

blinking last and laughing first

October 30 – December 18, 2022

Rumpelstiltskin

1166 Manhattan Ave #301

Brooklyn, NY 11222

David Diao / David Muenzer / Maria VMier

Rumpelstiltskin is pleased to present *blinking last and laughing first*, an exhibition featuring paintings, drawings, and sculptures by David Diao, David Muenzer, and Maria VMier.

We are honored to exhibit two paintings that Diao has selected from his archive, one of which has never before been shown. This painting, *St. Etienne-Checklist* (1991), takes as its focus the checklist from his first major institutional solo exhibition at Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain in 1989. Rendered in a subtle blue and reflective gray, the painting is emblematic of a period in Diao's oeuvre during which he shifts his analytical lens from the production habits of other artists to his own career.

Similarly documenting an interaction with a major institution, *Double Rejection 2 (MoMA Boardroom)* (2012), depicts Diao's earlier painting *Triptych* (1972) hanging in the Phillip Johnson-designed MoMA boardroom. At a pivotal moment in his emerging career, Diao stretched and installed this painting for deliberation by the acquisition committee, which ultimately rejected it. Years later, this same boardroom faced a rejection of its own, when it was demolished to make way for the museum's shifting footprint. Reflecting upon both his successes and failures with the same melancholic yet humorous gaze, Diao's work suggests that highs and lows alike ultimately flatten into memory.

Maria VMier's five bronze door knockers also draw attention to how artists relate to institutions. Shown previously at Museum Brandhorst, the sculptures require the wall on which they are hung to complete the gesture for which they were made. Whether interpreted as a summoning of a representative, a desire to be let in, or a physical criticism, each knock creates a new mark and a dull thud.

In his two red pencil drawings and one oil painting, David Muenzer examines social realities more broadly: the inflated globe heads of each figure highlight their opaque inner psyches. Though formally identical, perhaps suggesting a universal kinship, the characters' heads literalize the isolation of living in one's own world – each head a distant planet in a bizarre galaxy. At once cheeky and unnerving, his drawings capture the persistence of mysteriously intimate moments which occasionally puncture an otherwise atomized world.