



Van Maltese

Birds flew down to peck at the painted grapes

June 24 - July 30, 2016

COOPER COLE is pleased to present a solo exhibition from gallery artist Van Maltese.

My feet were tired from the day's work. Slumped immobile on a three-legged stool, I found my toes buried beneath a scattering of papers that evidenced my most recent labours. The night was quiet and hours vanished at a time. The weight of my upcoming performance, only one night away, was finally sinking in. It was close to 3am when I noticed the candles flicker. A premonition of the wreck that was drawing near. Then, suddenly, the stillness of my studio was destroyed by the crash of a mirror. The same mirror that had been my only company as I'd rehearsed these past six weeks. The mirror that doubled my studio and doubled my body. But mine was no longer the only body present. A formerly flat reflection had dressed herself in three-dimensions. All in red.

Her hands were badly burned and her body arrived draped in chiffon. She pleaded for my help wanting only to return home. Her inarticulate fingers a newly landed impediment on her path back to illusion. She begged to borrow mine.

She asked me to draw a line.

Then a cross. Then a curve.

I asked for her shoes.

Her gift latticed their silky red ribbons around my calves. An uncanny fit. I gave my legs over to them willingly, not that I could have resisted. I was overwhelmed. Taller now than I had been before, perched on pointed hooves pointing south, I saw my studio from a different vantage. It had been transformed into a stage. On it, the slippers danced me in circles, my feet barely touch-ing the ground. New shoes make the soul light. Only they didn't stop. What at first felt like a liberation, I now recognized as a kind of capture. The pace quickened and my extremities flailed ecstatically. Was this really happening to me? Had I left my rounded reality to partake in the flat fiction of the mirror? The macabre choreography was unrelenting and my legs burned with activity. I thought to cut them off, but instead I sang back the symbols.

A line —

A cross X

A curve (

The mirror laughed and I continued to dance. "She fooled you, you know."*

– Aryen Hoekstra

*Text is adapted from Kate Bush's *The Line, the Cross & the Curve* (1993) an extended music video she wrote and directed featuring songs from her 1993 album *The Red Shoes*. The album and subsequent video were inspired by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's 1948 film and Hans Christian Andersen's 1845 fairytale of the same name.

Van Maltese (b. 1988, Toronto, Canada) holds a BFA from OCAD University. She is the National Winner of the 2012 RBC Canadian Painting Competition and has exhibited her work in solo and group exhibitions across North America. Most recently, she has exhibited at Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, Greenpoint Terminal Gallery, New York, Halsey McKay, East Hampton, USA; The Power Plant, Cooper Cole, Toronto, Canada. Maltese currently lives and works in Toronto, Canada.

For additional information please contact the gallery:

info@coopercolegallery.com

+1.416.531.8000