



Matt Hansel, *A Dance with the Past*, 2025, oil on linen, 142.2 x 177.8 cm (56 x 70 in.)

## A Mysterious Vision

### The Uncanny and Lingering Influences of Surrealism in Contemporary Art

9 September – 17 October 2025

Preview: 9 September, 6 – 8pm

Via della Spiga 1, Milan 20121

Robilant+Voena is pleased to announce the upcoming Milan iteration of *A Mysterious Vision: The Uncanny and Lingering Influences of Surrealism in Contemporary Art*, curated by Robert Zeller. Following an acclaimed run in New York, the Milan exhibition brings the selection of works of 16 contemporary artists to European audiences, with some of the artists showing for the first time in Italy. On view in Robilant+Voena's gallery on Via della Spiga at the heart of the city, the show examines the **enduring influence of Surrealism** in the psyche and creative processes of artists working today. These works will be shown alongside an important painting by **female Surrealist Leonor Fini**, on loan from a

private collection. The exhibition is accompanied by an extensive catalogue of the exhibition, which elaborates on the four key Surrealist themes explored in the exhibition: the Psychic Landscape, the Psychic Interior, Uncanny Figuration and Non-Objective Fragments.

*A Mysterious Vision* expands upon curator Robert Zeller's 2023 acclaimed book *New Surrealism: The Uncanny in Contemporary Painting*, which presented a sweeping exposition of both historical Surrealism and its legacy in the world of contemporary art, on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the movement.



Ginny Casey, *Overgrown Vessel*, 2025, oil and watercolor on canvas, 139.7 x 139.7 cm (55 x 55 in.)

The breadth of the works in the exhibition suggests the richness and variety of the Surrealist influence on artists working today. On entering the gallery, visitors are faced with the impressively-sized *A Dance with the Past* by Matt Hansel (pictured at the top of this press release), one of the works that speaks to the Psychic Landscape current within the show. This theatrical painting provides a triumphant arrival into the exhibition, depicting a *danse macabre* of sorts, offering a window into a fantastical world, executed in the artist's signature precise and vivid style, with immense technical proficiency. The work is a playful reflection upon the historical associations of demons as symbols of human vulnerability, infused with the essence of Northern painters such as Hieronymus Bosch and Pieter Brueghel. Instead of hellish visions of pain and suffering, there is a harmony at play between the human figures and the so-called demonic creatures – existing in a realm where the past holds no sway and anything is possible.

Similarly rich in its detail but speaking to the theme of the Psychic Interior, **Gretchen Scherer's *A Secret Room, Beneath the Ambrosian Library*** exhibits the artist's signature subject matter and style, presenting jewel-like representations of historic interiors of galleries, libraries, grand halls and stately homes, filled with paintings and *objets d'art*. Evoking interior views of princely or noble collections by the likes of Johann Zoffany, David Teniers or Giovanni Paolo Panini, Scherer's paintings are unashamedly contemporary, rendered in vivid colours and exhibiting a style that has an illustrative, picture-book quality.



Gretchen Scherer, *A Secret Room, Beneath the Ambrosian Library*, 2025, oil and acrylic on panel, 76.2 x 91.4 cm (30 x 36 in.)

Her painting in the exhibition, like her wider repertoire, is devoid of people and has the slightly unsettling feeling that all the painting figures are watching us from within their gilt frames. This painting is particularly fitting for Milan, depicting a room – imagined, private? – but unseen by the public in the city's magnificent Pinacoteca Ambrosiana.

**Ginny Casey's** fascination with the creative process is encapsulated in her bold, bodily painting *Overgrown Vessel*. Set in a nondescript interior, a bright blue human-figure appears to be consumed by the clay vase they are modelling, with an additional oversized hand gripping the stem. This work speaks to how artists are often lost in the creative process, and reflects Casey's enjoyment of playing with scale and toying with the viewer's expectations. The potter and clay appear to be symbiotic partners in this strange embrace, a certain anthropomorphism inviting the viewer to identify as much with the object as with its maker. The scene is underpinned by a certain humour and curiosity: besides the main grouping, what are those pink boulders in the background, and where does the rear door lead?

Several of the works in the show engage with feminist perspectives; **Jamie Adams'** painting *Jeannie Rose* depicts an androgynous figure based on the influential mid-century actress Jean Seberg. Oozing with nonchalance and confidence, this painting belongs to the artist's *Dollhouse* series, inspired by conversations with his four daughters about the female figure as depicted in art. The languid yet regal pose of the central figure recasts concepts of the role of the female model, glimpsed here in an brooding, otherworldly setting. The works of **Laura Krifka** offer highly polished snapshots of domestic settings or daily life, often reflecting the female experience. Her two paintings in the show, *Smile* and *Nip*, exhibit the artist's characteristic meticulous style and subtle feminist narratives. In unique ways,

both paintings offer a commentary on motherhood, especially the expectations of society and the associated physical and emotional impacts.

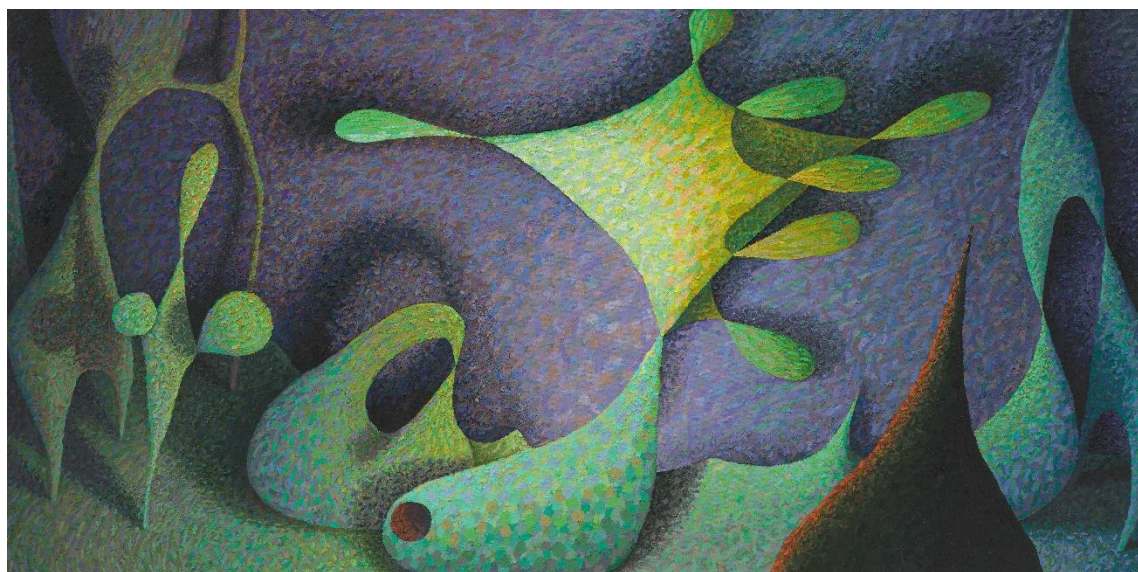


Left: Jamie Adams, *Jeannie Rose*, 2022, oil on linen, 114.3 x 76.2 cm (45 x 30 in.)  
Right: Laura Krifka, *Smile*, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 91.4 cm (36 x 36 in.)



The non-figurative works in the show are just as varied and richly significant as their representational counterparts. Alicia Adamerovich's *Inflated* is a boldly chromatic composition of abstract masses that ebb and pulsate with her characteristic use of complementary colours. Testing the boundaries of abstraction, these biomorphic shapes are unfamiliar yet possess solid form – characteristic of the artist's painting practice. For the artist, the disciplines of painting and sculpture are intertwined in a very organic process, as testified to by her three-dimensional work *Nimrod*, also on view. The work comprises a tree trunk sourced from near her parents' home in rural Pennsylvania, that escalates upwards into a carved steeple-like construction; a construction that is echoed in the forms that populate *Inflated*.

**Artists featured:** Alicia Adamerovich, Jamie Adams, Ginny Casey, Vincent Desiderio, Lars Elling, Lola Gil, Matt Hansel, Alessandro Keegan, Tim Kent, Arghavan Khosravi, Maria Kreyn, Laura Krifka, Kristy Luck, Robert Ryan, Gretchen Scherer and Nicola Verlato.



Alicia Adamerovich, *Inflated*, 2025, oil on linen, 91.4 x 182.9 cm (36 x 72 in.)

### About the curator

**Robert Zeller** is a visual artist, writer and curator who received a BFA from a joint program of the Boston Museum School and Tufts University and an MFA from the New York Academy of Art. In tandem with curating art exhibitions, Zeller has written two books for Monacelli Press, an imprint of Phaidon International, *The Figurative Artist's Handbook* (2017), and *New Surrealism: The Uncanny in Contemporary Painting* (2023). He contributed a chapter to *Photography: Real and Imagined* (2023), profiling the permanent collection of Surrealist photography of the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia, and has also written for *The Brooklyn Rail* and other influential art periodicals and blogs. Zeller has given lectures and moderated panels at Gagosian Beverly Hills, New York University, Rizzoli Books and other influential venues. He is currently working on his third book, *Witty and Macabre: The Legacy of Surrealism, Symbolism and Expressionism on Contemporary art in Belgium*, which will be exhibited in New York in 2027.

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### Notes to editors

Robilant+Voena is a partnership of art dealers Edmondo di Robilant and Marco Voena. They launched R+V in London in 2004. Further gallery spaces were opened in Milan in 2009, and Paris and New York in 2020. R+V has distinguished itself as one of the leading international art dealers in Old Master paintings, as well as 20th-century Italian art. In recent years, the gallery's dual specialisms in European Old Master paintings and 20th-century Italian art have been complemented by a carefully curated programme of contemporary projects, working with artists whose practices build upon the artistic inheritance of the past. The gallery strives to create dynamic, thought-provoking exhibitions that

juxtapose the old and the new, creating unexpected links between artists working across the centuries and drawing out eternal themes through art.

The gallery has sold paintings and works of art to many important private and royal collectors and museums including the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Frick Collection, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the National Gallery, London, the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, the Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, the National Gallery of Stockholm, the Louvre Abu Dhabi and the Museum of Western Art Tokyo. R+V is represented at the most prestigious fine art fairs in the world, and is committed to its active exhibitions program and the publication of books and scholarly catalogues.

### Current and upcoming exhibitions

#### New York

*James Seward. In Between*, 27 June – 8 August

*Robert Zeller. The Fragment is the Whole*, 12 September – 16 October

#### London

*Stephen Appleby-Barr. Mesocosmos*, 23 May – 8 August