

BERNHEIM

SARAH SLAPPEY

BERNHEIM, London
October 8 - November 14, 2024

Bernheim is delighted to announce a new exhibition by American artist Sarah Slapppy entitled **Bloodline**, her first solo presentation in London. Focused on the dichotomy of the public and the private sphere, an important theme in her oeuvre, Slapppy has pushed the boundaries of painting to encompass a rethinking of our own representation in those environments.

In this new body of work, Slapppy utilises her talent for hyperrealist images of body parts to explore historical and almost immutable positions that have been anchored by art history in our perception and vision of not only the body but our position within society. Placing us simultaneously as spectators and voyeurs, the artist creates a space for the viewer that is imperceptibly uncomfortable. Bodies reminiscent of Bernini's sculptures are depicted sanctioned and pierced by hard metal, sometimes initially inoffensive but also in more brutal forms by rebar and construction tools. Drawing on stereotypes largely built by cinema and photography, in scenes viewed from above, the protagonist almost drowns in their bathtub, before taking a long suffocating breath. Pushing the boundaries of realism, Slapppy uses her incredible pictorial talent to expand our vision. The creases, swollen bellies, rolls, and curves of her shapely forms are reminiscent of Hans Bellmer bulbous figures, while the smooth and polished manufactured surfaces of the bodies parallel Louise Bourgeois's annular sculptures. The viewer can assemble these references yet it is in that new, in between space, where the artist leaves room for interpretation of a subtle violence, that a new language is born. Like an almost imperceptible splinter, left to infect the body, the artist points to all the things that gangrene us, she opens our eyes wide and does not allow us to look away. Her immense paintings draw us in through their sleek and sublime surfaces, only to repulse us and leave us with unforgettable imagery. The utter sense of tragedy that emanates from the works also points to the fact that eroticism and violence are almost always intertwined. As Simone de Beauvoir explored in her work, art has the ability to overcome existential separation between self and other, to engage and to be undone by other truths, to portray the temptations of violence and to examine the intimacies and complexities of relationships with others.

Sarah Slapppy's work deploys an honesty rooted in traditional images, her capacity to account for the most minute details is her most powerful tool to convey a message that has never been more poignant, that we cannot look away.

Sarah Slapppy (b.1984 in Columbia, South Carolina). Lives and works in Brooklyn, USA.

Her recent solo shows include *Sacrifices* at Bernheim, Zurich (2022), *Self Care* at Sargent's Daughters, New York (2021), *Tenderizer* at Bernheim, Zurich (2020), *Power Play* at Sargent's Daughters, New York (2020) and *Soft, Pink, and Warm* at Deanna Evans Projects, New York (2019). Permanent collections include Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C.; The Albertina

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Museum, Vienna; Pérez Art Museum Miami; Institute Contemporary Art Miami(ICA); Columbus Museum of Art; Musée D'Art Moderne et Contemporain (MAMCO), Geneva; Orange County Museum of Art, Costa Mesa; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; The Pond Society, Shanghai; K11 Musea, Hong Kong; The Vanhaerents Art Collection, Brussels; The Zabłudowicz Collection, London; Xiao Museum of Contemporary Art, Suzhou; Sixi Museum, Nanjing; Collection Majudia, Montreal and Fundación MEDIANOCHE0, Granada.

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