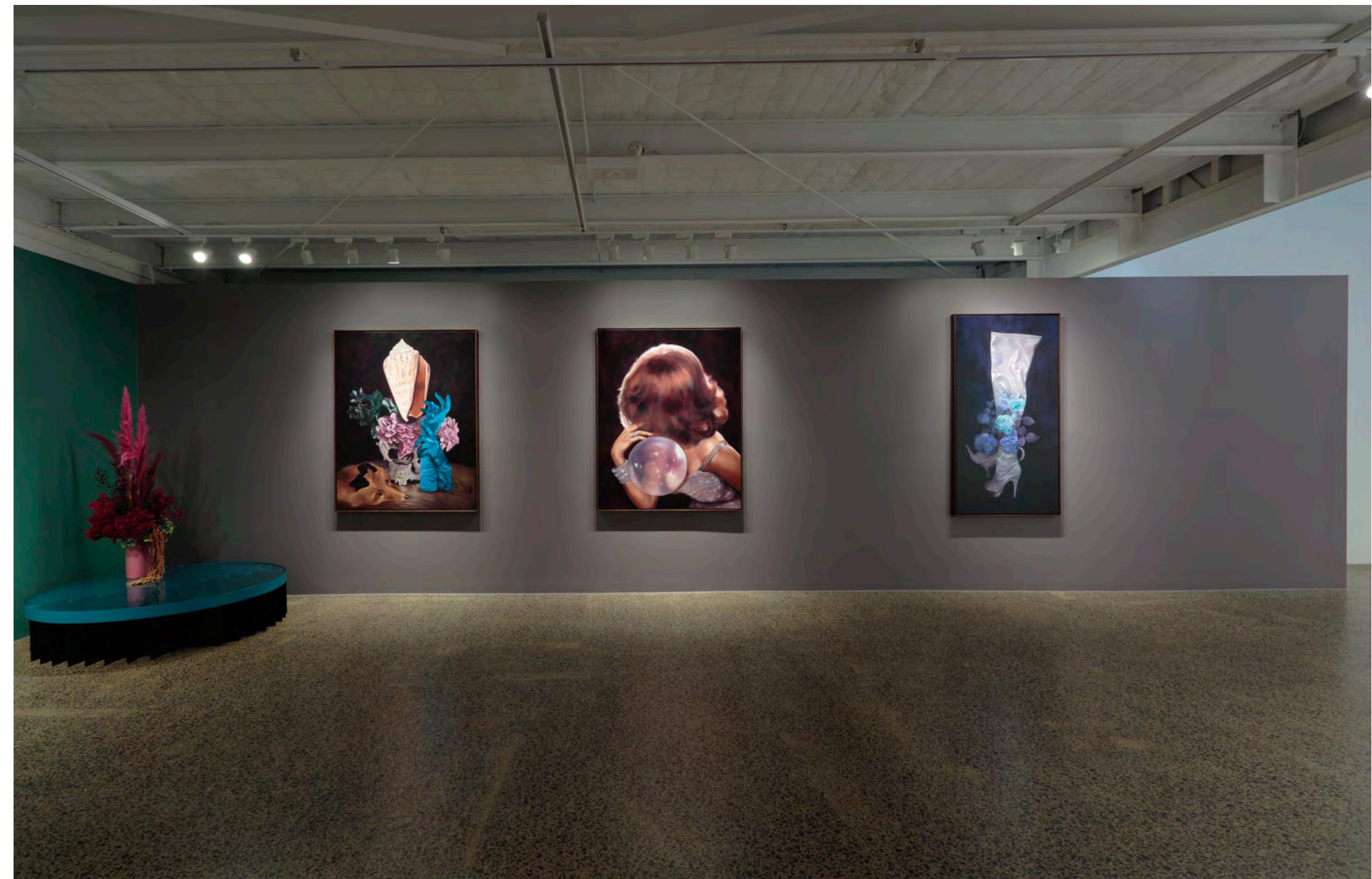
aluminium, glass, paint

31 x 140 dia. cm

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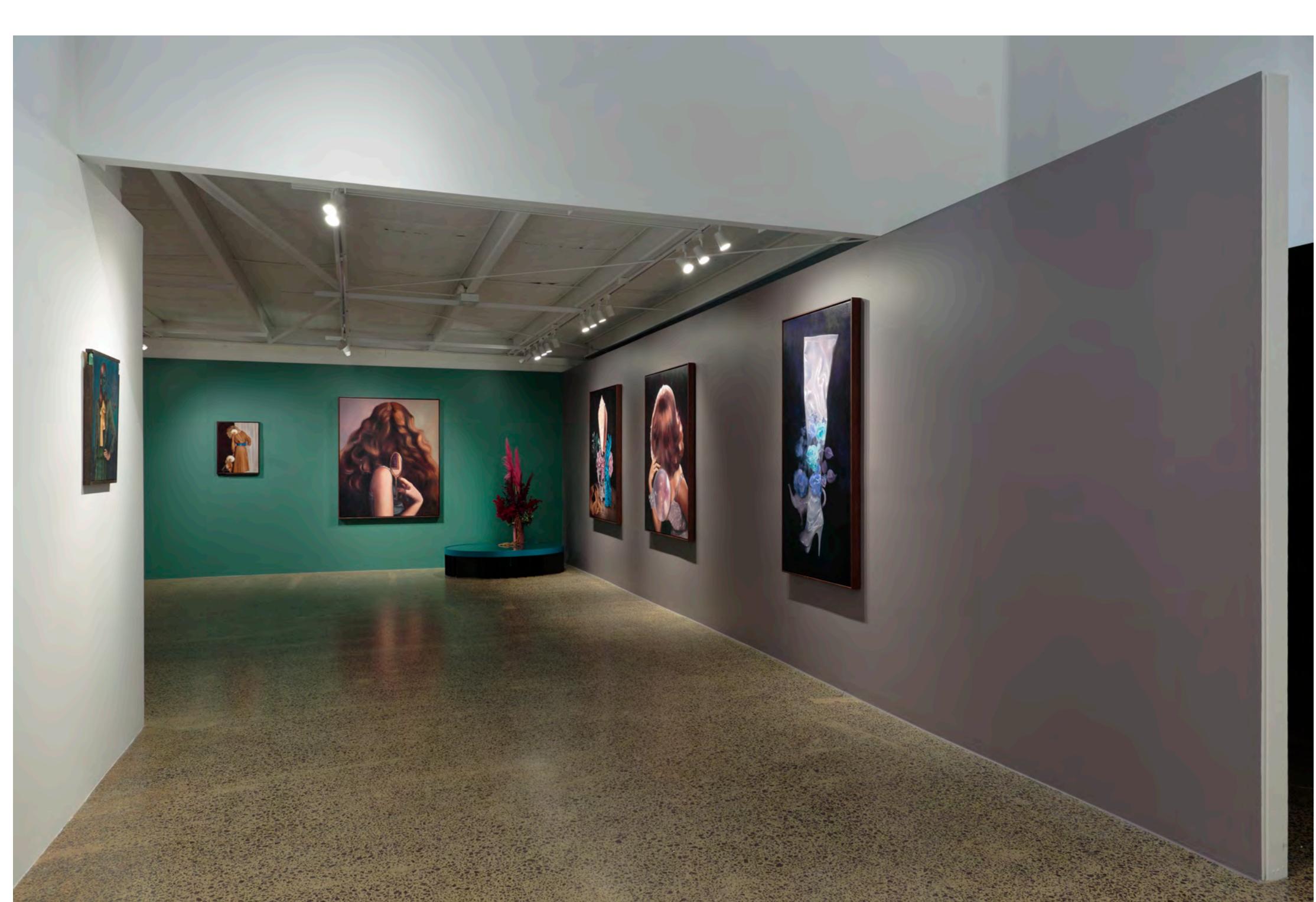
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