

# MAKE ROOM

## Julia Maiuri

### *Approach of Another*

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Make Room is excited to announce *Approach of Another*, Twin Cities-based painter Julia Maiuri's first solo exhibition with the gallery and the final show at Make Room's 5119 Melrose Ave location. The new body of work to be presented is an extended reflection on the paradox of encountering oneself as another, or the realization that, even to ourselves, we are never fully known. There is always something hidden within our actions, some other set of intentions, just beyond our awareness. We feel but do not grasp them. Who do they belong to?

Julia Maiuri's paintings approach this question through the language of cinema, using the highly stylized aesthetic of film noir to probe the edges of consciousness and expand our image of subjectivity. By depriving the work of plot or a framing narrative, Maiuri is able to isolate the visual effects used by Hollywood to create a sense of foreboding or psychological drama within popular film. Extreme close-ups, tightly cropped frames, cast shadows, obscured faces, high contrast, and dissolve transitions make up the limited lexicon of this genre, which combines and reconfigures these elements according to formulas that have already been proved on the market. Psychology, it seems, has a particular look that can be repeated and copied. As much as we consider our individual experiences unique, why is it that images composed in this way are all but guaranteed to provoke a reaction from the mass of viewers? What does it mean that our response to film can be anticipated and organized in advance?

Walter Benjamin's foundational essay on "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Mechanical Reproduction" contains an oft-cited passage on the difference between the painter and the cameraman. The painter, so Benjamin claims, is like a magician that heals with touch, while the cameraman is like a surgeon cutting into the patient's body. For Benjamin, the camera allows an unprecedented closeness to the objects it captures. Put in front of an actor, it begins to reveal subtle, unconscious gestures that relate to the film's narrative but also seem to have another, undisclosed source. Film, while overtly trading in tired cliches, nevertheless corresponds in some way to more surreptitious currents of thought.

In Maiuri's paintings, the movement of film is arrested between frames, creating a superimposed image in which the perspective adopted by the viewer becomes confused. Are we the woman in the painting or someone else? Are those her hands? Our hands? We feel ourselves implicated in a set of events of which we know nothing and of which nothing more exists. In paintings like *Measured*, *Pretending*, or *Inside Information*, a double set of eyes seem to waver with emotion. But with what emotion, exactly? Anger? Fear? Or something else altogether?

*Approach of Another* is intended to challenge the viewer's certainty in a stable, homogenous self. At the same time, however, the show reveals the extreme affinity between certain visual effects and the psychological tension they create in film. Rather than deploying them once again to narrative ends, Maiuri turns the technique of film noir in on itself to pose the question of its suggestive power.

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**Julia Maiuri** (b. 1991, Michigan) currently lives and works in Saint Paul, Minnesota. She received her MFA from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (2022), and her BFA from Wayne State University, Detroit (2013). Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, with a recent solo exhibition at Gallery 12.26, Dallas (2022). Maiuri's work has been featured in group exhibitions that include Make Room, Los Angeles (2022); Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, New York City (2022); and MAMOTH Gallery, London, UK (2022). Her work has been featured in art publications such as *Artsy*, *Visual Art Source*, *Art Maze Mag*, *Floorr Magazine*, and *WOPOZI*. Maiuri was a 2018 recipient of an Artist Initiative Grant in Visual Art from the Minnesota State Arts Board.

Established in 2018, **Make Room** is a contemporary art gallery owned and directed by Emilia Yin. The newly relocated 4500 square foot gallery is situated at the heart of Hollywood, made up of multiple exhibition spaces with an outdoor courtyard and garden. With its dynamic program—which includes both on-site solo and group exhibitions as well as ambitious off-site projects with international collaborators—and a particular focus championing female, emerging, and artists of color, Make Room has positioned itself as a cutting edge incubator for emerging artists engaging with cultural identity, conceptual practices and global perspectives. Not limited to a physical gallery, Make Room works to generate new possibilities and support its artists' visionary projects and the development of new bodies of work.