

**material**  
WORLD

September 10 - October 28, 2020

**Stephanie Serpick: *Material World* Artist Statement**

The most recent paintings, the series *It's Always Darkest Before the Dawn*, are an expression of feeling in dealing with personal issues and political events. These feelings stem from both reactions to events in our country and the world, as well as personal loss. They are intimate paintings represented by unmade beds and tossed sheets, absent of any human evidence, on intentionally blank, somewhat rough backgrounds. The empty bed in these paintings represents a place for grief, isolation or healing. As such, the work speaks to our shared feeling of grief, with the understanding that while we all suffer in our individual ways, suffering is universal.

Source material for this work are photographs I have both taken and found, and the intimate size of the paintings references the intimate nature of the subject matter. The backgrounds of the paintings are repeatedly painted and sanded, to create a frame and backdrop for the bedding that is flat, yet rough with work and time. The bedding itself is seen from different perspectives, but still indicates a scene of desolation and despair.

While the series started in the fall of 2016, recent events—including the pandemic—have provided a new dimension to the work and have compelled me to consider the themes in light of these events. Our forced isolation and the challenges it has brought to our physical and mental health provides an additional shared experience from which to consider grief and eventual healing.