Le Jardin

*A Solo Exhibition by **Manon Steyaert** with **Am Collective, NY***

In her latest body of work, Manon Steyaert explores the theme of *Le Jardin* (The Garden), both as a visual gesture and as a conceptual space. Drawing on childhood memories and literary references, Steyaert's new works envelop the viewer in colour and wonder, creating an immersive and sensorial experience.

Le Jardin engages with a series of oppositions: order and chaos, the man-made and the natural, restraint and excess. These tensions are echoed throughout the works. Steyaert reflects on formative memories, including repeated viewings of The Twelve Tasks of Asterix, particularly the task of *"The Isle of Pleasure"*, a place of seductive beauty where one risks losing clarity of senses. This notion of the garden as both sanctuary and snare is further informed by Greek mythology, where gardens appear as sites of pleasure, temptation, and entrapment. These layered references surface throughout the exhibition, shaping its underlying atmosphere of allure and ambiguity.

This new body of work comprises three distinct series, shifting between minimal, gestural, and sculptural approaches. Incorporating materials such as oak, linen, oil paint and silicone, Steyaert invokes the organic and man-made qualities of the garden while exploring themes of beauty, chaos, and control. Her continued use of silicone acts as a "smokescreen" over painted canvases, allowing diffused glows of colour to ebb and vibrate beneath a frosted draped surface.

Expanding her painterly language, Steyaert introduces abstract gestural works influenced by Claude Monet and his *en plein air* practice, capturing fleeting moments of light and, atmosphere through fluid brushstrokes. Combining painting with carefully draped layers of matte silicone Steyaert creates a soft veil between the painted surface and the viewer, obscuring parts of the work whilst highlighting others. This mediation evokes a sense of shifting air and time, as if seen through a subtly toxic lens of silicone, inviting the viewer to become immersed, yet never fully oriented, much like wandering through a garden and becoming lost. The series *Through the Ripples* embodies this sensation of partial perception. The silicone layer suggests looking through water, movement i.e. folds revealing only fragments of what lies beneath, enough to intrigue but never to fully resolve.

The third series, *Entangling Light*, extends Steyaert's exploration into spatial composition focusing on form and colour. Strips of oil-painted linen are draped alongside silicone, deconstructing her wall-based works into painterly sculptures. These pieces balance control and surrender: while composition and palette remain carefully considered, gravity plays an active role in shaping their final form. Colour spills outward into the surrounding space, encouraging viewers to move around the works and encounter them from multiple perspectives.

Across all three series, Steyaert returns to *Le Jardin* as both subject and metaphor, an environment of beauty, disorientation, and quiet tension. The exhibition captures the sensation of becoming lost, echoing the dual experience of childhood wonder and uncertainty within the garden's shifting landscape in time.