

Press Release

## **NOEMI CONAN** ***MIDNIGHT SUN***

**19 October—1 December 2023**  
**Private viewing: October 18, 6-9pm**

David Kovats Gallery  
5-6 Kendrick Mews  
South Kensington, London SW7 3HG

David Kovats Gallery proudly presents *Midnight Sun*, Noemi Conan's debut solo show with the gallery.

The exhibition showcases the creative universe of the Polish, figurative painter and debuts works created in the past two years, combining a wide variety of visual influences and the personal mythology of the artist. The exhibition unveils her close ties with her upbringing in the Eastern Bloc. Noemi's paintings are a mix of Eastern European culture, symbolism and both communist and capitalist propaganda.

A former student of the The Glasgow School of Art, Noemi was highly influenced by her memories from Poland, becoming obsessed with its cultural landscape whilst relocating to the UK. A form of immigrant idealisation, she incorporated parts of the culture she was born in, in order to make sense of the context she was surrounded by in Glasgow and London and how she, as a female, was part of society in the Western world.

Her main subjects are women, always painted in sensual outfits, reminiscent of sex workers she used to see on Polish country roads in the 90's. She always paints them in a way that captures an unsettling essence apparent in their movements, expressions, and glances.

Through the subjects painted in her works, Conan talks about the hyper-sexualisation of Eastern European women, both in their home countries, but also in the countries where they emigrate. By making the women move and act in ways that are not normally associated with femininity and sexuality, such as smoking whilst running, stretching, walking in the woods at night, the artist takes them out from these preconceived roles that society has pushed upon them.

Her obsession with the hyper feminine, but intimidating women archetype was highly influenced by her family background, especially by her aunt who used to work in construction, a male dominated industry, but was always known as the Angel of Death due to her beauty and strong character.

The name *Midnight Sun* is closely tied to the colours which have a key role in Conan's work. Using a bold colour palette, Conan's paintings depict a surreal landscape, giving off a stark feeling that she found in the work of Edvard Munch. The nuances used transform the landscape into a post-apocalyptic background, alluding to the over-industrialized Poland that was left in ruin after the fall of the communist regime, but also the Chernobyl tragedy that affected the country. The works also reference the current laissez faire of the environmental discourse of the Polish political parties.

'*Midnight Sun* alludes to the White Nights of the North of Europe, which I experienced when living in Norway but which also somewhat explains the odd orbs I put into my landscapes. I have connected strongly with the emotional strain that Munch depicts through the way he paints trees, skies and fields. He saturates these landscapes that on the surface should be boring, with a life that mirrors his own anxious way of seeing the world which I find very relatable. All of these works are in a way, me creating love tokens for Edvard Munch, even though I am pretty sure he would not reciprocate my attachment to him.' - Noemi Conan

*Midnight Sun* brings together a body of work that can be read as dark fairy tales about the voluntary exile of an Eastern European, young woman. Based in London, Noemi Conan explores the ties between her Polish upbringing and her life in the United Kingdom, developing a personal archive of mixed cultures, ideas and influences.

The exhibition will be on until the 1st of December at David Kovats Gallery.

**For any enquiries:**

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