

# rodolphe janssen

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## **Patrizio di Massimo** ***As Snug as a Bug in a Rug*** 21.05 > 16.07.2022

In his latest body of work, painter Patrizio di Massimo delves into the rich complexities found at the thematic core of his practice—portraiture.

Expanding on his formal play and compositional whimsy, the artist pulls focus onto one of the most intimate, yet universal of human acts. Sleep spans realms of the conscious and subconscious mind, depicted here as a bridge to both the worlds of daydreams and nightmares. Surreal acts are lived out in internalized realms of the psyche, for di Massimo, these spaces are occupied by a menagerie of fantastic beasts, whether real, imaginary, or a foreboding combination of the two.

*As Snug as a Bug in a Rug* expresses the relationships between the interior and exterior arenas of sleep as a physical, while equally psychological, theatre. In a series of new paintings, the domestic setting of the bed frames di Massimo's renewed focus on his subjects. Constellations of both family and friends anchor these works, rendered from the artist's own candid documentations of his life. Subjects lay in passive, yet contorted combinations of embrace, their coupling caught in a kind of mid-day slumber. In these personal portraits, the rendering of textiles becomes a tertiary subject caught in an animated state of idleness. Bedspreads, pillows, and quilts exaggerate representation through the artist's obsessive attention to the undulating folds of the bed's terrain. These beds are not often kept, but active sites in a supposedly quiet moment of stasis.

As pair to the domestic scenes, a group of paintings offer an interpretation of dreams which tether the parallel universes of wake life to dreamscape. This series of vignettes depicts terrorizing altercations between allegorical subjects. Here the self-portrait is continued through di Massimo's body of work, whether represented as confronting demons or doppelgängers, the artist considers himself as his most accessible subject by utilizing his likeness as a formal and conceptual strategy. In developing his compositions, di Massimo superimposes himself onto found imagery as a pictorial scaffold, culled from sources spanning the Italian Renaissance to erotic retro pulp, rendering his own image into rousing tableaux. These sleep terrors stand in stark contrast to the safety appreciated in the familial states of rest. We are often led to believe that monsters are kept abated once we are hidden under the covers, in this exhibition being wrapped in repose is equal parts safety as well as a suggestion of its fleeting impermanence.

One painting in particular stands as witness to the events unfolding on exhibit here. As the only solitary subject visibly awake, a portrait of the Nepalese painter Lok Chitrakar in his studio stares directly outwards from the canvas. Di Massimo met the artist, a painter of mandalas, while participating in the 2022 Kathmandu Triennale. The portrait continues the artist's series in depicting fellow artists in their studios, in the context of this exhibition Chitrakar is framed as an awakened observer. His portrait is a reminder of the creative act taking place here, breaking the fourth wall in doing so.

As viewers we are invited to decipher the theatrics of di Massimo's subjects, traversing the threshold from inside and outside of the mind. When entering the world of dreams, we are exposed to a dramaturgy erected deep within the subconscious, cast from the discrete actors of our lives. Here the stage is set in the act of sleep, where we are made audience to what resulting dreams may come, while kept safely at a distance and snug as any bug in a rug.

### **About the artist:**

Born in 1983, Jesi, Italy; lives and works in London, UK.

Recent solo exhibitions include *The Tale End of the Tale*, T293, Rome, Italy (2021); *The Escalator Cycle*, Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli-Turin (2021); *Il tempo dello sguardo* at Palazzo Ducale, Urbino, Italy (2019); *Patrizio di Massimo*, Kura, at Fonderia Artistica Battaglia, Milan, Italy (2019); *Inside Me*, ChertLüdde, Berlin, Germany (2018); *Bread and Circuses*, rodolphe janssen, Brussels, Belgium (2017); *Me, Mum, Mister, Mad*, Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisbon, Portugal (2014) and *Monologue for two*, (performance) Fiorucci Art Trust, London, UK (2013).

His work is included in Public Collections such as The Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy; David Roberts Art Foundation, London, UK; Fiorucci Art Trust, London, UK; Lewben Art Foundation, Vilnius, Lithuania; Malvina Menegaz Foundation for Arts and Culture, Castelbasso, Italy; Italian Embassy in London, UK; Jiménez - Colon Collection, Ponce, Puerto Rico and Collezione Giuseppe Iannaccone, Milan, Italy.

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### SIDE ROOM



**Patrizio di Massimo**  
*Self - portrait (After Lionello Spada's Cain and Abele)*, 2022  
Oil on linen  
193.5 x 154 cm (framed)  
76 1/8 x 60 5/8 in  
(PDMa012)



**Patrizio di Massimo**  
*Sleeping Diana*, 2022  
Coloured pencil on paper  
21 x 29.7 cm (unframed)  
8 1/4 x 11 3/4 in  
36.9 x 47 cm (framed)  
14 1/2 x 18 1/2 in  
(PDMa019)

### ROOM I



**Patrizio di Massimo**  
*Than and Jordan (Penarth Centre)*, 2022  
Oil on linen  
143.5 x 114 cm (framed)  
56 1/2 x 44 7/8 in  
(PDMa017)



**Patrizio di Massimo**  
*Diana and Nicoletta (28B Erlanger Road)*, 2022  
Oil on linen  
234 x 174 cm (framed)  
92 1/8 x 68 1/2 in  
(PDMa013)



**Patrizio di Massimo**  
*Lok Chitrakar*, 2022  
Oil on linen  
223.5 x 133 cm (framed)  
88 x 52 3/8 in  
(PDMa015)



**Patrizio di Massimo**  
*Untitled (Monsters)*, 2021  
Oil on linen  
204 x 144 cm (framed)  
80 1/4 x 56 3/4 in  
(PDMa011)



**Patrizio di Massimo**  
*As Snug as a Bug in a Rug (Francesca, Filippo and Martino)*, 2022  
Oil on linen  
134 x 204 cm (framed)  
52 3/4 x 80 1/4 in  
(PDMa014)



**Patrizio di Massimo**  
*As Snug as a Bug in a Rug (Francesca, Ale e Giuilo)*, 2022  
Oil on linen  
185 x 185 x 5 cm  
72 7/8 x 72 7/8 x 2 in  
(PDMa010)

### ROOM II



**Patrizio di Massimo**  
*As Snug as a Bug in a Rug (Medusa)*, 2022  
Oil on linen  
204 x 194 cm (framed)  
80 1/4 x 76 3/8 in  
(PDMa016)



**Patrizio di Massimo**  
*As Snug as a Bug in a Rug (Diana)*, 2022  
Oil on linen  
38 x 30 cm (framed)  
15 x 11 3/4 in  
(PDMa018)