

ANNA ZORINA GALLERY

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MARC BRESLIN

VEILS

On view: April 1 – April 29, 2023

Opening reception: Saturday, April 1st, 5-8 PM

Anna Zorina Gallery is pleased to introduce *VEILS*, a solo exhibition by artist Marc Breslin and his debut presentation with the gallery. In these latest works, themes of concealment and surveillance unfold throughout the gallery's three rooms.

A series of monochromatic portraits devoid of features and markers of identification line the walls of the main gallery. The simplified forms are drawn from Cycladic sculpture (ca. 3200-2300 BCE) and reference the work of Constantin Brancusi, Myron Stout, Giorgio de Chirico, Rene Magritte, and Michael Heizer. These stark paintings emanate notions of the ancient and unknown. They also directly reference the artist's interest with anti-facial recognition masks. These masks are worn in an attempt to preserve privacy and combat the rapid advancement of AI software being used for policing and mass surveillance. The idea of a disguise, or to masquerade, inherent to the idea of painting, creeps into a relationship between monitoring and future technology. According to a 2016 study out of Georgetown University, half of all American adults are in a police facial recognition database, and in China, their well-documented, far-reaching surveillance of the Uyghur community has led to mass detention into "re-education camps".

The masks in Breslin's paintings are of the chrome surface variety, chosen not only for their striking visual qualities but also for their ability to simultaneously hide and reflect. While these masks act as veils to cover the face of the wearer, they also act as mirrors to consider and expand the field of vision for the viewer. This tension between watching and being watched is continually at play throughout the exhibition.

The two paintings in the back gallery are rendered in meticulous detail in both color and black and white. The monochrome works are reminiscent of the often-grainy black and white videos of surveillance cameras. In *Welcome to the Party (Arnolfinis in Color)* and *Welcome to the Party (Arnolfinis in Black and White)*, Breslin confers new meaning to the Arnolfinis, the affluent husband and wife originally depicted in Jan Van Eyck's celebrated masterpiece from 1434. Compared to the original painting, Breslin paints his figures life-sized, inviting viewers to immerse themselves in the composition. Fitted in chrome masks, the pair is reinterpreted as contemporary, anonymous stand-ins. The convex mirror painted by Van Eyck is transformed from an optical tool into a disco ball - Breslin's version echoing the gleaming characteristics of the mask and suggesting the idea that an omniscient surveillance lens lurks behind this mesmerizing reflective surface. This notion is further expanded upon with larger-than-life canvases of two disco balls, one monochromatic, the other painted in radiant technicolor. Universes unto themselves, almost transcendental in their appreciation of the sublime and emphatic command of tonal values – it's as if they were plucked out of the Arnolfini portraits, intricately pieced together through tiles of color placed with a hypnotic revelry, seductively spinning the present into an unknown future.

MARC BRESLIN (b. 1983, New York) lives and works between New York and Mexico City and received his BA in literature and art history from Boston College in 2005. He has exhibited nationally and internationally at Galería Karen Huber, Mexico City; Galleria Umberto Di Marino, Naples; Fondazione Rivoli Due, Milan; New Museum, New York City; and Palazzo Strozzi, Florence to name a few.

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