

# RIOT MATERIAL

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## The Raw And The Cooked: Claudia Doring-Baez And Sophie Iremonger

APRIL 13, 2018 BY [PHOEBE HOBAN](#) — [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

at La MaMa La Galleria, NYC

Reviewed by Phoebe Hoban

Claudia Doring-Baez is fascinated with repurposed images; images culled through memory or even re-enacted. As a graduate student at the Studio School, she devoted an entire series to Cindy Sherman's iconic *Untitled Film Stills*, appropriating the cinematic stills that Sherman herself had appropriated, and recreating them in oil paint; a true meta work.

Similarly, her 2014 show, "Paintings After Proust," was inspired by Eric Karpeles' richly illustrated book, *Paintings in Proust: A Visual Companion to In search of Lost Time*. Presenting her personal interpretations of some of the 100-plus masterpieces Karpeles lists as being referenced by Marcel Proust in his 7-volume opus, "In Search of Lost Time," Baez accomplished a double feat: she used Karpeles' book and its famous images as a touchstone to channel her own stream-of-consciousness memories of reading Proust.



Last Year at Marienbad

For her current series, Baez, who has a Bachelors Degree in film from Columbia University and produced several films shot and directed by her brother, Adolfo Doring, including *Rose and Roy*, a 2015 documentary about the artist Rose Wylie, turned to Alain Resnais' New Wave classic, *Last Year at Marienbad*, which she first saw as a child. Once again, black-and-white film stills have provided fertile material for Baez's fluid imagery.

The movie takes place in a labyrinthine hotel, full of baroque chandeliered rooms, shadowy corridors and secret alcoves, and a garden replete with statues and topiary. It revolves around a man and a woman, who may or may not have had an affair there the year before. The woman's husband completes the enigmatic love triangle. Considered by many a meta-masterpiece—a perfect example of post-modernism—it is as much about cinema itself as about the story it purports to tell. Its repetitive use of spoken phrases and carefully posed images, including occasional frozen stills, is hypnotically—but often annoyingly—self-referential.



Installation View

Baez's 14-painting suite is not so much an ode to the movie as a meditation on the artist's memory of it. It opens with a colorful diptych depicting the femme fatale, played by Delphine Seyrig, in various guises, reclining on a bed. She is bracketed at one end by a single image of her husband and a miniature version of the statue of a stone couple that is repeatedly shown in the film. Baez has randomly cribbed the movie's subtitles as titles for her canvases. So for instance, an evocative black-and-white image, tinged with violet, of the jealous husband peering from behind curtains at his possibly adulterous wife and her lover, is called "All the Bedrooms are the Same," while a black-and-white image of an empty bedroom is called "It's Unbelievable, I don't quite Remember."

The paintings include close-ups of the three characters and various scenes of coupling—whether it is the husband and wife or husband and presumed lover. Among the most striking are those featuring the woman. Baez has caught the spirit of not only the film's imagery but its descriptive language. In the painting, "It was not me you must be mistaken," the woman is shown in a characteristic pose, with her hand on her shoulder, a pose verbally described by her lover. And in what might be the central painting, "And once again, we found ourselves separated," she is depicted in a lace dress, leaning against a stone balustrade that overlooks the garden, a pose also described verbally in the film. Unlike the film,

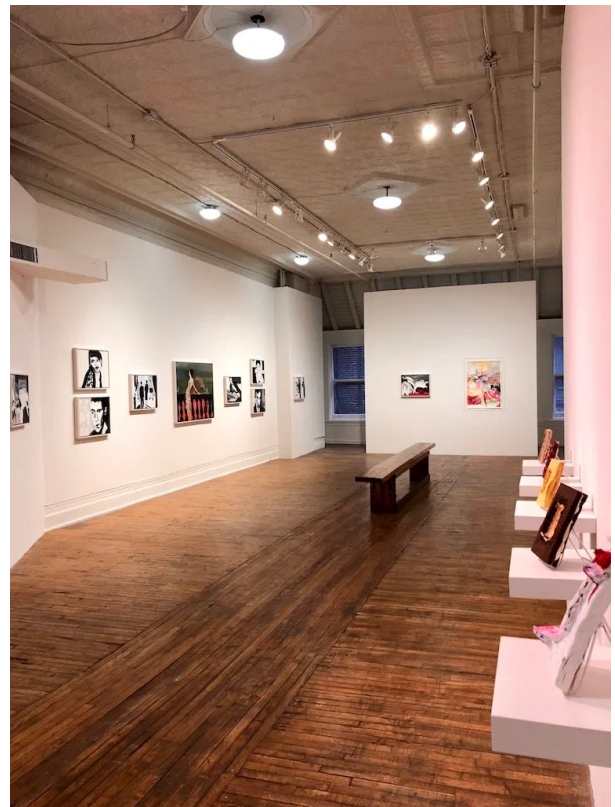
however, which has a forbidding, remote quality, Baez's images are intimate, redolent, full of both mystery and yearning. Baez has once again performed the alchemy of filtering known imagery through her own personal perspective—adding an enticing and visually loaded layer. |

At first glance the work of Sophie Iremonger seems to have little in common with that of Baez. But the two artists share an intimate, nostalgic, pre-digital scale. Iremonger's multimedia works on paper are delicate and ephemeral, with a unique blend of quirky imagery—think Wayne Thiebaud meets the Mexican Day of the Dead.

Rather than being conventionally framed, these pieces are shown floating behind glass, or framed by painted lines on the wall. That suits their odd and original subject matter; fetes trumpeting royalty, desserts aplenty, including drippy cupcakes, and coffins depicted like candy boxes, filled with edible nuggets—except for the pairs of clasped hands or the skulls or the small corpses thrown in for good measure.

In “Manifest Confectionary,” a turn-of-the-century figure stands at the top of the canvas, surveying an endless array of sweets. And then there are the “Chocphagous,” pieces, variations on the coffin theme, including one of the two best works in the series, “Many chocophagus,” with multiples of the Iremonger's intriguing death-by-confection vision. The other standout is “Skull custard,” which features a barely discernible ghostly visage hovering above a foreground of deadly? tarts and custards. (Confection also serves, less-successfully, as the theme of five small sculptures, also on display, consisting of hollowed-out books dressed up as desserts.)

Rendered with a decorative panache, there is something endearingly nonsensical about Iremonger's curious images. As it turns out, the artist is also the author of several whimsical books, including “Cookery for The Unemployed: time-consuming recipes for the useless eater,” which, of course, features Iremonger's idiosyncratic illustrations.



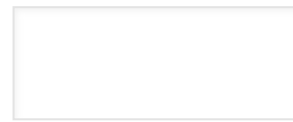
Installation View



Sophie Iremonger, *Manifest confectionary*

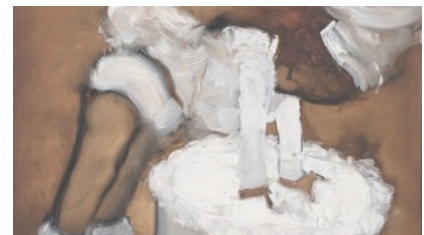
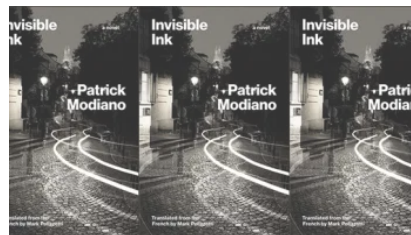
Featured Image: Claudia Doring Baez, *I love, I already loved to hear you laugh.*

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Phoebe Hoban has written about culture and the arts for a variety of publications, including The New York Times, New York Magazine, The Wall Street Journal, Vogue, Vanity Fair, GQ, Harper’s Bazaar, ARTnews, and The New York Observer, among others. She is the author of three artist biographies: *Basquiat: A Quick Killing in Art*, (1998), published as an e-book in May, 2016; *Alice Neel: The Art of Not Sitting Pretty*, (2010) and *Lucian Freud: Eyes Wide Open*, (2014).



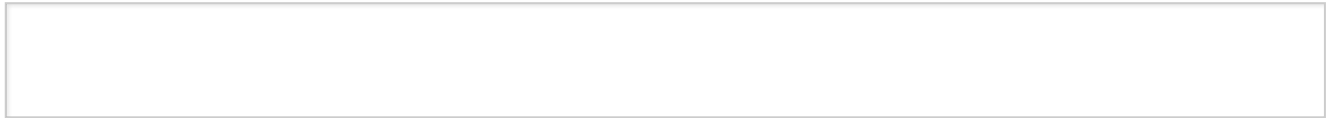
In Search Of Lost Time In Alfonso  
Cuaron's Roma  
In "Film"

Stalking Memory to Spy Out One's  
Self in Patrick Modiano's Invisible Ink  
In "Books"

Kim Dingle: I Will Be Your Server  
(The Lost Supper Paintings)  
In "Art"

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