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Massey Klein Gallery is pleased to present *into the fold,* a solo exhibition of new paintings by Kathryn Mecca. The exhibition will be on view from October 14th through November 19th. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, October 15th from 4-7pm. This is the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery. For press inquiries or questions regarding works available, please email info@masseyklein.com.

into the fold presents new oil paintings from Kathryn Mecca that, through an intense focus on the human figure, create an absence of context that permeates the image, examining the tension between intimacy and the technological lens. The artist's technique is a dynamic collision between traditional and contemporary practices. Working with oil paint and canvas, Mecca creates painted environments that are simultaneously indulgent and superficial. Materials, layers, and folds blend in a traditional painterly fashion while the artist draws from technology to add modern elements of crispness, intensity, artificial light, and cropping. By zooming in on a particular feature of each figure, such as a shoulder, an elbow, or a chest, Mecca deliberately augments specific elements of the human figure, thus stripping the painting of a distinct context. Producing uniquely quiet yet manicured, elusive moments, Mecca presents a tension that distances the viewer from completely connecting with the image while simultaneously confronting them with a private moment. Effectively confusing the perception of the viewer through this dichotomy, Mecca simulates the repetitive, curated, seductive nature of the technological lens and explores the inherent pleasure derived from it.

Inspired by the alluring individually-curated content which media suggests, Mecca examines the subsequently fragmented experiences that the technologically-filtered world presents. Obscuring the boundary between reality and imagination, the artist dramatically simplifies each subject, zeroing in on minute and nuanced details, compelling the viewer to consider the human body without a defining context.

Using clothing as a symbol for excessive curation, the artist explores how indulging in an overly stylized version of reality strips us of genuine connection and instead, creates an artificial sense of intimacy. Mecca's imagery simultaneously limits the viewer as technology limits our content and raw connection with one another.

Mecca's creative process begins with source material taken from automated content found in ads, posts, or news - imagery that was posed, staged, and shared with a distinct purpose. Unlike her previous work, which often begins with unstaged photographs taken in public spaces, none of these source figures were "real or natural." Mecca's paintings are charged with dualities. By focusing on the folds of the fabric, with edges meeting and forming definitive boundaries yet looping endlessly, the artist plays with contradictions. The overstated folds suggest movement and action, producing a dramatic energy, yet without any sense of narrative the figures remain empty and lack any sense of identity.

The paintings in *into the fold* were created on one of two surfaces: an ultra smooth polyester surface, which has a fragility that feels cheap yet luxurious because of its sleek texture, or a gessoed canvas, which appears synthetic in its smoothness, yet is prepared painstakingly by hand with a palette knife in many thin layers. Both of the artist's chosen surfaces are synthetic and plastic-like, yet lavish in their precise lack of texture. The outcome is a seductive deception in tactility and intimacy. They encourage the viewer to question their access to information, its sincerity, and how that affects their ability to experience human connection in a genuine way.

Kathryn Mecca graduated with a BA in Visual Art and Sociology from the Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University in 2010, where she was awarded the Ruth Crockett Prize for excellence in art. In 2020, Mecca received an MFA from the Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Temple University in Philadelphia, PA, where, during her studies, spent one year abroad at Temple University Rome (2019). Her work has been featured in exhibitions at institutions internationally such as Asarian-McCullough Gallery at St. Thomas Aquinas College (Sparkill, NY), San Francisco Art Institute (San Francisco, CA), New York Academy of Art (New York City, NY), Temple University Rome Gallery (Rome, Italy), Indianapolis Art Center (Indianapolis, IN), Union Street Gallery at Indiana University (Kokomo, IN), and Tom Thomas Gallery at Indiana University Gallery East (Richmond, IN). Mecca has presented work in solo and group exhibitions at commercial galleries across the United States and London. She first exhibited with Massey Klein Gallery during their inaugural *Tyler MFA Painting* exhibition, which featured the work of Tyler's nine MFA graduates from that year (on view from 17-31 August, 2020). She was then selected to present new work with Massey Klein Gallery, alongside artists Howard Fonda and Leigh Suggs, at the 2021 virtual edition of Future Fair Holiday Market. Recent exhibitions include Lucky Charm at Moosey Gallery, London, UK, and Surveilled Silence at Temple Contemporary in Philadelphia, PA. Upcoming shows include a group exhibition in Tokyo, Japan. Her work has been featured in several print and online publications, including Certain *Ground*, *River View Observer*, and *Tinge Magazine* (cover image). The artist lives and works in Maryland.