

TAMARA AL SAMERRAEI
Promise You Made
2023

In *Promise You Made*, Tamara Al Samerraei produces a new body of work that revisits both familiar and unknown spaces but also the space of painting itself. The exhibition includes her Black Book series in which the artist paints from photographic documentation of her diary of watercolor drawings that she kept between 2020 and 2022, a period characterized by moments of isolation, heartbreak, and recovery. Photography has always been key in the artist's practice and is a medium through which she is able to "return" to both painting and the spaces she has left or was forced to leave behind. Among the places that Al Samerraei depicts are the walls of her studio, reproducing traces of what remains from a past life and a precarious working space, or what the artist calls the "evidence of work and the evidence of life".

Beyond physical environments, Al Samerraei also returns to her older paintings which explore the role of figuration, pointing towards the absences that she has experienced in recent years. The paintings in this exhibition all consider the relation of the artist to her own work, the relation between photography and painting, and between experience and reproduction. By re-staging and re-composing them, Al Samerraei lays bare a world bereft of human contact.

A painting of her studio exterior which once served as a refuge is accompanied by musician and composer Jana Saleh's solo piano piece *Soupir* (2020). The sound resonates in the space as an homage to a time of convalescence.



Take Two, Red Green Buttons
2023

Acrylic paint on canvas
160 x 205.5 cm



Aphrodite
2023

Acrylic paint on canvas
160 x 200 cm



Studio 1
2023

Acrylic paint on canvas
160 x 201 cm



Studio 2
2023

Acrylic paint on canvas
160 x 201 cm



Studio 3
2023

Acrylic paint on canvas
160 x 201 cm



Studio 4
2023

Acrylic paint on canvas
161 x 190 cm



Black Book (series)
2023

Acrylic paint on canvas
Approx 85 x 108 cm each