

He Loves Me He Loves Me Not

2019

Oil and acrylic on canvas

90cm x 100cm

Two relationship detectives examine wilting daisy petals under a harsh blacklight. The figures handle the flowers using latex gloves and a pair of sterile forceps, being careful not to contaminated their surface. A delicate array of petals rest on the table, having fallen from the daisy's pistol. Picking the petals off one by one, they enact the game in which a person seeks to determine whether the object of their affection returns their love: *he loves me... he loves me not*. In this case, two detectives are employed to decode the meaning of an ambiguous relationship. They do so with agile limbs and surgical equipment, taking the art of petal picking with the utmost seriousness. The centre of the daisies radiate with a subtle, yellow glow, its reflection visible in the shades worn by the inspectors. They are reminiscent of the beating heart of a lover. The romanticism of the painting is undercut by the slick depiction of the agents analysing the daisies, suggesting that even the intangible nature of love can be coded, quantified and evaluated. As well as, reinforcing the extreme lengths many of us will go to when seeking the affection of our sweetheart.