

# THE PILL®

APOLONIA SOKOL

I had trouble sleeping,  
But she said she loved me...

May 25 – July 31, 2018  
Preview, May 24, 6 – 8 pm



The Pill is thrilled to announce Apolonia Sokol's first solo show in Istanbul.

A young dark-haired woman wearing a white blouse and red skirt lies on a sofa in an unnatural position; her body appears to be dislocated like a puppet's. Behind the sofa stands another thick-haired woman who seems to be there to keep an eye on the former, in a threatening rather than caring way, just like a skulker or the incubus in Johann Heinrich Füssli's *Le Cauchemar* (The Nightmare).

The young women who inhabit the paintings of Apolonia Sokol occupy an unusual place in which an angular and closed geometry appears. This might seem to restrict them, but it also provides a safe harbor, and one can see how truthful perspectives, flat-covered walls, and sharp edges eventually provide a reassuring framework. In that respect, these women hold contradictory positions: strong and fragile or decided but uncertain. They find refuge in a supportive womanhood holding tightly on to each

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other; their hieratic and erotic bodies intermixed. Both sisters and lovers, they fell peacefully asleep like kittens nestled in a litter.

These are the contemporary women, and at the same time, they are timeless as they bring back the memories of other young ladies, Avignon or the banks of the Seine. They are mixed-race, they do not belong to any particular nation, and they search for an "ideal" place in this world. Their beauty is as the beauty of ancient goddesses and what they appear to be telling us is that we think we possess them, but they do not belong to us. Warriors at rest, they are capable of great achievements. They may seem untouchable, but they are lost in love, and, in that sense, they are waiting for love in this confined dramatic and mental space, which is also their workspace.

They wait for an inspiration to strike. Thus comes a touch of pensive melancholy out of their eyes. These women are in all directions at the same time. They dream and escape surreptitiously through windows. A painting being like a window makes it possible to envision a world that generates hope, a bright future.

*I had trouble sleeping, but she said she loved me...* A fragment of a stolen poem (poems are written to be stolen) lends its name to the first solo exhibition of Apolonia Sokol at the Pill Gallery. An excerpt, like fragments of paint that appears here and there in the backgrounds of the paintings... Ghostly faces, furtive thoughts, heady memories of beautiful encounters appear as flashes and gaps in the night of this artist's studio, where a young woman is experiencing thousands of things, doubts, bright ideas with a multitude of loving sisters in her thoughts while painting. And that is what Sokol distills day after day and night after night in these portraits, where the events of her own life flow. Then we are reminded of that great sentence in Henry James's short story "The Middle Years": "We work in the dark – we do what we can – we give what we have. Our doubt is our passion, and our passion is our task. The rest is the madness of art."

Richard Leydier

*Apolonia Sokol (b.1988 , lives and works in Paris). After completing her MFA at Academie des Beaux-Arts de Paris, the artist moved to Los Angeles (USA) where she exhibited and became friend with painters such as Henry Taylor, Elizabeth Peyton...and later to Brussels (BE) where she had a solo exhibition at The Attic. Apolonia Sokol's work has been exhibited in several institutional group shows such as Tainted Love (curator Yann Chevalier) in new Contemporary Art Space Confort Moderne's inaugural show in France, Peindre dit-elle # 2 (curators Julie*

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*Crenn, Anabelle Teneze and Amélie Lavin) in Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dole and Emerige Prize 2018 (FR) (curator Gaël Charbau). The artist's work is included in several prestigious private collections. HBO and Danish Documentary are producing an ongoing documentary on the artist directed by Lea Glob.*