

SOPHIE OLYMPIA | THE OLYMPIA PROJECT

***ORCHID.Spring* by Matthew Morrocco**

Additional exhibition text for *ORCHID.Spring* by Matthew Morrocco at Gallerie B.B.

ORCHID is an ambitious new body of work by artist Matthew Morrocco, which deconstructs the role of marginalized bodies across social, financial, and queer economies of being. The series, which spans video, installation, and photography, features Morrocco posing in a variety of monochromatic body suits set in lush natural landscapes. These suits obscure his identity and represent the colors that make up the spectrum of visible light: red, green, blue, orange, yellow, violet. Whereas his earlier work courted and problematized cultural narratives about queer identity and sexuality, this new series refuses the viewer a particularized queer body, obscuring Morrocco beneath the suits, each representing a color from the spectrum of visible light.

The project provides a potential antidote to the problematic issue of privacy on the internet in order to comment on the commodification of the artist's biography. In *Spring*, the third iteration of the artist's seasonal four-part project, the figure has turned purple and is seen joyfully climbing cherry blossom trees against a crisp blue sky. Throughout the series, Morrocco inhabits the role of a faceless character named Orchid, who evades identification in favor of an abstracted subject, eliding the possibility of signification as a particular person. The figure becomes a structural rather than biographical element within the work and turns away from the troubling necessity of biography that plagues the contemporary artist. The signifier is merely a color, there is no signified subject and in this way the viewer is led to experience the work the way they might a color field painting--precisely how they prefer.

The show will consist of a large scale installation with images mounted directly on the wall. As part of the installation, a 3D printed frame will house a monitor which will display a changing image set against a colored wallpaper--see images for reference. The show is accompanied by an augmented reality *ORCHID*.app that allows users to curate virtual and individualized iterations of the photographs in their own homes. The app will give viewers greater authority over their experience of the work after the physical show comes down. This method of viewing troubles traditional codified rules of engagement with art objects which champions scarcity or a paucity of viewing possibilities, and expertly curated presentation. Combining the abstract Orchid figure with the opportunity to cultivate one's own viewing experience enables a uniquely personal exploration of the exhibition and the artist's work. The viewer maintains control as the work investigates the painful loss of privacy and autonomy.

In an age of big data and social media, our private information is mined, used, and sold to feed us fabricated information and new products we don't need. Today, not only is the artist scrutinized for biographical information, but the spectator cannot maintain autonomy. With data companies mining information, and social media networks revealing so much, the consumer has become a commodity who is collected, marketed and re-sold back to itself. To participate in this system of social media and internet-based exploration is to be subordinated to the rules of engagement--content regulation, data collection, use and sale of our own marketable data and privacy. While there is, at times, a social necessity for participating in this system, in today's world it is as if, in the harrowing words of Judith Butler, "the price of existence is subordination." It is not just privacy that we lose, but the possibility of being something outside what our social media presence suggests we are. For Morrocco, his suit is a coping mechanism, a cloak of invisibility which grants access to experiences

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beyond the confines of personal identity. Like the eponymous crypto-currency the exhibition is named after, the suit grants the artist access to the world, but maintains his anonymity, placing a barrier between his person and his objectified presence. Set against bright yet brittle winter landscapes, the *Spring* iteration of this show presents a figure rapturously exploring the joy of solitude among the trees.

Exhibition dates:

April 19 - June 15, 2019

Gallerie B.B.
840 Santa Fe Drive
Denver, CO