

Rene Matić / Oscar Murillo. JAZZ. 14/3–28/7 2024

PRESS CONFERENCE	Wed 13/3 2024 • 10 AM
OPENING	Thu 14/3 2024 • 7 PM
CURATORS	What, How & for Whom / WHW (Ivet Ćurlin • Nataša Ilić • Sabina Sabolović) and Laura Amann
EXHIBITION VENUE	kunsthalle wien Museumsquartier

Kunsthalle Wien presents **Rene Matić** (b.1997, Peterborough, UK) and **Oscar Murillo** (b. 1986, La Paila, Colombia) together for the first time.

For **JAZZ**, both artists present existing works as well as new commissions made specifically in response to the space and the city of Vienna. Encompassing painterly gestures, installation, film, photography, and sound, each element on show is in dialogue, shaped by Murillo's black canvas installation which is suspended from the ceiling throughout the space.

Together, through dissection and reconciliation, both artists explore the impossibilities and contradictions that arise from notions of desire, visibility, and opacity.



Rene Matić, *60 and 25, alive*, 2022,
installation view: Rene Matić, *upon
this rock*, 2022 • PHOTO: ANDY STAGG,
COURTESY THE ARTIST, SOUTH LONDON
GALLERY AND ARCADIA MISSA, LONDON,
© RENE MATIĆ

On the exhibition

Coming from differing vantage points and mediums, both artists employ gesture and abstraction within their practices. **Murillo** chooses the social over the subjective and the collective over the individual, while **Matić**'s practice is often grounded in the personal. **Murillo**'s works, and even titles, often reference the act of sending messages or of recording, intercepting, and tuning into, while **Matić** displays a deep concern with the reception of the image. **Murillo**'s paintings and drawings come to life through mark-making and gesture; **Matić**'s works use dance as a form of expression within the realm of the moving image and photography. In this sense, *JAZZ*.—a title that evokes many resonances and qualities within each artist's practice—could be understood as a mode of artistic collaboration but also of reception: one where cultural sensibilities are blended, improvisation takes place and group interaction becomes as vital as the individual voice. *JAZZ*. nods to concepts of desire, of consumption of the Other, it plays with performativity while retaining the right to opacity.

While in some ways the practices of **Matić** and **Murillo** seem rather complementary to one another, they also overlap in important aspects. For instance, the gestural painting, reminiscent of action painting, that is so often at the heart of **Murillo**'s work is akin to the use of dance and dancing in **Matić**'s videos, as they both share a spontaneous, unboth-

ered, and unscripted nature. Both artists also share intuition within their process and production, a calculated intuition. One could say intuition deployed strategically. Additionally, both artists succeed in carving out a space of independence for themselves in a cultural context that is determined to classify and smooth out everything and everyone. Claiming such a space first entails an act of "disaffiliation" (concept by Édouard Glissant), through which one breaks away from established traditions creating room for discontinuous and new thinking and then reformulating one's (art-)historical narratives and genealogies both in an intellectual way but also in terms of personal relations. ●



Oscar Murillo, *Maria Virgelina Murillo*, 2015 • PHOTO: TIM BOWDITCH AND REINIS LISMANIS, COURTESY THE ARTIST, © OSCAR MURILLO

On the works of Oscar Murillo

At **kunsthalle wien**, Oscar Murillo's large-scale black canvases—a recurring element—fully develop their impressive architectural dimension. Suspended from the ceiling to create an almost labyrinthine structure, they carefully shape the space, allowing for intimate encounters with the works. While their intense darkness may elicit a sense of danger or perhaps mourning, this darkness can also be a space that breeds new life and rebirth.

Within this maze, we encounter further works by **Murillo**, such as a completely new set of landscape paintings titled *fields of spirits* (2023).

Frequencies, one of **Murillo's** collaborative projects, initiated in 2013, involves visiting schools around the world, fixing canvas onto the pupils' desks, letting them freely draw on, graffiti, and mark them, until, several months later, the artist collects them. In the **kunsthalle wien** exhibition, excerpts from this collection are installed as a large-scale wallpaper. The prints magnify the unconscious and conscious marks to striking proportions, as well as provide the basis for the *Telegram* (2013–2023) series.



Working with fragments—made in different spaces and time periods, and moved from place to place only to be stitched together or reworked layer by layer—has long been at the core of **Murillo's** work. It's a practice that highlights the presence of the many hands and vastly different geographical contexts that permeate his paintings, sculptures, and performances. ●

On the works of Rene Matic

Circling Murillo's structure but also deeply embedded in it, we find **Rene Matic**'s contributions to the exhibition: four new commissions—two films, a photography series, and a sound piece—as well as an existing wall installation.

Matic's starting point for their contribution to the *JAZZ.* exhibition is Vienna's response to and "outrage" at **Josephine Baker**'s performance in the city in 1928. A few years earlier, **Baker**, a US-American, had emigrated to Paris, where she became extraordinarily successful as a dancer and singer. Her experience in Vienna breaks with the somewhat romanticized narrative of her relatively liberal reception in Europe, contrasting the harsh racialized context she experienced in her homeland. The Austrian reviews regard **Baker** as "a serious attack on the values of European culture". In these articles, **Baker** becomes synonymous with Blackness, jazz, and low culture, while Vienna, and Europe, become synonymous with whiteness, the waltz, and high culture.



The outrage **Baker** sparked in Vienna was so strong that the Church felt compelled to intervene, with many sermons warning of her seductive performances. Throughout the city, churches loudly rang their bells to prevent 'poor souls' from sinning and offered atonement services to strengthen parishioners' relation to the "holy and divine".

It is against this incident that **Matic** develops the film works *redacted* and *climax*, the photo series *(out of) place*, and the sound work *voice* (all 2024). In *redacted*, we see the artist dancing in a black space with a single fixed spotlight. As they dance, their body moves in and out of the darkness, in and out of the spotlight, and therefore also in and out of our gaze. **Matic** draws on darkness as a means of occlusion and a strategy of removal that can signify both refusal and protection—a notion of essential value to bodies that are already by default exposed in their cultural and societal context.

Rene Matic, *(out of) place 1*, 2024 •
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND ARCADIA MISSA,
LONDON, © RENE MATIĆ

The filmic text work *climax* puts original quotations from **Baker** into direct dialogue with the Viennese reviews. This dialogue could be understood as a conversation, an argument, or maybe even lovemaking—or, as the artist says, a “hate-fuck”.

WE HAVE BECOME

The photographic series occupies light boxes similar to those found across Vienna, including in MuseumsQuartier, the frames are a reference to **Baker**'s original performance advertisements. While the singer and dancer consciously reinforced the attraction and fantasies she elicited, **Matić**'s imagery too plays with certain eroticism, whilst also capturing an in-between moment of movement and intimacy, as if avoiding clear definition and rather allowing for a new space to open up.

I RAN AWAY

In *voice*, the sound of church bells rings out within the gallery space from time to time—only in this case they do not signal a warning about but rather call for prayer for **Baker**, giving voice back to the dancer. The bell also acts as an interruption in the space, to remind the audience of their participation in the act of looking, and the histories and politics surrounding that act.

IN PRAYER

While both **Matić** and **Murillo** are generous in sharing their thinking, feeling, and practices, each also remains committed to “the right to opacity for everyone”. As the philosopher and poet **Édouard Glissant** argues in his book *Poetics of Relation*, transparency—through its attempts at definition and clarification—ignores the aspects of the self that are difficult to grasp, or even unknowable. Opacity, by contrast, simply accepts that everything that makes us *us* cannot be understood completely. ●

SENSUALITY

UNINHIBITED

Biography Rene Matic

Rene Matic (b. 1997, Peterborough, UK) is a London-based artist and writer whose practice spans photography, film, and sculpture, converging in a meeting place they describe as "rude(ness)"—an evidencing and honoring of the in-between. Matic draws inspiration from dance and music movements such as northern soul, ska, and two-tone as tools to delve into the complex relationship between West Indian and white working-class culture in Britain, while privileging queer/ing intimacies, partnerships, and pleasures as modes of survival.

Recent solo exhibitions include *upon this rock*, Kunstverein Gartenhaus, Vienna, 2023 and South London Gallery, London, 2022; *soul time*, Studio Voltaire, London, 2022; *in spite of, instead of*, Quench Gallery, Margate, 2022; *flags for countries that don't exist but bodies that do*, Arcadia Missa, London, 2021; and *Born British Die British*, VITRINE Gallery, London, 2021.

Recent group exhibitions include Coventry Biennial, 2023; *Divided Selves: Legacies, Memories, Belonging*, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, 2023; *Crowd Control*, High Art, Arles, 2022; *Queerdirect*, Sadie Coles HQ, London, 2022; *Arcadia*, Bold Tendencies, London, 2021; Bloomberg New Contemporaries, South London Gallery, London, 2021; and *Friends and Friends of Friends*, Schlossmuseum, Linz, 2020.

Matic's works are held in several prominent collections, including Tate, London, UK; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; UK Government Art Collection; Arts Council Collection, London; South London Gallery, London; Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; Martin Parr Foundation, Bristol; University of the Arts London Collection, London; Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York; and Deutsche Bank Collection, Berlin. ●



Biography

Oscar Murillo

Oscar Murillo (b. 1986, La Paila, Colombia) has developed a multifaceted and challenging practice encompassing large-scale paintings, collaborative projects, live events, videos, sound pieces, and installations. Through each of these bodies of work, the artist probes questions of collectivity and shared culture, demonstrating a commitment to the power of material presence and complex meditations on contemporary society.

Murillo earned his BFA at the University of Westminster in 2007 and his MFA from the Royal College of Art in 2012. In 2019, Murillo was one of four artists to collectively win the Turner Prize, and in 2023 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Westminster.

Murillo's recent solo exhibitions include *Masses*, WIELS, Brussels (2024); *Together in Our Spirits*, Fundação Serralves, Porto; *Frequencies*, Javett-UP, Pretoria (both 2023–24); *A Storm Is Blowing From Paradise*, Scuola Grande della Misericordia, Venice; *Currents 121: Oscar Murillo*, Saint Louis Art Museum, St. Louis (both 2022); *Social Cataracts*, KM21, The Hague and *Condiciones aún por titular*, Museum of Art of the National University of Colombia, Bogotá (both 2021–22). This summer, Murillo will present newly commissioned works and a participatory installation at Tate Modern, as part of UNIQLO Tate Play programming.

Works by the artist are included in museum collections worldwide, such as, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Tate, London; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; Dallas Art Museum, Dallas; Fondazione Prada, Milan; Kettle's Yard, Cambridge; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, and The Museum of Modern Art, New York. ●



Oscar Murillo

● PHOTO: TIM BOWDITCH, COURTESY
THE ARTIST, © OSCAR MURILLO

The exhibition at a glance

Rene Matic / Oscar Murillo. *JAZZ.*

CURATORS What, How & for Whom / WHW
(Ivet Ćurlin • Nataša Ilić • Sabina Sabolović)
and
Laura Amann

CURATORIAL SUPPORT Ezra Šimek

EXHIBITION VENUE **kunsthalle wien** museumsquartier •
Museumsplatz 1 • 1070 Vienna

EXHIBITION DATES 14/3-28/7 2024

OPENING HOURS Tue-Sun 11AM-7 PM • Thu 11AM-9 PM

Free Thursday night:

Free admission every Thursday from 5–9 PM

EXHIBITION GUIDE A comprehensive free exhibition guide will be published, with an essay by the curators, statements by the artists and illustrations and descriptions of the works. The digital version is available on the **kunsthalle wien** website.

PRESS MATERIALS <https://kunsthallewien.at/en/exhibition/rene-matic-oscar-murillo-jazz/press>

SOCIAL MEDIA

instagram.com/KunsthalleWien
facebook.com/KunsthalleWien
twitter.com/KunsthalleWien
soundcloud.com/kunsthallewien
#MatićMurilloJAZZ

PRESS CONTACT

katharina baumgartner
+43 1 5 21 89 – 223
presse@kunsthallewien.at

ana berlin + team
+43 660 47 53 818
hello@abc-works.today