

LIANG FU,VIKTOR MATTSSON,ADRIAAN MARIN, SERGIO MIGUEL, JUSTIN LIAM O'BRIEN,
and CHRISTOPHER PAGE.

Spectre

June 27 — August 21, 2025

Artists use materials to conjure up recipes for visions of their imagination—alchemical processes through which thought, memory, and emotion are transmuted into form. In *Spectre*, pigment, surface, texture, and gesture become the language through which the intangible is made visible, where the seen and the felt coalesce into image. In this way, each artwork is not simply constructed but summoned—an apparition born from the subtle interplay between material choice and psychic resonance.

Anchored by Eva Hesse's reflection that "art is controlled and disciplined perception, creatively and imaginatively expressed," *Spectre* brings together artists **Liang Fu, Viktor Mattsson, Adriaan Marin, Sergio Miguel, Justin Liam O'Brien** and **Christopher Page**, each of whom moves through the thresholds of perception, materiality, and the unconscious. Their works oscillate between oneiric suggestion and what Walter Benjamin called "awakened time," drawing the viewer into a space where material, image, and thought converge—not to clarify, but to reverberate, linger, and haunt.

Benjamin's concept of awakened time emerges from his philosophy of history and image-making—wherein perception becomes an active encounter, a sudden flash in which the past pierces the present and reveals its emotional or symbolic charge. In Adriaan Marin's *Beschermengelen*, this temporal disjunction takes form in paint: the emotional texture of memory rendered in thick, impasto strokes of violet and rose. The figures—an angelic presence flanked by a woman offering flowers and a man petting a cat—hover between solidity and dissolution, appearing both present and fading, as if summoned from a personal mythology. Inspired by the artist's father, sister, and childhood cat, the painting becomes a spectral portrait of guardianship, suffused with longing and ambivalence. A knife held gently, almost imperceptibly, by the central figure, and a river splitting the landscape in two, deepen the painting's latent unease—suggesting that even in moments of care, protection may carry its own shadow. In Marin's hands, memory does not simply return; it arrives as an apparition, unresolved and charged, perfectly embodying Benjamin's vision of history's return through the haunted image.

In *The Dying Light*, Christopher Page paints with the precision of illusion, yet resists the seduction of realism. His compositions often feature paintings within paintings, glowing skylines glimpsed through imagined windows, and—as in this work—mirrors that refuse to reflect. Though each piece appears framed, none are; the illusion is fully contained within the canvas. In this particular painting, what seems to be a mirror offers not our reflection but the faint image of an empty interior, lit by a glowing window. We are drawn into this "other scene"—what Freud once called the unconscious—but find no trace of ourselves within it. Despite their visual exactitude, Page's works are not straightforward *trompe l'oeil*; they are perceptual thresholds. The viewer becomes ensnared in a cycle of looking and misrecognition, suspended between surface and depth, presence and absence. The image beckons, then recedes—haunting the gaze even as it denies it.

Liang Fu's *As Above, So Within* offers a different kind of spectral encounter. Using mineral-based pigments and solvents, Fu creates a shimmering, ghostlike surface where a giant eye—or a celestial body—

emerges and disappears into fields of grey-blue. This is a painting that gazes back. It evokes the feeling of being seen not by another person, but by the universe itself. The work drifts between the cosmic and the personal, between mysticism and matter, embodying a profound meditation on perception and interconnectedness.

In *Sleight of Hand*, Justin Liam O'Brien conjures a scene dense with psychological tension and quiet intrigue. A group of partially obscured figures huddle around a tabletop scattered with coins, cards, and folded paper structures. Their gestures—furtive, ambiguous, almost conspiratorial—suggest a moment suspended between game and deceit, transaction and performance. Faces are turned away or cropped from view, drawing the viewer's attention to the choreography of hands—gripping, offering, withholding—capturing the emotional charge of a decision about to unfold. Rendered in rich, muted tones and smooth gradients, the painting channels the compositional weight of Renaissance tableau with the intimacy and ambiguity of film noir. Like much of O'Brien's work, *Sleight of Hand* speaks to the psychic weight of urban life: how inner worlds crowd the frame, how gesture betrays what thought conceals, and how meaning flickers in what is withheld or unseen. As with many works in *Spectre*, the painting reflects on what remains hidden in plain sight, exploring the instability of perception and the quiet drama of suspended action.

In Sergio Miguel's *Estudio De Un Toro* and *Estudio De Una Crucifixión*, the figure becomes a volatile site of transformation—erotic, sacrificial, and unclassifiable. A gaping-mouthed bull, rendered with taut musculature, evokes both desire and death, while a double-headed, cruciform body resists sanctity and monstrosity alike. These works are shaped by Miguel's ongoing dialogue with the legacies of Francis Bacon and Diego Velázquez. From Bacon, he inherits the convulsing body—smeared, screaming, always in flux—while Velázquez offers the structural discipline and painterly economy that anchor such expressive violence in form. Miguel's figures do not seek resolution; they hover in a state of becoming, blurring boundaries between flesh and spirit, man and beast. In this tension—between rupture and rigor, ecstasy and containment—his paintings open a visceral register within the exhibition, where the image emerges not as representation, but as sensation, echoing Benjamin's notion of the image as a flashpoint of memory and matter.

In *The Empty Handed Man*, Viktor Mattsson conjures a spectral allegory of violence and tenderness. Two elongated, surreal figures—part devil, part fable—enact a ritual of wounding and taking: the aggressor grips a bloodied dagger in one hand and the blue heart of the other in the other. The wounded figure—empty handed, as the title suggests—stands in a posture of quiet surrender, already emptied and yet still losing more. Their distorted anatomies and calm expressions blur the line between harm and care, evoking archetypes that often populate Mattsson's universe—devils, cowboys, and clowns. Rendered in muted, earth-toned hues, the painting captures a moment of emotional contradiction, echoing *Spectre*'s central concern with the unstable terrain between cruelty and compassion, presence and absence, memory and myth.

Together, the works in *Spectre* operate like phantoms—surfacing and withdrawing, flickering between past and present, image and afterimage. They are not ghosts in the gothic sense, but apparitions of thought and feeling, rendered in pigment and form. To encounter these works is to be drawn into a state of heightened seeing, where the image does not represent, but remembers. These are not static compositions—they are invitations to linger in uncertainty, to allow the unresolved to unfold.

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***Spectre* is on view from June 27, to August 21, 2025. Opening hours are Wednesday through Saturday from 13:00 to 18:00 hrs.**