

Edition 21, 2021

**ART
MAZE
Mag**

ArtMaze Magazine is an independent artist-run and ad-free international print and online publication dedicated to showcasing and promoting experimental and progressive contemporary art, which reflects modern society and its environment, provokes conversation and action; and fosters innovation and diversity of mediums which make today's art scene so intriguing and versatile.



Featured image:

Sophie Lourdes Knight
Stay
acrylic on canvas
120 x 90 cm
more on p. 108-109

HOW WE WORK

ArtMaze Magazine is published five times per year and announces a competition-based curated call for art for each issue every 2-3 months. We invite guest curators from internationally renowned galleries as well as independent art professionals to select works for each issue's curated section of works.

ArtMaze print editions offer its readers a continuous art experience which includes interviews with our guest curators and featured artists from recently published issues; as well as our carefully curated selections of artworks which offer an insight to the inspiring progress and success of an extraordinary amount of emerging contemporary artists from all over the world who have been applying to our competition-based curated calls.

Artists are welcome to submit works in any medium: painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics, printmaking, photography, textile, installation, digital, film, performance, any mixed media etc.

Artists or any art organisations on behalf of artists from all countries are welcome to submit.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR WORK

We accept works to be sent to us for consideration only via our annual competition-based calls for art for print publications. Please visit our website for more details: www.artmazemag.com/call-for-art/ or see p. II

Each individual submitting work to ArtMaze Magazine opportunities is provided with a fair and equal chance. Incoming submissions are following a very specific and unique process via Submittable platform, therefore each competition-based call for art has a transparent policy.

ISSUES

All issues of ArtMaze Magazine are stored in the UK in the British Library (London), Bodleian Library (Oxford University), Cambridge University Library, National Library of Scotland, National Library of Wales and Trinity College (Dublin).

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FRONT COVER:

Monika Chlebek
Huge Ass
oil on canvas
140 x 190 cm
more on p. 116

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BACK COVER:

Loren Burke
Primieval Forest-B
watercolor
8 x 13 inches
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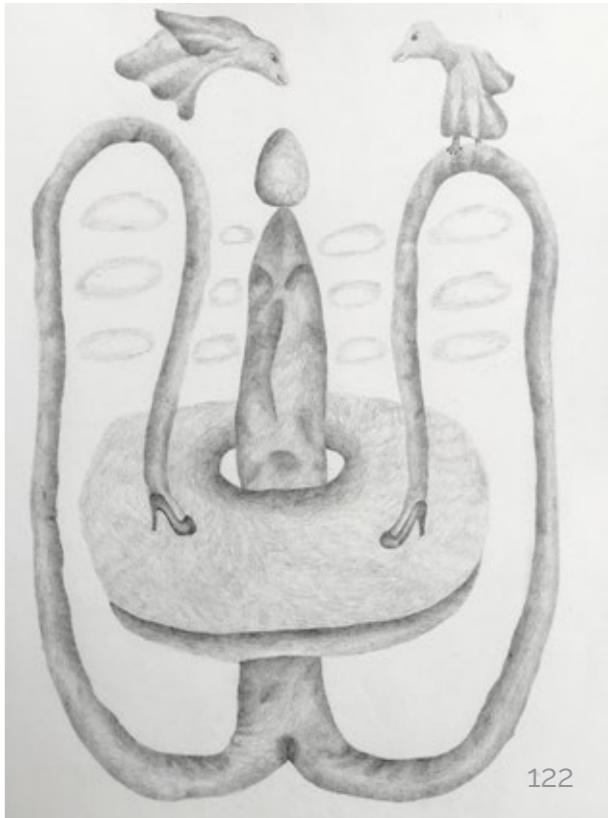
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from the editor

We are pleased to be releasing our new Issue 21, first edition of this year!

This time around we've been working closely with guest curators Cassie Beadle and Victoria Williams from Cob Gallery in London on our Winter call submissions. It was a truly rewarding experience, as evidenced by the selection of twenty-four outstanding artists (p.68-105). We thank Cassie and Victoria for their generous input in this edition which has reflected their remarkable vision and expertise in the curatorial process. Our Editorial Selection (p.106-129) of works highlights sixteen extraordinary and noteworthy individuals, whose works have captured the attention of the Art Maze editorial team, which we felt compelled to share with you in this separate selection and which we hope you will appreciate as much as we do.

For this edition's Interviewed section (p.14-67), we have selected three previously published artists whose work we hugely admire and whose progress we have been following over a long while: Gustav Hamilton, Philip Hinge and Sebastián Hidalgo. Gustav speaks candidly about his spontaneous encounter with ceramics and how he explores ways in which clay pretends to be his canvas allowing him to play with dimension and paint, referencing his own life diary. Philip's work takes us to the world of goth-faced trees and human-animal creatures and narratives that blend together art history, popular culture and meme references—these multi-layered motifs of dark humor and optimism reference modern human experiences. Sebastián invites us to his world of fantasy where bridges and doors are provided to find answers. The otherworldly figures and narratives in his mixed media work serve to question our perceptions and the way we view reality in the tangible world.

Our next 22nd issue promises to be an ever-exciting one as we have teamed up with the brilliant Fabiola Alondra and Jane Harmon from Fortnight Institute, NYC. Fortnight Institute is a phenomenal gallery and online platform for emerging talent. We enjoy witnessing their ever-growing support for up-and-coming artists and highly rate their curatorial proficiency in this field.

If you are interested in submitting your work and appearing on ArtMaze's pages, please feel free to check out our website for more information (www.artmazemag.com) and hopefully we'll be able to work together in the near future.

Yours truly,
Editor and Founder
Maria Zemtsova

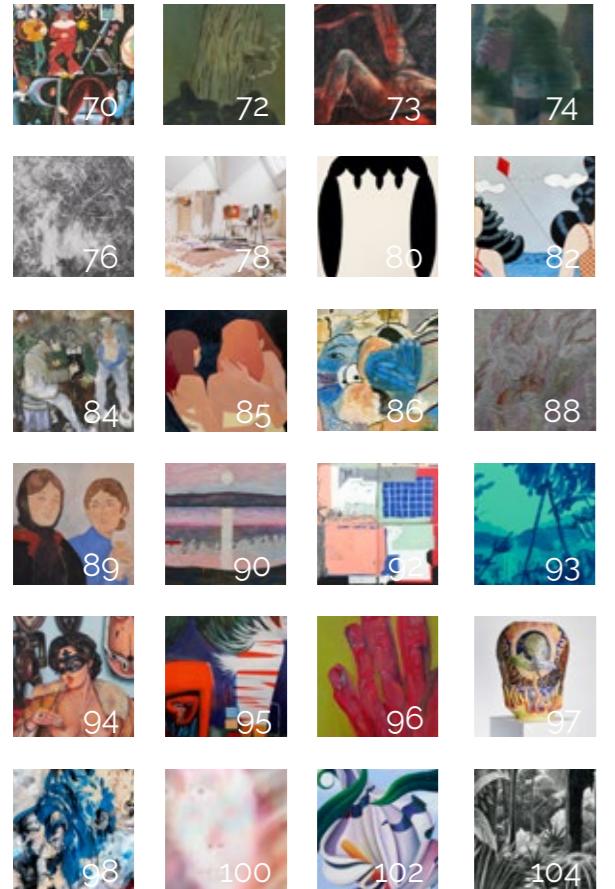


Featured image:

Ryan Ome
Madidi
ink on cloth, oil on panel, wood
130 x 160 x 3cm
more on p. 93

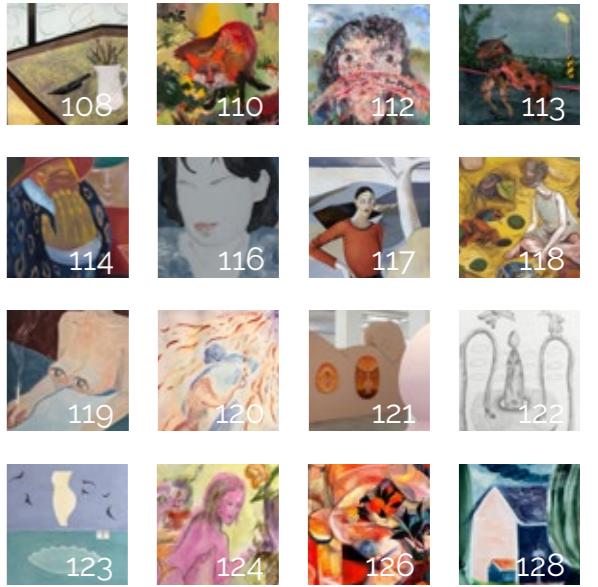
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curated selection of works



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editorial selection of works



Edition 22:

call for art

DEADLINE:
March 4th, 2021

Guest Curators:

Fabiola Alondra and Jane Harmon,
founders of Fortnight Institute,
NYC

Submit your work for a chance to be published in print and digital issues,
as well as online on our website and social media.

ELIGIBILITY:
The competition is open to all artists, both national and international,
working in all visual mediums: painting, drawing, sculpture, ceramics,
printmaking, photography, textile, installation, digital, performance, film,
any mixed media etc.

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Featured image:

Beatrice Dahllof
Pole Chabru
oil on canvas
35 x 45 cm
more on p. 89

interviewed.

The potter's condition: In conversation with Gustav Hamilton

Gustav Hamilton found his way to ceramics after being dropped from the school choir. By way of pottery, he has found a home for himself in this elemental and fickle medium. His work, which can most simply be described as ceramics about ceramics, is whimsical, thoughtful and introspective. Vases, book ends, teapots, jugs and mosaic tiles are recurrent subject matter in his work, giving a nod to clay's utilitarian roots and a playful jab at ceramics as a sculptural medium. These functional items are meticulously painted in glazes onto the surface of flat ceramic slabs, creating a mind-boggling interplay between two and three dimensional surface and object. "In my work there is a lot of implied dimension butting up against real dimension, paintings inside paintings and windows to nowhere," Gustav explains, "in some ways the image shows what it is but also what it is not." A small gathering of meaningful objects (on a white table) depicts exactly what the title implies—a Swiss Army knife, a studio advertisement note written on yellow paper, a pencil and two drawings—but these are not three-dimensional objects but flat renderings painted on a slab of clay pretending to be a canvas.

Gustav's work depicts the life of the artist through the ordinary objects that surround him. The pots, books and miscellaneous items are a visual shorthand that narrate fragments of encounters and fictitious scenes. Like an unreliable narrator, Gustav flits between the roles of author and actor, artist and subject, playing with the borders between real and imaginary.

Born and raised in the Midwest, Gustav lives and works in New York. In addition to his own art practice, he is a studio manager at BKLYN CLAY where he is currently co-developing a dinnerware range. In this interview Gustav tells us about learning to love country music and shares some of his highs and lows of working with clay.

interview by Layla Leiman

Featured image:

Gustav Hamilton
Please place this in a beautiful space
glazed ceramic
41 x 13 1/2 x 13 1/2 inches



“Although clay can do and appear to be so many different things it excels at being utilitarian. There is something either about the material or about me starting out as a potter that makes it seem like ceramics is happiest when it has a function or a job.

Ceramics is really the greatest pretender, at least of materials that I know...In my work there is a lot of implied dimension butting up against real dimension, paintings inside paintings and windows to nowhere. It feels natural to do this on clay pretending to be canvas.”

- Gustav Hamilton

AMM: Hi Gustav! To start us off—can you remember the first time you handled clay? What was your response? What did you make?

GH: I remember it and I still have the piece! I think I was in 3rd grade and it was in the basement of a local public school. I made a sculpture of a dog holding a bone standing next to a bowl of dog food. I was trying to make it a Dalmatian but it looks more like a stegosaurus with cow patterns on it. I remember being really confused about how to handle the clay. I saw the teacher make his thing and then I could see the dog I wanted to make so clearly in my head but it just wasn't doing what it was supposed to.

It wasn't until my sophomore year of high school that I got into working with clay regularly. I had been in choir with my friends for years and then, because I have a horrible voice and ear, all of my friends made the show choir but I didn't. So I dropped the class. I still needed an art credit so I went to the office and said I wanted to take something else and ceramics was at the same time so I went for it. I had some great teachers and

some really good friends in my class and it was perfect. By that point I also had slightly better motor skills and it just made sense. Throwing didn't go as easy for me but hand building I just seemed to understand.

AMM: Can you share with us a little about your interest in the materiality of clay and how this might translate thematically in your work?

GH: I came to art through clay, really through pottery. Clay has been my go-to material for a long time and I think it has to do with its ability to be so many things. Lately my work has been more focused on the ceramic paintings but there is also an ongoing series of sculptures, mostly side tables and bookends. Although clay can do and appear to be so many different things it excels at being utilitarian. There is something either about the material or about me starting out as a potter that makes it seem like ceramics is happiest when it has a function or a job. Ceramics is really the greatest pretender, at least of materials that I know. When I was in school I was interested in using materials that pretended to be something that they were not but clay does it better than anything else. In my work there is a lot of implied dimension butting up against real dimension, paintings inside paintings and windows to nowhere. It feels natural to do this on clay pretending to be canvas.

AMM: Tell us more about the ways you play with depth and perspective—with two and three dimensionality—in your work and to what effect?

GH: When I first started making paintings on ceramic tiles something about it just felt strange. The material that I was using, clay, was something that I had always used for making sculpture. Using it to make primarily flat work felt like I was giving up what clay did best. But once I started adding implied depth and perspective to the pieces something really exciting happened. The implied depth to the work in some instances can be confused with actual depth and it started to scratch the same itch that the Magritte Human Condition paintings do for me. In some ways the image shows what it is but also what it is not.

AMM: While your practice is very much rooted in ceramics, painting features prominently. Did you ever feel torn between these two mediums? Please tell us more about how they live together and interact in your practice?

GH: It used to be about once every other year that I would try to be a painter. Each time I would get my painting materials and I would immediately remember how hard it is to paint! I used to say that painters were so lucky because their paintings don't ever explode in a kiln or crack while drying but man is it hard to paint (colored pencils may be even harder but I can use them while I sit on my couch so I'm giving them a real honest shot).

I really learned how to paint, and outside of one painting class I took in undergrad,



portrait by Emilie Goldfinger



the only time I've truly painted (houses not included (I was a house painter at one point)) is on ceramics. I think part of it is maybe the intimidation of working with new processes and having to find a new workflow and routine (in ceramics you don't have to clean your brushes really, it's pretty nice). I am pretty dead set on starting some paintings soon, and I think this time it'll take. I have plans to work a little larger with painting and wood burning/carving combined with ceramics. There is something really comfortable about working in a material that has a lot of limitations but I think it will be freeing to step outside of it for a bit.

AMM: In your artist statement you describe your artworks as "auto-fictitious objects where real life events merge with fictional narrative". Can you tell us more about what you mean by this?

GH: Yeah absolutely. When I first added that to my statement I was thinking a lot about how my work can be viewed similarly to the show Seinfeld. When I was a kid it was really the only thing my parents watched other than the nightly news and I remember being so confused by it. I knew that Jerry Seinfeld was a real person that was a comedian living in New York and that was the story of the show but I didn't understand what else was real and what was made up. I want my work to act in some ways like that, like a diary where not everything needs to be explained because there is an assumption that the reader of the diary is also the author and therefore already has an understanding of the backstory. But instead of it being accurate I let myself become an unreliable narrator and depict or imply stories that aren't necessarily true.

AMM: In what ways is your practice located within and in relation to art history? How does your work interact with art history?

GH: Ceramics in school, or at least in my schools, focused really heavily on post WW2 American and British ceramics. I tend to think about this period more than really any other even though it's so short. The narrative of the ceramic artists that made it to the fine art world like Ken Price, Ron Nagle, John Mason, and Betty Woodman was something I totally loved. When I was a young student working with clay they were beacons of light for me to aim towards. Because they were so important to me during a really formative time I still think about them and their work a lot. I tend to pull bits from artists that I like. I've been using a blue sky with cloud motif for a while that comes from Magritte (I keep a book of his paintings at my studio). I started using it just to fill some space but as I've used it more and more I think it gives a glimmer of hope to the scene.

I think I also look at historical examples as a way to give myself permission to do things. I am so often surprised by how many funny pieces there are at the Met, especially when it comes to ceramics.

AMM: Archways and birds are favourite motifs in

many of your artworks. What do these and other recurring symbols in your visual language represent?

GH: When I first started painting birds I began with ones from where I grew up in North Dakota. I wanted something to enter into the space, that at the time was filled with books and art objects, that could be a stand in for me or at least a part of me. This has had a slow shift and slightly more recently I've been looking to pair the birds from home with porcelain bird figurines made by the German company Meissen. I like having multiple versions of them in a similar way to how the characters in Spaceballs have multiple versions of themselves when they rent the movie Spaceballs and watch it. More recently I've, at least in some ways, replaced this stand in for a person with depictions of gloved hands. Like the birds this also gives the viewer an understanding that the scene isn't a depiction of something concrete.

A big part of my work deals with the separation of interior and exterior space. The archways

bridge for people to get into my work. I've always made work that was somewhat tongue in cheek, not really "haha funny" and not mean spirited jokes but more like the casual jokes you might make with a family member or close friend. With the bookends there was something a little absurd about them but also totally understandable. In general my work tends to be a little navel gazey and presenting it with some humor hopefully softens it up a bit so it isn't all about my own ego. I'm not sure how it reads to a viewer that doesn't know me but I've tried to give my work the same tone that my grandparents or my parents have, something that is slightly self-deprecating but in general used to move information or a conversation along. My family, especially my dad, uses jokes to talk about almost anything. In general I wouldn't say we are an exceptionally funny family, but we put a lot of stock in humor.

AMM: Clay is a very temperamental medium. Do you have any horror/pleasant surprise stories to share? How has working with this medium influenced your approach to making art generally?

GH: My college ceramics professor, Beth Lo, used to make these really great shirts that said "I hate ceramics" and the clay club would sell them. I think everyone that has worked with clay has probably had their heart broken at one point or another. I once blew up an entire kiln's worth of work (like a huge car kiln) that was the work for my midterm critique. That was really shocking, one little mistake turning the gas up and it was over. But the mistake that I think about the most is when I was almost done with grad school and I had just started making paintings with glaze on big tiles. I opened the kiln while it was really hot, like 600 degrees, because I just couldn't wait any longer to see how this piece looked. It was bigger than anything I had made in years and it was this new process, I had no idea what it was going to look like. I opened the door and rolled the work out and it was so much better than I had imagined, I was really surprised and almost stunned by what I was seeing. And I was just so giddy, I couldn't wait to show someone what I did. So I went wandering around and found my friend Kiyoshi and said "You gotta see this thing, it is just nuts." We walked back to the kiln and the piece had cracked in half from the shock of cooling so rapidly. That is my least favorite way to lose a piece, after all the work and time that went into it to have it break because I didn't have any patience to let it cool. I tried to remake it a few times but I never got it right.

Issues like pieces warping or cracking or exploding have pushed me to be really careful and almost obsessive about the making, drying and firing processes of my work. It has become a highly choreographed ritual and each thing needs to happen in its time or I will be too nervous to move forward. Now it is really rare for a piece to crack or warp beyond a reasonable amount and it makes it easier to invest more time into each piece. When I started this work 1 out of 4 or 5 would crack or warp really badly and my studio was just full of constant losses.

"My college ceramics professor, Beth Lo, used to make these really great shirts that said "I hate ceramics" and the clay club would sell them. I think everyone that has worked with clay has probably had their heart broken at one point or another."

- Gustav Hamilton

became a really nice way to have that split, they generally act as windows. I think I started using it regularly after seeing the 1935 version of The Human Condition by Magritte where he uses an arched doorway. I think I try to use it in a similar way where what is seen through the window is often considered separate or more real than the other pieces, especially when it transitions from exterior to the interior, but it is in fact the same.

AMM: Ceramics often feature as subject matter in your works (vessels, mosaics, tiles, etc.) Can you tell us more about this metatextuality?

GH: Yeah, along with ceramics being really good at pretending to be other things it is amazing at being ceramics! I haven't really thought much about it but it does seem fitting.

AMM: What role does humour play in your work?

GH: I hope that the humor present acts as a

AMM: What are the hardest things for you to get right' in your art?

GH: Lately it has been color. I recently changed to a slightly lower firing temperature (around 2000 degrees Fahrenheit) and it has helped to reduce cracking and warping in the firing but after working at a higher temperature for so long my understanding of what the glazes will look like isn't as sharp. The colors sometimes change a bit and other times they change drastically so when I'm working I often have test samples of colors around or I'm looking at older work but lately my understanding has been off. I really love what glaze is capable of but working with something that changes so drastically can be difficult and I think it encourages me to play it safe and do things I know will work. Sometimes I can go back and reglaze or grind areas but in general if it comes out and it isn't good, it's kinda over. It's the worst when everything is right except you have one part that just looks like junk.

AMM: In your development as an artist, what have been some of the pivotal experiences or mentors that have had a profound impact on you? What lessons did you learn?

GH: I have worked with a lot of people that had a profound impact on me but some of the ones that I think about the most were past professors. Beth Lo and Trey Hill were two of the professors I worked with the most in undergrad and it was while I was working with them that I stopped making pots and began making sculpture. Beth and Trey both had such an understandable way of talking about art that removed what had been so intimidating about it. They both had a really strong grasp on the material and pushed me to try new ways of working.

After I left Montana I went to Kansas and did a post bacc program at Kansas State University. My professors there were Amy Santoferaro and Kyle Triplett. Because we were in the middle of Kansas and there wasn't a huge art scene or many artists to hang out with we would just hang out together. I got to see really in depth what a life in the arts could look like, they were both open about the positive and negatives of going into this versus a more stable job. Seeing it first-hand made me know I was up for it and could in some ways prepare for the future. The last person I want to talk about is my brother Anders. He has been a major factor in most of my decisions and always knows when I need some serious feedback and when I need encouragement. I talk through ideas about new pieces with him, go to him for advice relating to what to show, if I should move studios, if I should buy a kiln, pretty much everything. I think if it wasn't for him I probably wouldn't have had the drive to leave Montana. I know I certainly wouldn't have moved to New York.

AMM: What ideas or themes are you currently exploring in your work?

GH: Lately I've been thinking more and more about my age. I just turned 30 a month or so ago and I am really happy with what I am doing but

at the same time I'm not exactly doing what I thought I'd do. I hadn't planned on moving so far away from my home and my parents and I think there is a longing for the Midwest that is present in my work. I've also been really considering if I want to have kids or not. I mean I haven't taken any steps towards having kids but because it is pretty common where I grew up to have kids in your 20s it's starting to feel odd not having them. When I think about not having kids I start to think about how I will be remembered

"...my work functions sort of like a diary and I think you see bits of these things consistently popping up in small ways. Depictions of western/midwestern landscapes, items from my childhood, and older work of mine sitting with work of the artists I idolized as a student. More recently the work has come to depict isolated or bleak spaces. The pandemic has really amplified how isolated I am, and like many people, I'm spending a lot of time dreaming about other places/other times when I could more easily connect with people."

- Gustav Hamilton

and where my work will end up when I'm older and especially after I'm no longer around. Ceramics is a material that will outlive me by a long, long shot and when I'm working with it I think it's natural to consider where it will end up. I've started to include depictions of works by ceramic artists that I have admired since I got into ceramics. Will the work be saved somewhere like Ken Price or maybe in someone's basement and they will say "oh yeah,

I think my dad's friend made that". I can also see it having a second life at a Midwest flea market or pawn shop, and I like that idea.

In general my work functions sort of like a diary and I think you see bits of these things consistently popping up in small ways. Depictions of western/midwestern landscapes, items from my childhood, and older work of mine sitting with work of the artists I idolized as a student. More recently the work has come to depict isolated or bleak spaces. The pandemic has really amplified how isolated I am, and like many people, I'm spending a lot of time dreaming about other places/other times when I could more easily connect with people.

AMM: What are your studio rhythms and routines? Do you work on only one piece at a time or jump between several? Run us through your process of working from research to completion.

GH: There is a really great video of Friedrich Kunath working in the studio. He talks about establishing the usual amateurisms and it shows him playing tennis against the wall and walking around in oversized shoes from an LA prop shop. I try to emulate his approach to a studio practice.

In some ways I treat my studio a lot like a living room. I go most days, usually after work and on weekends. I try to have a few things in process so there is always something to work on, it's nice if you can have some easy mindless work and something that takes more brain power so that I can pick what I have the energy for. I think my favorite pieces have come from when I'm messing around and working but not working too hard and generally not worried about finishing the piece for something. I have some fun stuff that I keep in my studio if I need a break, right now I have a yo-yo, a harmonica, a dart board made out of drywall (custom made by the great painter and friend Henry Glavin), and some other stuff to mess around with. When I'm starting new work I generally begin with rough sketches that are often more notes than drawings. A big part of working with clay is doing things in the correct order. I take a lot of pictures and save them in different categories on my phone for reference, these pictures vary, sometimes they are color groupings, shapes, or objects. From start to finish a piece generally takes a few months but that is mostly because ceramics is so slow to begin with and I'm pretty tentative about making the first moves on a new piece.

I don't have the space in my studio for a large kiln so I make and fire all of my work at BKLYN CLAY. It's about a 15 minute walk from my studio so it isn't too bad to move stuff back and forth. I have plans for some pieces that will take longer to construct but lately my work has been pretty quick to build. After I build something I let it dry really slowly over a week or two and then I put it through the first of two (sometimes more) firings, called the bisque firing. When the work comes out of the bisque (aka the biscuit) firing the pieces are much stronger. This is when I move them to my studio to work on the glazing.





This is without a doubt the slowest part. I plot a lot of the stuff out with a pencil drawing but lately I've been also scratching into the surface of the clay before it is fired to give a general layout. I also use a digital projector sometimes to help me plot sections out. The glaze that I use is mostly commercially available. Mayco Stroke and Coat is my all-time favorite but I also use Amaco underglaze and other odd glazes here and there. Most glazes need 2-3 layers brushed on so I spend a lot of time sitting over each piece applying layers of glaze. Once the piece is glazed I then move it back to BKLYN CLAY and fire it there. I wouldn't be able to make what I have been making if it wasn't for that place.

AMM: When you're not in studio, what are some of the things you enjoy doing?

GH: Well I work quite a bit, and these days a lot of the usual fun stuff isn't happening so like everyone I needed to come up with some new things to do. Since the pandemic started I began playing guitar again! It's the first real true hobby I think I've ever had. I keep playing but I'm not really getting any better but it's okay! I was in a band in high school called Buffalo Alice and we mostly covered Green Day and Blink 182 so I've been relearning a lot of that.

My friend Cammi Climaco and I started a podcast called The Ceramics Podcast and although we don't release episodes super often (or regularly) that takes up some time. It has become such a good excuse to sit down and talk with old friends and people I don't know. Cammi and I could just talk at each other and make dumb jokes for days.

Outside of that it's a lot of watching TV, walking around the city, wasting time on Instagram, trying to find the perfect pair of Birkenstocks for working in the studio (right now I'm all about the super Birki but I had to drill two small holes for ventilation). I'm really looking forward to being able to travel around a bit more. I love going up into the Hudson Valley and especially love going to Minnesota and hanging out with my parents. I can't wait for it to be warm so I can swim in a lake.

AMM: You're a studio manager at BKLYN CLAY. What does this entail? How does being involved at a busy public studio influence your own creativity and work?

GH: I manage the studio along with my brother Anders. We were both brought on when the current space was opened about two and a half years ago. Since then my job has shifted around quite a bit. I always focused more on material and back room type stuff. Now we have a really good team of people working here and my job is more in project development type territory and resident handyman. We launched a dinnerware line in the fall that Sarah Allwine, the Lead Technician, and I had been working on for a while. I spend so much time looking at pots and I had often wanted to spend more time making them but was too busy. Working with Sarah to design the line was such a great way to work through ideas collaboratively with someone that has a great eye for design and is fun to work with. I'm really, really proud of what we made. We are still working out new surfaces

for it and some additional pieces to the line so my days are often consumed with testing glazes for color and durability. We are hoping to have a line of lamps and other design objects soon so there is a lot of sketching and making prototypes for future pieces.

Working at BKLYN CLAY has had a major impact on my work. The most obvious thing is just having access to kilns and materials. NYC is getting better but it is not an easy place to do ceramics. Beyond the basic stuff the biggest influence it has had on me comes from the people that work there. Jennifer Waverek, the Owner and Director, and Laura Vogel, the Operations Director, both dream pretty big and encourage others to do the same. When I started I came on part time and the most enticing part of it was that I would get to work with my brother, but now it has become such an important part of what I do and how I make my work that I'm not sure what I would do without it.

AMM: What's happening in the world of ceramics currently that's exciting you?

GH: I think what I am most excited about is that ceramics keeps getting bigger. I had no idea so many people would be into it. There is so much different work being made right now. I think if I had to name a couple specific things one would be the use of 3D printers in clay. For a long time it seemed like a gimmick to me and I just wasn't seeing any work made with them that got me excited but Jolie Ngo and Nicolas Touron are two people that seem to have really tapped into something new.

In my work I'm really excited about using ceramic decals! I had dipped my toe in a few times in the past but I was never really into what I was getting. But lately (mostly because I have access to a decal printer) I've been playing with how I make the image, what it is applied to, and then how hot it is fired. It took a while to figure it out but I am finally using it for bits in pieces that I've thought about for years but wasn't able to do.

Another thing that isn't new but seems to be making a new comeback is the use of jigger/jolly machines. They work in a similar fashion to a potter's wheel but with a mechanical arm to shape the clay that is placed on a plaster mold. I think they were invented in the 1800s and were really popular in industry but now Shimpō makes a version that attaches to your wheel head and you can do it wherever. It works great for making plates and bowls especially and has really opened up how I think about production work.

AMM: What are you reading, watching, listening to right now?

GH: I'm pretty homesick at the moment and I think my brother is too so we have been watching the series Fargo. It isn't perfect but just seeing the landscape and hearing the accent really goes a long way. When I'm working I listen to a lot of podcasts, some history podcasts, some crime podcasts, way too many political podcasts. I love listening to country music. I'm into older golden country music (Alan Jackson is probably

my favorite) but I'm also a huge sucker for late 90's early 00's country music. My dad was into country music for a while and I worked for him as a carpenter in the summers from the start of high school until I finished grad school. All day long the radio would be playing and when I started I hated country but eventually it won me over. Kenny Chesney released a live album a year or two ago that I still can't get enough of. I'm not reading much these days. Most of my reading happened on the subway but I've been doing what I can to avoid mass transit and it has really hampered my reading. Right now I'm reading a book called The Secret History but I am not even sure I know what it is about. Each night I try to read before bed but I've been so tired lately I just fall asleep two or three pages in. I think I just keep rereading them night after night. I always have something by Dave Hickey kicking around next to my bed that I'm in the middle of and for Christmas my friend Zoe gave me the new Ron Nagle book so I've been flipping through that with my morning coffee.

AMM: Despite the prevailing uncertainty in the world, do you have any projects or exhibitions coming up? What's next for you?

GH: Yes! I will be having a show at David B. Smith Gallery in Denver at the end of March. It was such a relief to have a date after so much uncertainty. Everything that I had lined up before was canceled or pushed back indefinitely. For a while it was nice to have some more time, I got to make more work, try some new things but after a while it was hard to keep making new pieces in a studio full of unshown work. Beyond that I don't have anything concrete but I will hopefully continue working with Zoe Fisher Projects. Zoe organized an outdoor show of some of my larger sculptures and it was really nice to see them outside. I would like to do something like that again!

Now that my work is finished for the show at David B. Smith I think it's a good time to start on some of the larger paintings/mixed media pieces I've been dreaming about. I just moved into a new studio space, time to try something new!

Featured image (p.18):

Gustav Hamilton
And the stronger you will be
glazed ceramic
24 ½ x 13 ¼ x 13 inches

Featured image (p.21):

Gustav Hamilton
For what it's worth
glazed ceramic
16 ½ x 13 ¾ x 2 inches

Featured image (p.22):

Gustav Hamilton
Could this be my swan song
glazed ceramic
17 ½ x 14 x 2 inches



Gustav Hamilton
Just once before I go
glazed ceramic
16 ½ x 13 x 2 inches

24



Gustav Hamilton
This is not only a test
glazed ceramic
20 x 11 ½ x 11 ½ inches

25



Gustav Hamilton
World's largest tiger muskie, The Bookends
glazed ceramic
14 x 6 x 7 inches

26



Gustav Hamilton
The table with the flowers
glazed ceramic
14 1/4 x 32 1/2 x 14 1/4 inches

27



Gustav Hamilton
It's less traveled for a reason
glazed ceramic
16 ½ x 13 x 2 inches



Gustav Hamilton
Three bananas and the truth
glazed ceramic
16 ½ x 13 x 2 inches



Gustav Hamilton
How to jump a shark
glazed ceramic
18 ½ x 18 ½ x 2 inches

30



Gustav Hamilton
Mirror to Mirror
glazed ceramic
13 x 16 x 2 inches

31



Gustav Hamilton
It's not a window it's a mirror
glazed ceramic
31 x 14 x 16 inches

32



Gustav Hamilton
This is not my place
glazed ceramic
18 x 14 1/4 x 1 1/4 inches

33



Chasing my tail: In conversation with Philip Hinge

To take a trip into the absurdist world of Philip Hinge's paintings, drawings and installations is to find yourself wandering a chaotic interior hinterland populated by a cast of strange anthropomorphic characters. A demonic long-nosed figure, often with a banana for a body, recurs throughout, guiding us in this strange land. We encounter the tortured visage of Van Gogh and goth-faced trees that weep and wail like a death metal chorus.

Cats: slinky, stealthy, are everywhere. Blending together art history, popular culture and meme references, these motifs and characters recur throughout Philip's practice, slowly mutating and morphing and adding more layers to this complex personal mythology. Philip's approach is inherently instinctual and intuitive, allowing experimentation, play and the cause and effect of the weird logic of his visual language to dictate the themes and directions in his art.

Philip says that his work is essentially optimistic, fuelled by a desire to engage with the full range of human experience. Within the kitsch and spooky aesthetic is a dark humour that touches the pulse of modern life. To accompany his 2019 body of work *Take My Life Please, Marvin Gardens*, Philip enigmatically writes: "Bananas can't be human, because we eat them. Yet here they exist, Freudian sight-gag or unaware jester, haplessly enduring the toils of banality." "We are the banana."

Alongside his own art, Philip has been involved with several off-the-wall project spaces—currently he runs one in the basement of his childhood home and another at the top of his cat's playtree. He received his MFA in Painting from Virginia Commonwealth University and his BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art. In this interview, Philip gives us a peek into his home studio in Ridgewood, New York, and takes us deep inside the weird world of his art.

interview by Layla Leiman

Featured image:
Philip Hinge
Do you need to talk
acrylic on canvas
60 x 48 inches

AMM: Hi Philip! To kick us off, what are you listening to, watching and reading right now?

PH: I've been listening to a lot of Black Metal, namely, Diabolical Masquerade, Summoning, Midnight Odyssey, Negura Bunget, and Limbonic Art. I have an intense nostalgia for Black Metal and have been growing with it since I was 14. For a genre that defined itself by a pretty limited set of rules, there are a lot of off-shoots and variations now. And in a weird way it's come around to being cosmically spiritual and expansive. The longer the genre goes the closer it gets to sounding like Enya (which I am all for by the way).

I'm bad at finding the time to read anything substantial, but I've been listening to the Southern Reach Trilogy by Jeff VanderMeer. It's heady and vague in a really nice way that ticks a lot of boxes for me. The whole story hinges on a mysterious eco-event which results in the creation of a mutation-laden forest zone by a coastal town. The story follows members of an organization who are trying to figure it all out and before something awful happens. There's some really great narrative invention and the story as a whole is really compelling and bizarre.

As far as watching, it's been a lot of bad movies; more specifically bad movies where everyone involved tried their absolute hardest to make something great and just failed. The earnestness of the creators is really important with that genre. A few of the good ones have been Feeders, Twisted Pair, Plum, and Black Cougar. On the whole, each movie can be totally embarrassing and absurd, but at the heart of it there's a real story about perseverance and creative follow-through. Even if the result is laughable you can't fault them because they saw their vision through. They had an idea, wrote the script, got a crew together, shot and finished their movie, against all odds. There's real commitment and vulnerability there.

AMM: How have you found working during the pandemic? What effects do you think this radical time has had on you creatively?

PH: It's been very sobering and humbling to work through all of this. On one hand it's been years since I've had the time and space to work as much on my own work as I did during the three-month quarantine. Overnight, I didn't have to go to my day job, I didn't have to schedule Catbox or darkZone or A.D. I just had to wake up and work in the studio (which is the second bedroom in my apartment). That air was very liberating and led to some invaluable growth and exploration. But, feeling that open and creative during such a tragic time also made me feel intensely guilty. I've tried to learn that it is ok to work through it, to count your blessings, and maybe even take things slower than I did before.

AMM: Are you influenced by your surroundings? In what ways does your art relate to your environment and personal experiences?

PH: My world sometimes feels very small, and I've come to realize my work has everything

to do with my interpretation of my immediate surroundings, which are all variants of domestic space. Part of this might be related to the fact that I have kept home studios for the past seven years. Working at home was a decision born out of necessity but over time has evolved to be an important part of the process. I seem to thrive when I have little to no separation between a home life and a studio life. I also get to be near my partner and my pets, which is very nice. It's led me to think about this idea of art and domesticity and how art is trying desperately to escape that "above the couch" fate. To me it seems much more interesting to lean into the idea that art has to integrate itself into these domestically functional environments. Like how do you make art which thrives in a hallway or a bathroom?

Experience ends up working in tandem with that live/work sentiment. If you're like me you carry your experiences with you every day, and it's hard

"...painting can be so exclusionary and elitist it's hard to find motivation to perpetuate it. Your role as a painter can be reduced to "gatekeeper of good taste". That's not so exciting to me. But it's difficult to find a way to subvert painting in an interesting way. That idea of painting as subversion is something I learned from Balthus. He mixed metaphors all the time, making these paintings which are classically reverent and sound while depicting intensely off-putting and problematic subject matter. The effect is complex and weird."

- Philip Hinge

to keep them from influencing your decisions, especially when you're in your most open or receptive state in the studio. This doesn't mean I'm making direct depictions of things that have happened to me, but just that I'm using painting and artmaking as a means to process all these things that have happened or are affecting me.

AMM: How does popular culture and media influence you as an artist and relate to your work?

PH: It's all very connected to how I grew up and became interested in making art. I learned to draw from watching movies. When a movie I connected with was over, I would be super jazzed and energetic about the way the visuals made me feel. I would try to prolong that experience by making drawings of characters

from the movie so I could keep the story going. Then later I got into comic books and would try my best to copy all the covers and art in them. All this visual information would be morphed and collaged together through my own drawing, endlessly manipulated into different variations in an effort to make something original. In that way, the role of pop culture and visual media isn't too different from now; it's a lot of processing the visual world around me, whether it's invented imagery or art historical or pop cultural, and then colliding those references to try and express something unique. I'm hoping that by having access to every aspect of visual culture, I'm starting to flatten the visual hierarchy for references in my own work.

AMM: Let's chat about your visual language which seems to borrow from the world of low-brow media. How has this style evolved over time in conjunction with the subject matter?

PH: My interest in proliferating this high/low kitsch aesthetic is an attempt to question or undermine the perceived weight of an art canon in the age of memes. Art has been traditionally about the perpetuation of visual or historical hierarchy. In medieval painting, the Virgin Mary and Jesus were always larger than the figures flanking them. Now art history has been flattened and overrun by the sheer amount of visual information. With Instagram and art mediation through computer screens, those medieval paintings are seen on the same scale and plane as Sonic fanart.

When I went to art school, my entire visual world was ejected because it came from that "low brow" tier (fanart, movie-posters, video games etc.). I was educated on the history of formalism and the associated artists, which were all new to me, and which were deemed good taste. My artistic life was re-programmed with a preset of permissible interests. I forgot my upbringing and all of those images from Magic the Gathering, Anime, and sci-fi disappeared as I tried to cloak myself in my new art history shroud in an attempt to gain acceptance. That's a heavy thing to deal with, and I've still got my baggage from it.

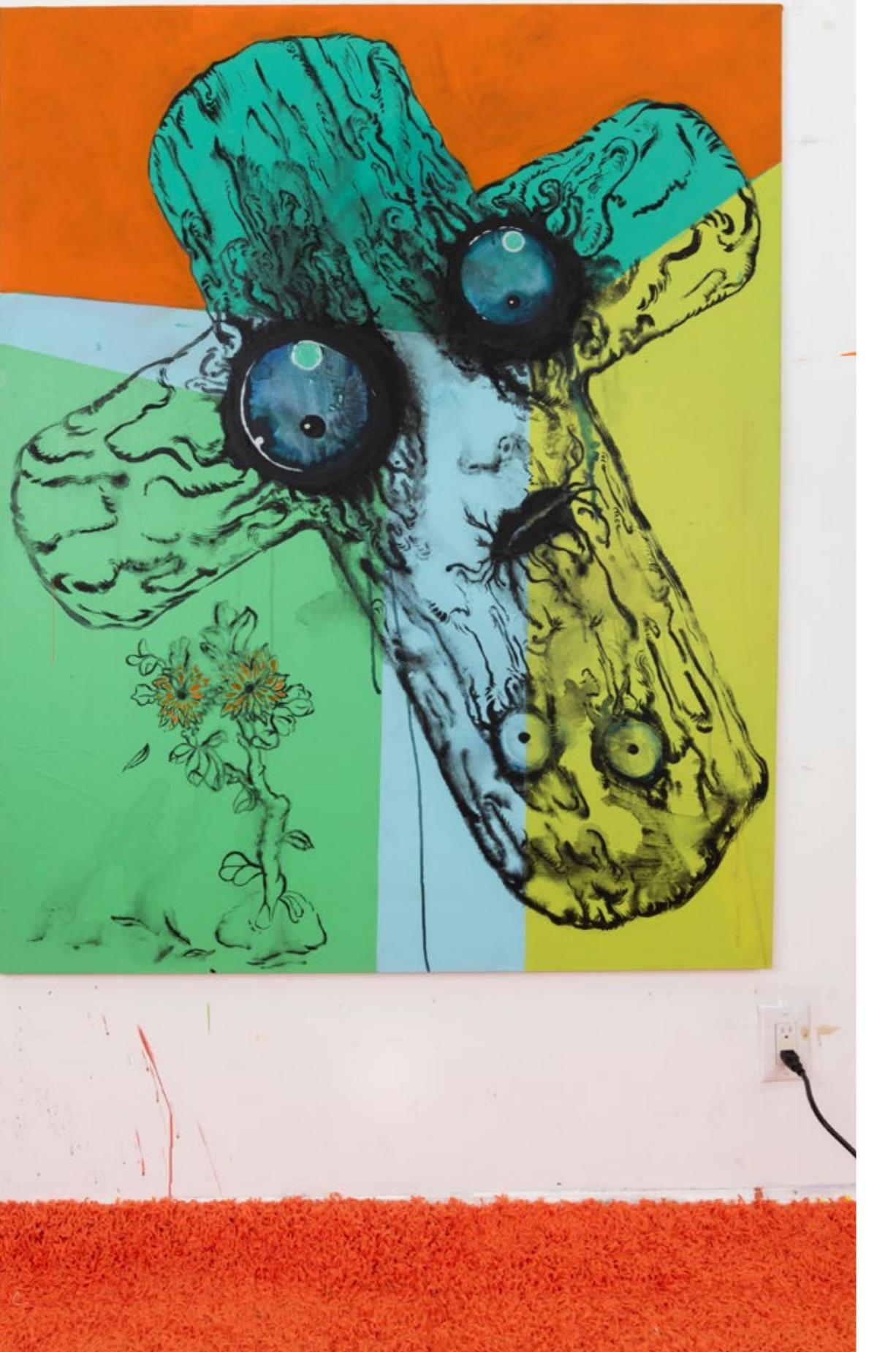
Over time, no matter how much I tried to deviate from my base visual interests, I couldn't shake this "something kind of kitsch" quality in my work. I was self-conscious and tried to dress up my kitsch-ness in irony. It took a long time to realize that it doesn't devalue the work or the seriousness of my artistic endeavors by dealing with my relationship with kitsch sincerely head on. Ideally, I'm aspiring to use a whole spectrum of imagery to challenge those institutional ideals of painting.

AMM: Painting is a hallowed medium historically. Your practice radically disrupts this. What about the medium appeals to you?

PH: It's funny because a lot of me still holds "painting" in some sort of esteem or reverence. I admire its history, and never get sick of looking at it. Specifically, I like its speed and how that varies the read of a work. There's something



portrait courtesy of the artist at darkZone



magical about the way a painting reveals itself to you. It can be blunt and deep at the same time; illusionary and finessed or painfully simple and straightforward. That produces an experience which seems unreal for a two-dimensional surface. On the other hand, I like playing with the frivolousness or inconsequence of a painting as a flat picture surface.

I mentioned it a little bit earlier, but painting can be so exclusionary and elitist it's hard to find motivation to perpetuate it. Your role as a painter can be reduced to "gatekeeper of good taste". That's not so exciting to me. But it's difficult to find a way to subvert painting in an interesting way. That idea of painting as subversion is something I learned from Balthus. He mixed metaphors all the time, making these paintings which are classically reverent and sound while depicting intensely off-putting and problematic subject matter. The effect is complex and weird.

AMM: Do you have any daily creative rituals?

PH: I'm a creature of habit. If I had it my way I would wear, eat, and do the same thing every single day. I like to wake up early, usually around 7 or 7:30. I'll have a smoothie for breakfast and have a coffee while I play video games (right now I've been replaying Resident Evil from 2002). For whatever reason that lets my mind rev up as I map out the day. After an hour and a half, I'll head into the studio and start to push things around and organize or draw until I get the guts to start painting. From there I can usually be in production mode all day. If it's been a good studio day, I take a hot bath while watching trashy TV and starting to plan what I'll make tomorrow.

AMM: Give us a peek inside your studio—what's going on in there on any given day?

PH: Recently I've been making little black sofas out of foam and trash bags which are meant to look like fancy leather couches. I don't know where they fit in just yet but I'm planning on them being a major component of a show in the future. I'm also exploring this very hard edged "opening" door motif with sad-faced trees painted over them; specifically integrating them alongside mirrors. I'm also working on a new set of cat litter paintings. I'm circling back to them because I feel like the focus was always the cat face, and there was no room on the panel for anything else. Now I'm curious to see how I can make them live in an environment. Like the cat face is speaking the same language but more broadly than the flatness of the background they're going to sit on. It's nothing earth shaking but to me it feels like there are endless configurations to be done. I've also been expanding my collection of found cat photos, and have a good batch going. I'm not sure how it integrates into the work, but it feels very important right now. The constant in the day-to-day studio is smallish paintings which are treated as "anything goes" paintings. Since I work out different ideas all at the same time, it's important I have a set body of work going that

"I'm naturally a very stressed-out person who has always experienced some sort of high anxiety and emotional disorder.

Growing up, when I was peak stressed about whatever I thought was going wrong with me, I would see how my cat was just happy to be around me and be petted. In a weird way I was jealous of the life my cat got to lead and how unaffected it was by the things that had such an impact on me. While that wasn't the hardline experience that made me say, "ok great, now I get anthropomorphism", it didn't hurt.

From there I've actively explored it as a form because it seems like the best way to make things work for me. For example, there's something lacking to me about painting "just" a tree. For whatever reason I really wanted to paint a tree but couldn't see it through. But if I painted a tree with a goth face on it, I could get behind that and feel like it represented me.

I guess that's what it comes down to; using it as a tool to help me relate to things and translate them into painting in a way that feels genuine to my experience."

- Philip Hinge

stays fairly open-ended in subject matter but constrained by size and canvas. All in all, the studio is about openness and following intuition.

AMM: In your work the divide between humans, animals and objects is blurred and malleable. Please tell us more about your fascination with anthropomorphism?

PH: For me it started pretty early. I'm naturally a very stressed-out person who has always experienced some sort of high anxiety and emotional disorder. Growing up, when I was peak stressed about whatever I thought was going wrong with me, I would see how my cat was just happy to be around me and be petted. In a weird way I was jealous of the life my cat got to lead and how unaffected it was by the things that had such an impact on me. While that wasn't the hardline experience that made me say, "ok great, now I get anthropomorphism", it didn't hurt.

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AMM: How would you describe the world that is depicted in your art?

PH: I would describe it as absurdist and optimistic. Things might be unruly or crude but there is an underlying logic and energy that crosses over to the viewer hopefully. It's a world where everything is connected to each other in some strange way, even if it doesn't seem like it at first.

AMM: Who are the long-nosed man and other cast of characters that recur and populate your work? What do they represent?

PH: The short answer is it's me...kind of. I'm coming to accept that most things I paint are surrogates for myself in some capacity. Originally the banana/moon/long nose evolved from these devils I was painting, which in turn had evolved from these imagined hospital self-portraits I was making. Eventually the devils got more and more outlandish and even cartoonish, and I found something close to the form of the long-nosed figure. From there it seemed right that the full body should be a banana, so I made the first painting of the long nose banana moon-man driving a car. That sparked a whole set of ideas and images, and by now it has evolved to have a dog for a nose and my face for a forehead.

I think populating the studio with this weirdo cast of characters is important for me as I flesh



out this personal mythology I'm developing. I can use different motifs to get at different sensitivities or discussions. This ties into what I mentioned earlier about the importance of pop references; painting gremlins and Garfields played a crucial role in learning to give myself permission to explore weirder ideas like the banana man. I also think they belong together, and it's possible they would also like to have a cat around, so I should paint them a cat to hang out with, too. The logic kind of continues that way, and new things come and go to help create this oddly specific associative narrative between characters.

AMM: The tone of your work is at once sinister and silly: Does the dark humour in your work perhaps speak to contemporary existential experiences?

PH: I feel like the humor in my work is a byproduct of my personality. I think I'm funny, I don't know if that's true or not, but I'll usually follow an idea if it makes me smile or laugh to myself. To me that's a signal that there might be something viable there. I can sometimes work with subject matter that is heavy handed or intense, and it helps to have a sense of humor to take the edge off a little bit. I hope that humor would translate to an audience and let them into the work. That idea of access points in my work is important, especially when things can seem a little chaotic or dark from the outset. I don't want to make things that people categorically don't want to look at, so having certain moments of levity or humor are important.

AMM: Cats feature prominently in your art—from figures in drawings with feline faces, to found objects in installations and impasto portraits in your solo show Cat Scratch Fever. Why?

PH: I've always had a cat or two in my life, and it's something I've come to depend on for comfort. Over the years, cats have taught me a lot about life and death. This sounds silly to say, but I learned about impermanence from cats which led me to develop a strong "all good things come to an end" complex. My first remembered experience of death was with the passing of one of my family's cats. As an entity cats are simple but mysterious, they represent so much from a supernatural and superstitious standpoint. But cats are also very good communicators, in a way I wish I was. When they are upset, even a little, you can tell instantly by paying attention to the cues they give off. And when they are happy, they have a whole other system and language of purrs and movements that let you know just how happy they are. I started putting them in the work to function as emotional anchors. There's something that feels good or instantly relatable about looking at pictures of cats. Having said that, not everyone feels that way, and I think it's pretty funny how polarizing a cat walking into the room can be.

AMM: What ideas or themes are you currently exploring in your work? How are these taking form in your practice?

PH: This is always a hard one to articulate, and it's something I try not to think about too much honestly. There are broad topics which

are reoccurring, like existence, domesticity, depression, processing personal relationships and how I fit into and interact with the world. I'm inherently not a research-based artist. I like to be fairly receptive to creative whims, trusting that whatever the next idea is will naturally fall into place with the main mission, which again isn't totally clear to me. Right now I'm chasing my tail and seeing where each painting takes me.

AMM: Alongside your practice you run two project spaces—darkZone in the basement of your childhood home, and Catbox Contemporary in your cat's play-tree. Please tell us the backstory about how these spaces came into being, and why spaces like these are important.

PH: Catbox started because I wanted to create a supportive platform for artists but had no access to space and no budget for a full-size space. What I did have was a very large cat-tree for my cat which happens to have a little room on top. I thought it would be funny and give artists a chance to deviate from their normal studio practices to make some very weird shows. From there the project has evolved into something I couldn't have imagined.

darkZone started just shy of two years ago and was done on an impulse. I spent a lot of time in my parent's basement growing up. I would dig through the boxes and boxes of family history putting pieces of the past together. It was this place that seemed so rich with potential and was full of memories and residual emotions. In a very strange way darkZone has become a way for me to process the angst I developed as a kid in relation to that house and that town in NJ. It's this collaborative trust exercise where everyone involved has to directly interact with my family's history for each show. That psychological weight is so vital to each show.

Off-beat spaces are the unsung heroes of the art world. I met a very special group of people when I moved to NY who had full time jobs, art practices, and ran spaces to make opportunities for people. There was no glamour in it. No one would do it if they didn't live for it. On a practical level it just doesn't add up. To boot there is no money in it, so it's a losing proposition. But to the community it's so important, it's a safe place for artists to take risks and discover themselves. It's also a way to divert the conversation from the mainline market-driven artworld and take some of the power from it. I've seen shows at project spaces that rival top gallery shows, and that is endlessly exciting to me.

AMM: What have you gained from running and curating these spaces?

PH: There has been so much learning. I went into it not fully understanding the impact curating would have on me and my life. I've made some wonderful friends, and I feel so lucky to have been any part of facilitating outstanding shows. I've also learned a lot about myself and where my limits are. It can be hard to see the forest for the trees sometimes, and even harder to juggle my personal life, studio life, "pay the bills" life, and my Catbox/

darkZone life. It all keeps working because I get so much energy from running these spaces. I hope the artists I have worked with know how much I've appreciated and cherished each experience. They're stars and they should know that. This is the part where I start to feel like the movie makers I mentioned earlier. I have a vision and a plan, and I can't speak to how it's going to turn out, but I've got a camera and a loose script and I'm going to do everything in my power to make it shine.

AMM: Do you think your cat appreciates art?

PH: I think she can sense that it's something important to me, and that helps her respect it. Sometimes I like to think she's trying to look at the paintings (I'm pretty sure she does). It's a weird thing to manifest this unspoken understanding with your cat; what magic. She's also been very respectful of Catbox work, and in our history has never deliberately damaged anything.

AMM: There seems to be an overlap between your curatorial style and the way in which you like to present your own work. Both instances are pretty anti-white cube in favour of immersive spatial experiences. Please share some of your thoughts around space and context.

PH: There's no denying that work hung in a well-lit white cube type gallery can really sing and become imbued by some otherworldliness. Because of that, I think it's really important to challenge the way art is exhibited, and it's something that's in the air right now. Changing the context around artworks can help emphasize themes or qualities in the work that may fall short in a more sterile or traditional environment. Introducing the idea of spectacle or theatrics back into the presentation of art is exciting to me and adds more layers to the subtext. Even when a show in a weird environment falls flat, I feel like it was worth the effort, because once all art starts to be made specifically for white cubes, I think the collective community starts to lose something valuable.

AMM: Despite the prevailing uncertainty in the world, do you have any projects or exhibitions coming up? What's next for you?

PH: There are a few really exciting things coming up; I'll do a split show with artist duo, Club Supperette, at Plague Space (Krasnador, RU) in late February. In April I'll be in a three person show I curated at mcg2xoxo in Japan, which will be Mary Audrey Ramirez, Lorincz Aron, and myself. Alongside that, darkZone and Catbox will keep going with shows rotating every 6-8 weeks, with some really exciting ones coming down the line. In the first half of 2021, Catbox will have a three cat tower installation at Atlanta Contemporary in Atlanta, Georgia. I'm constantly looking forward to the future.

Featured image (p.40):

Philip Hinge
I've never had that t
acrylic on canvas
20 x 16 inches



Philip Hinge
studio installation with cat, 2020

42



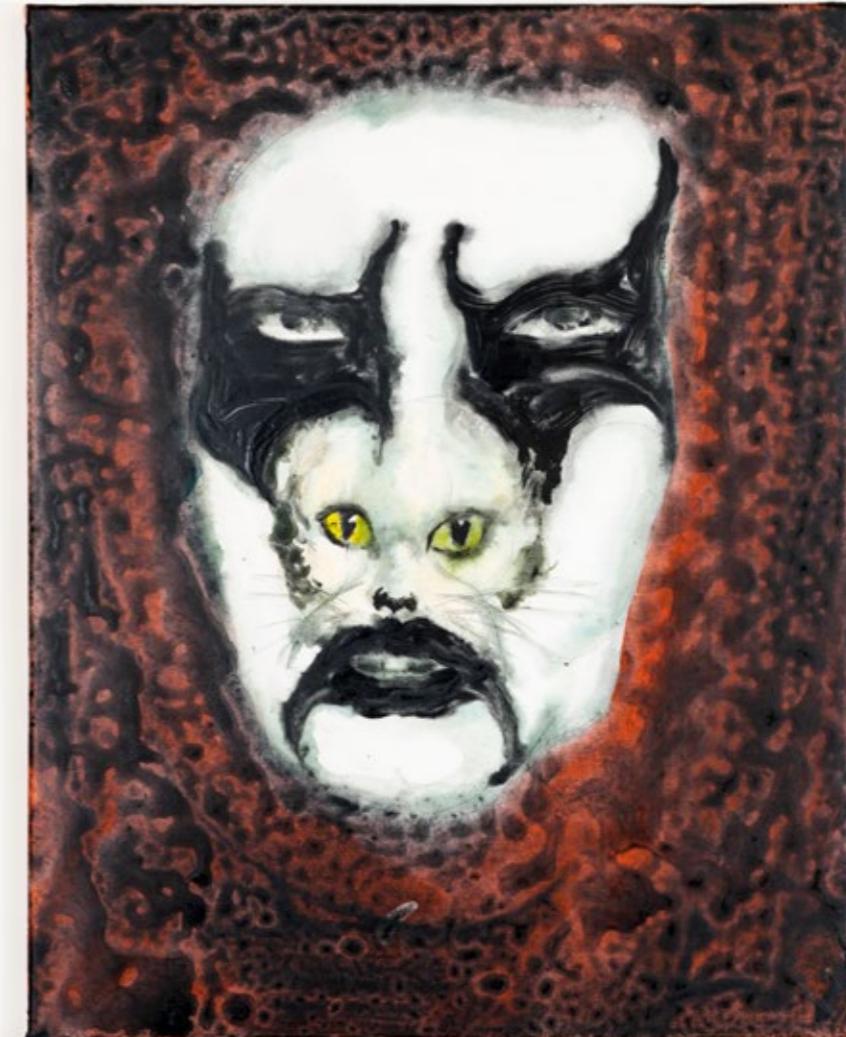
Philip Hinge
Eye m bungry
acrylic on canvas
12 x 24 inches

43



Philip Hinge
Not eye
acrylic on canvas
24 x 32 inches

44



Philip Hinge
At the edge of the river by the fog
acrylic on canvas
20 x 16 inches

45



Philip Hinge
Silent gloom
acrylic on canvas
60 x 48 inches



Philip Hinge
Take care of yourself
acrylic on canvas
48 x 32 inches



Philip Hinge
This isn't how it was supposed to be
acrylic on canvas
16 x 20 inches

48



Philip Hinge
Beyond earthly limitation
acrylic on canvas
16 x 20 inches

49



Philip Hinge
I don't nose
acrylic on canvas
16 x 20 inches

50



Philip Hinge
Gloomy
acrylic on canvas
16 x 20 inches

51

The bedrock of the imagination: Sebastián Hidalgo's fantastical interpretations of reality and sensory perception

Sebastián Hidalgo's painting practice is an explorative one. Working between different mediums and grounds—oil paint, ink, graphite, marble, linen, canvas, paper—Sebastián emphasises sensory experience and tactile perception as integral to his act of making for the way the material interacts with his subject matter. It is the emphatic materiality of his process that anchors the fantastical, surreal qualities of his images in the world of tangible experience. In the paintings *Bocanada* (Puff) and *Baile* (Dance), the ethereal, almost vaporous oil-rendered images of a celestial outward breath and an indistinct dancing figure are given solidity, density and opacity by the chunks of marble on which they are painted. For Sebastián, the planes of reality and the imagination are intersecting and have a mutual bearing upon one another. That which is otherworldly contains, in his view, the capacity to be palpably felt by altering one's perception of immediate reality.

This notion of defamiliarising the viewer from the accepted perimeters of the real is conceptually present throughout Sebastián's work. His paintings show surreal landscapes, hazy human forms with blurred faces, disembodied hands which enter the frame as though thrust into view by an unseen figure, fantastical creatures with human aspects, shapes which linger on the verge of becoming something recognisable while simultaneously being pulled towards abstraction and obscurity. The figures that appear in his images are like those seen in a dream, their features smeared and blended together, or else spliced with outlandish beings. The surreal quality of Sebastián's work is upheld by his use of colour. In many paintings, brightly dappled neons lend an unearthly luminosity to his subjects, while in others, contradictory chromatic choices highlight the tension between perceived reality and imagined fantasy. While Sebastián states, "my work can't offer any answers", his images do offer a distorting lens through which the viewer is invited to peer as a way of reconfiguring their perceptions and understanding, both of the external world and of their own internal landscape.

Based in Cholula, Puebla, Mexico, Sebastián is currently experimenting with rendering his paintings in large-scale formats, finding inspiration in everything from Seurat to sci-fi, Mezcal culture art to his own perceptual experiences.

interview by Rebecca Irvin

Featured image:

Sebastián Hidalgo
Lenguita
oil on linen
51 x 37 cm



AMM: Hi Sebastián! To start off—can you tell us a bit about your background and your studies, and how your art practice became your main focus?

SH: I was born in Mexico and spent my childhood on the periphery of Puebla, a city placed in a valley surrounded by volcanos. The place I grew up in had a lot of high trees and free spaces to wander around; that environment led me to establish a close relationship with the natural world. I am the son of a taxidermist and an anthropologist, which gave me access to a craft workshop and an awareness of ancient mesoamerican art.

I've been drawing most of my life—I felt a strong attraction to it from an early age. I lived in Germany and Canada for a while, and when I was entering my twenties, after working for a year as a dishwasher, I decided to dedicate myself to art. I did a BFA between Spain and Mexico. When I was done with those studies and was on my own, I immersed myself in the practice.

AMM: Your recent works incorporate different mediums—what is the thinking behind your choice of materials?

SH: It's hard to know which event may shift the direction of the work. It can be a personal experience or finding something of interest while working, like a material, an alternative way to apply paint or a different point of view. I've been mainly working with oil because it is a very flexible medium and it offers me a lot of possibilities, but I do change medium when I'm drawn to it. These changes boost my attention and help me understand things differently. When I go back to oil I see things with a fresh view. Lately, I've been going back and forth between drawing and painting. In a certain way they have become the same for me.

AMM: What is it about marble that attracts you to it as a ground on which to paint? Does it make you work differently to how you would on canvas?

SH: Marble is mostly made of calcium carbonate; it can serve as a ready-made undercoat to paint on and certain kinds absorb and reflect light in a particular manner, providing a bright white surface that enables a broad spectrum of colour. Painting on a rock feels peculiar and marble has a special presence to me. It feels good to be close to it and to hold it in my hands. There is something about rocks, you kind of sense their density and weight when you are close to them. Technically speaking, I haven't found much of a difference between working on marble and canvas, the difference lies more in the sensations you get while working and in the possibilities that unfold before you. From that perspective it does make me work differently to how I would on canvas.

AMM: How do you negotiate the dichotomy of abstraction and figuration?

SH: It has been a process for me, since I got used to looking at paintings in both ways at the same time. It is a tension between matter and image. The pole towards which a piece moves depends on what I am chasing or looking for at that moment—it is often subject to its own evolution.

“Fantasy and imagination play a role in the world we inhabit. They may operate in their own plane of reality, but they have an effect in the tangible world...”

“I use otherworldly figures as an amplifier, to provoke an alteration in our perception and to induce us to question ourselves about reality and its boundaries..., it gives me a wider range of freedom while working, to detach shapes from reality. All in all I think my work can't offer any answers, it's just made to provide bridges and doors.”

- Sebastián Hidalgo

AMM: There is a vaguely surreal quality to many of your works, particularly those that include otherworldly figures—can you expand on the concepts underlying your subject matter?

SH: Fantasy and imagination play a role in the world we inhabit. They may operate in their own plane of reality, but they have an effect in the tangible world. When I was a child, animated cartoons had a big impact on my mind; they can push you quickly to feel a wide range of emotions and alter the mind while you watch them. I think that may have contributed to developing an inclination

towards those kinds of shapes.

I use otherworldly figures as an amplifier, to provoke an alteration in our perception and to induce us to question ourselves about reality and its boundaries. Plus, it gives me a wider range of freedom while working, to detach shapes from reality. All in all I think my work can't offer any answers, it's just made to provide bridges and doors.

AMM: What role does symbolism play in your work?

SH: I'm interested in the way symbols evolve as well as in their capacity to compress and concentrate big amounts of information, ideas and meanings. It also makes me curious how they are conceived. I use them sometimes to synthesize, to alter their course of direction, to expand them or to play with complexity. Symbolism works for me as a tool to be used when needed.

AMM: How do notions of selfhood and interiority enter your images? What do you think of the notion that art is always a reflection of the self?

SH: I have always been attracted to the inner world, my relationship with it and my understanding about it has been evolving since I was a child. Eventually that attraction found its way to the surface through my work. I think that looking inward helps us to expand our comprehension and it also encourages us to develop deeper connections with the world. Consequently, part of my work comes from personal experiences and inner states, but I use those forces just as fuel. At some point those works become something else, meant to resonate and interact with people and their own inner states.

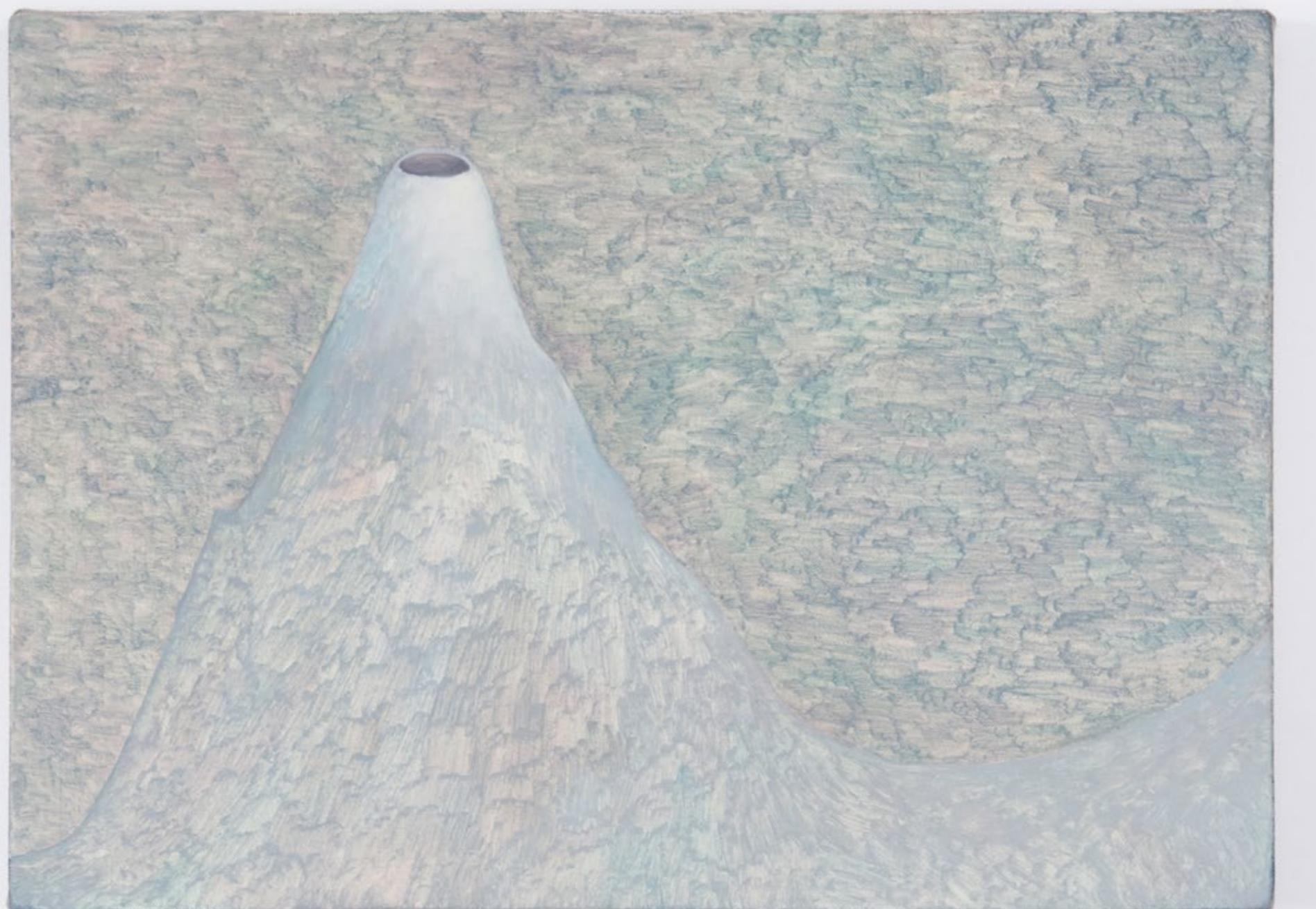
I don't see art as a reflection, its origin and its destination are still a mystery to me, but if we picture the self as an inherent part of us, then I could see art passing through ourselves. I think the self acts like a filter.

AMM: Can you tell us about your solo exhibitions? When working towards a show, do you create a body of work centred on a single theme, or do you think of each artwork as a standalone piece?

SH: I don't create a body of work centred on a single theme—at least I don't conceive it that way. I tend to work in cycles, in spirals, and usually all the pieces that belong to a cycle share common characteristics due to the interests that I may have at that particular time. So, even though I try to take each piece its own way, they end up connecting. At the end I like to see the whole result and how the pieces interact with space and with each other; it opens new dimensions of dialogue and an unexpected overall sensation. There is a kind of tension about it that I enjoy.



portrait courtesy of the artist



AMM: What is your approach when it comes to making a piece? Do you plan or sketch out compositions beforehand?

There is a lot of creative visualization involved. I usually look for starting points—it can be colour, an idea, a concept, a composition, a stain, a sensation—then I see where they can take me. I use no specific method, sometimes I plan thoughtfully and other times I like to balance on the tightrope until something appears. Recently I have been spending more time working on compositions.

AMM: Could you please tell us about your collaborations, in particular working with Rafael Uriegas on a piece 'El río nos confrontó (The River Confronted Us)? You evidently share points of common interest, but what differences or distinct perspectives do you think you each bring to the work?

SH: Akira Toxqui is a collaboration project with Rafael Uriegas. We made up a ghostly figure to open new fields of creativity and to free ourselves from ourselves. Working in duo with Rafa has been an enriching experience, it expands my understanding of painting and of the creative process. It gives us unexpected perspectives and an atmosphere of uncertainty while working, and that I value a lot because it drives the work to the unknown and you learn a lot along the way.

AMM: Are there other artists, either from art history or currently practicing, whose work has had an influence on your own?

SH: Overall much of what I have seen has had—in different measures—an influence on my work, and it hasn't been limited to the visual. Lately I have been into the Mezcal culture art, Seurat and sci-fi. To me it's a matter of absorbing and forgetting information. Aesthetics change and evolve; I'm mostly interested in the medium possibilities as well as in what drives some people to spend part of their lifetime pursuing those possibilities.

AMM: Outside of visual art, what inspires your work? Do you ever look to film, literature or current events?

SH: I appreciate people who go as deep as they can into something until the point where they forget themselves, I like to listen to music made that way. I rarely watch TV, I prefer watching films once in a while. I used to read a lot about Taoism, Zen Buddhism, Yoga and Mysticism; occasionally I read literature and texts. Nowadays I spend more time staring at the world.

AMM: What conditions are necessary for you to be able to create? Do you have any rituals or routines that help you to work?

SH: It helps a lot to avoid being in a hurry, having time is the most valuable condition for me. Apart from that, my actions and routines are usually quite simple and ordinary if you look at them from the outside.

AMM: Are there other directions you envision your work taking? Will you continue experimenting with different mediums and materials?

SH: At the moment I am concentrated on painting and I have the projection of working in bigger formats, to stand in front of bigger colour fields. That's all I know about my direction at the moment.

AMM: How have you managed to maintain your practice in the past year? Have you found ways of continuing to work?

SH: I tried to adapt to the situation and to the change of rhythms as far as possible. Fortunately, I didn't experience any dramatical alteration in my working habits.

AMM: What role do you think art has in times of crisis?

SH: I see crisis as the consequence of a previous state, and from this point of view I think art—along with other means—can help us to base our choice of priorities on more stable principles.

Featured image (p.56-57):

Sebastián Hidalgo
Fuego (Fire)
oil on linen
27 x 38 cm



Sebastián Hidalgo
Telón (Curtain)
ink and oil on marble
11.5 x 10.5 x 4.2 cm



Sebastián Hidalgo
Lobo (Wolf)
oil on marble
17.4 x 17.7 x 2 cm



Sebastián Hidalgo
Baile (Dance)
oil on marble
16 x 10 x 2.2 cm

60



Sebastián Hidalgo
Proyector (Projector)
ink and oil on marble
29.5 x 9.5 x 7 cm

61



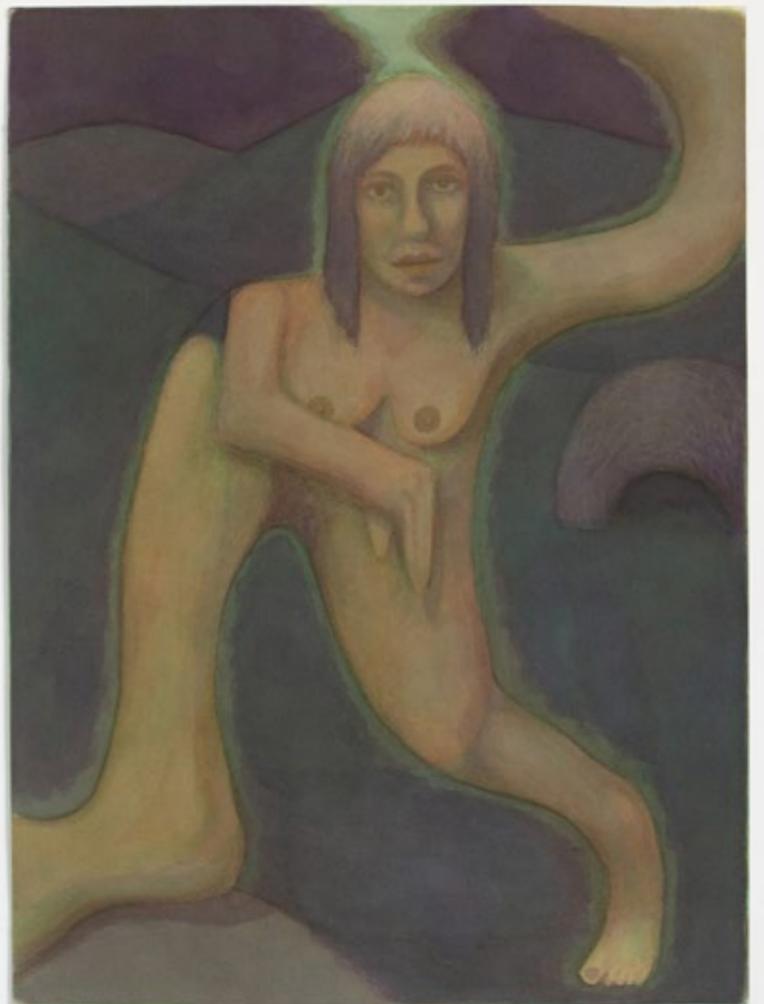
Sebastián Hidalgo
En el pasto (In the Grass)
oil on linen
81 x 61,5 cm

62



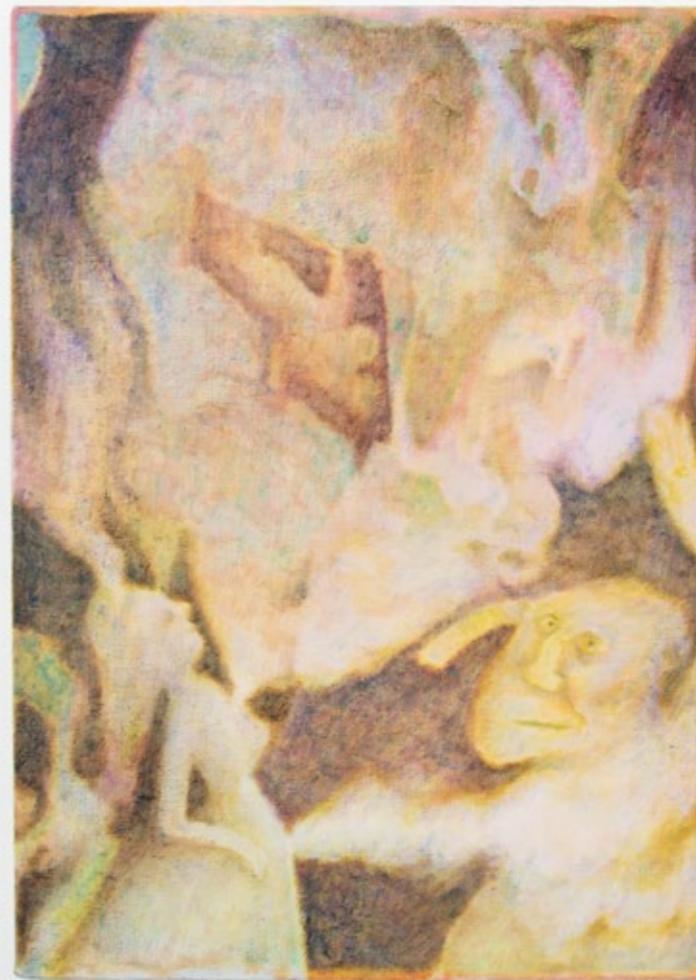
Sebastián Hidalgo
Bocanada (Puff)
oil on marble
9,5 x 10 x 2 cm

63



Sebastián Hidalgo
Humana Lámpara (Lamp Human)
acrylic ink and
watercolor on paper
44 x 33 cm

64



Sebastián Hidalgo
Acrisol
oil on linen
46 x 33 cm

65



Sebastián Hidalgo
Loto (Lotus)
oil on linen
49 x 37 cm



Akira Toxqui (artist project by Sebastián Hidalgo and Rafael Uriegas)
El río nos confrontó (The River Confronted Us)
acrylic paint, oil, watercolor, oil and colored pencil on linen
110 x 150 cm

curated selection of works
by Cassie Beadle, curator, and Victoria Williams, director of
Cob Gallery, London

Featured image:

Jamie Morse
Leelanau Coast
oil on canvas
28 x 32 inches
more on p. 90-91





www.instagram.com/pippysailor_jr

Image:

Saturnalia
oil on panel
24 x 24 inches

70



Born 1986 in Heath, Massachusetts. Currently lives in Turners Falls, Massachusetts.

Image:

Primeval Forest- A
watercolor
8 x 12 inches

71

ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: curated selection

Joachim Lenz



www.joachimlenz.com

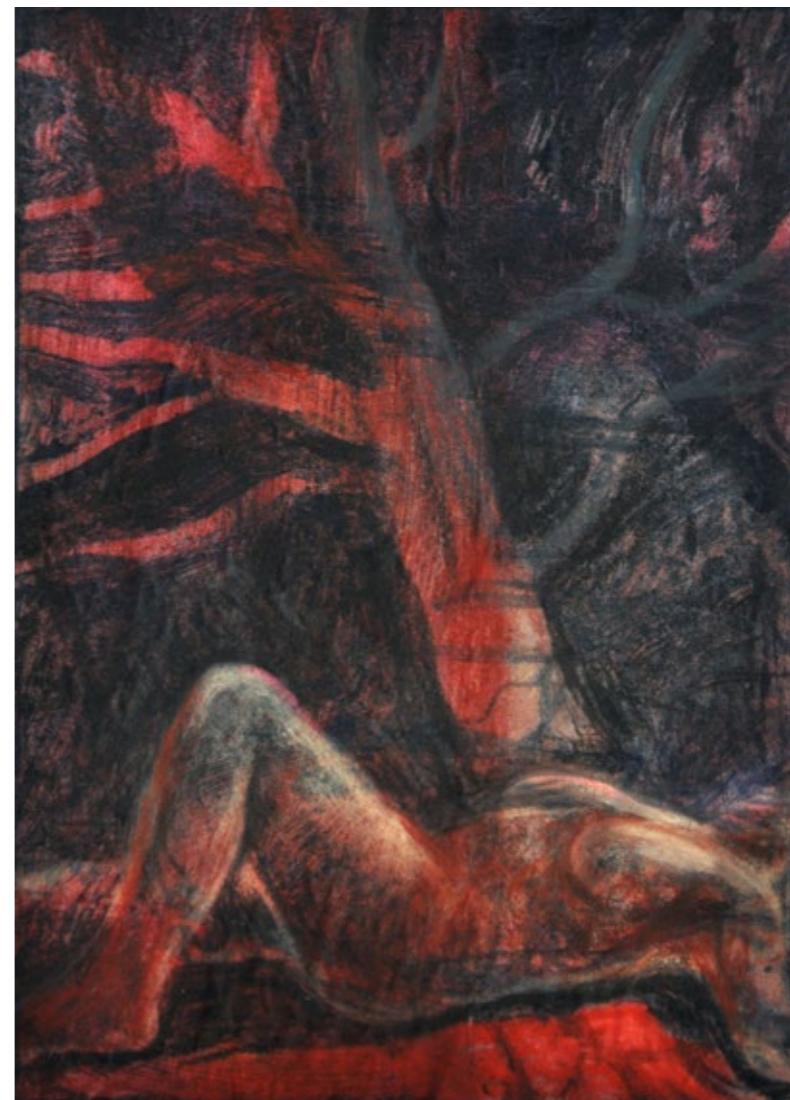
Why refer to traditional genres like still life and portrait in painting today? I have a liking for painting the shadows that objects cast resting on a plane or where they touch one another. I don't see this use of shadows so much as a technique of rendering an object in an illusionistic way, but as a way of making the space in between visual and tactile equally present as the body. Everything is on the same level of matter, to be equally touched and felt. Human and non-human subjects alike appear in the paintings treated equally. Recently I've become more interested in exploring a transient area between the organic and the inanimate. Tree trunks appear absurdly human-like and seemingly vested with psychological issues, taking on habits like smoking and dressing up. The traditional western notion of a separation between the natural world and human history, between nature and culture, between the material world and the ideal is in question. Especially the cigarettes materialize an area of transition and interrelation between human and non-human but at the same time they seem to claim their own agency.

Joachim Lenz lives and works in Berlin. He studied painting with Günther Förg and Sean Scully at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich.

Image:

untitled (disappearing act)
oil on mdf panel
40 x 30 cm

Yiwei Xu

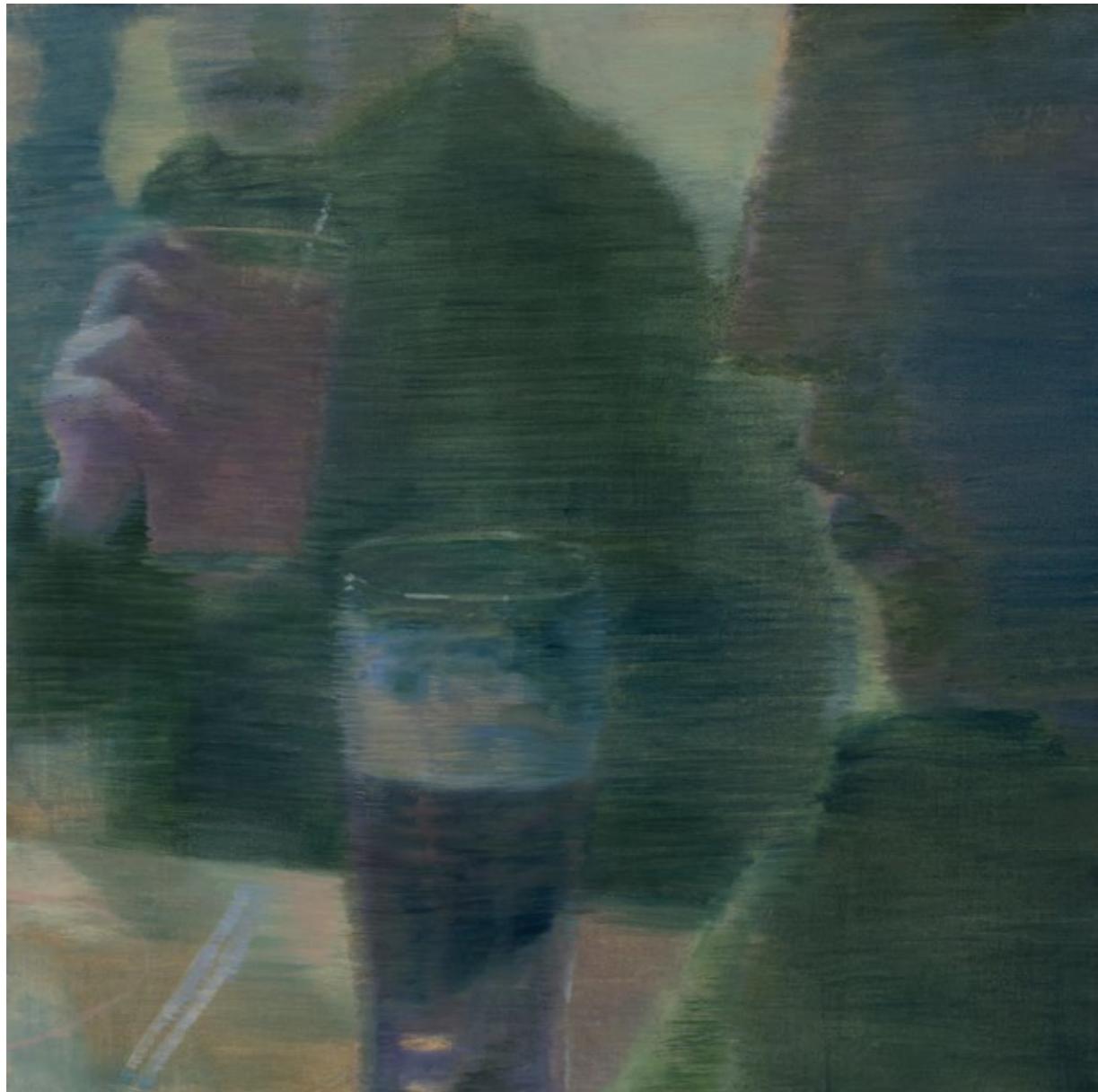


www.yiweix.com

Yiwei Xu is a London based Chinese illustrator and artist, currently studying at the Royal Drawing School. She is seeking the boundaries between the real world and the inner world, or maybe there are no such boundaries, and the entire experience of life is a dream. The mysterious and subtle atmosphere in the world fascinates her. Light and shadow reveal the gate of the hidden tunnel that connects realities and fantasies. She uses mixed media, like charcoal, pastel, and coloured pigments, to create harmony and conflict that could express a bizarre yet realistic world through artworks.

Image:

Sleep
oil paint, charcoal, chalk pastel, monoprint
21 x 15 cm



Yoora Lee

www.yooralee.com

Image:

no more bet
oil on linen
20 x 20 inches



Yoora Lee (b1990) is a Chicago-based artist. Yoora received a BFA in painting at South Korea and moved to Chicago in 2016. She graduated with her MFA in Painting and Drawing from School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work has been exhibited internationally including the United States and Korea.

My paintings are filled with analogous color relationships and wavering horizontal marks that imagine an impressionism derived from video tape distortion. My brush strokes blur the picture like an analog TV glitch, undulating the image as though from an obsolete technology. The unreal color provokes a sense of fantasy, reminding people of brief moments when life felt like a movie or drama. My filtered palette indicates the unknown, something outside of ordinary life. Compositionally, the repetition of reflected spaces and screens creates sub-narratives that are open-ended and incomplete. The picture plane opens outward toward the viewer, inviting them into an awareness of a between-space where the painting is a stage and they are the theater. The goal of my painting is to depict the unreal and arcane quality in mundane existence.

I source images from the media of decades past. I begin with old, found stills and create new fictions. With VCRs, our past became accessible and editable at home. I grew up in the transition from analog to digital. I've discovered my affection for the 1990's as an adult through social media, movies and animation. Many programs depicting that decade are still popular. Pre-internet television continues to be my favorite form of entertainment. The TV shows that I watched when I was a kid are evident in my paintings, false memories in my unconscious mind. Specifically, I bring the vibes of City Pop, a synth-laden subset of Japanese pop music and related videos, into my paintings. My images evoke a nostalgia of the recent past, as grainy VHS grade images meet the retro mood of Japanese anime. The power of nostalgia, both romantic and empty, manipulates the viewers' minds and emotions through imperfect memories. We recall our frustrated expectations of the future, which is now the present moment.

Fiction needs characters, and so all of my paintings are figurative. Time is warped, however, and figures of the present are juxtaposed with those from the past. Through walls, windows and screens viewers can look back and forth through. Nonetheless, the figures feel blank, inviting the viewer to project themselves into their points of view and wonder about their intentions. Their postures and environments mix feelings of emptiness, isolation and ennui. The only thing the viewer can be sure of is a hazy feeling of uncertainty.

Image:

sneaky night
oil on canvas
24 x 22 inches



www.rachelwolfson.com

R a c h e l W o l f s o n

S m i t h

Image:

Babel
graphite on paper
140 x 140 cm



Rachel Wolfson Smith is an American artist based in Amsterdam, NL. Her large graphite drawings look to the landscape to interpret changes experienced over time. Interests in psychology, history, and painting surface in her drawings, which simultaneously represent and abstract the landscape and the people who live in it.

Wolfson Smith is a recent alumni of The Contemporary Austin's Crit Group and 100W Corsicana Artist and Writer Residency. Her drawings are held in public and private collections, from Google to artist Kiki Smith. She has exhibited nationally and internationally, at institutions including the Women's Museum (TX), the Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art (CA), and NeueHouse (NY). Her work has been discussed in publications such as Design Milk, Sightlines, Glasstire, and Iron & Air Magazine, and she has been awarded grant support from The Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation, The Awesome Foundation, and the City of Austin. Wolfson Smith received a BFA in painting from MICA and an MFA in painting from Indiana University.

In 2021, Wolfson Smith will open solo exhibitions at Women & Their Work and Ivestor Contemporary in Austin, TX. Her work can be found on Instagram at @wolfsonsmith

Image:

No One Will Remember We Were Here
graphite on paper
366 x 183 cm

Alex
Lewis



www.lexlou.com

Image:

The Carpet Merchants
mixed-media Installation
dimensions variable

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Alex was born in 1988, and lives and works in London. He is currently completing his final year of MA Painting at the Royal College of Art. He was recently selected to study Ceramics at Japan's oldest art school Kyoto City University of the Arts and was awarded Distinction for his dissertation: A Stitch in Time: A Journey through Temporality and Fabric. Alex studied BA (Hons) at the University of Brighton and Foundation at UCA Epsom. Alex makes site-specific installations and mixed-media paintings that collage fabric, metalwork and ceramics. Slow craft processes are interwoven with the ephemera of fast fashion and painting itself. The work takes its cue from alternative modes of display such as bazaars, marketplaces and street montages, materially pregnant with objets trouvés and cloth. Objects are laid bare upon flea-market rugs, which explore the mercantile and abject through a low neutral aesthetic.

Alex's process is a form of excavation, a slow reveal of things buried in the mud and a return of clay pots to the soil from which they came. The drape, sag and crease of his fabrics are important but sometimes things fold in on themselves and become something new altogether. Clay, a wet, coloured mud, is analogous for paint and the woven tooth of canvas becomes a carpet upon which he stands. The porous canvas, t-shirts and dust-sheets that he works upon soak up coffee-stains, residual paint marks and natural dyes; an allegory for how painting absorbs its surroundings. Collaboration is a crucial part of Alex's work. He seeks to erode the notion of the esteemed auteur—cloth is exchanged with artists and decorators. However, he doesn't wish to retreat entirely, there is something of the Ragpicker in him.

Alex's work has been exhibited nationally and features in international collections in New York, Somerset, Brighton and London. He was awarded the Contemporary Collaborations Art Prize (2020), which included a research trip with Alexandra Villing, Curator of the Greek and Roman Collection at the British Museum. He partook in SpaceshipDungeonZoo, London, (2019); a collaborative exhibition in Alvaro Barrington's Studio and undertook a residency on Antony Gormley's Estate (2018). A series of solo exhibitions including Bizarre Bazaar: The Subtle Art of Hoarding, London, (2020); David Gitane, London (2016) and Drawings, London (2012). He has taken part in a series of group exhibitions including REFUSE REFUSE, London, (2021); Tales From the International Market, London, (2021); A Fish You Already Caught, London, (2020); Painting Tongues, London, 2020; The Royal College of Art WIP Show, London, (2020); Playground, London, (2019). Two of his works were selected for the 250th Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, curated by Grayson Perry RA and one of the paintings was selected for Kathryn Oliver's Top 6 Picks (RA Sales Director).

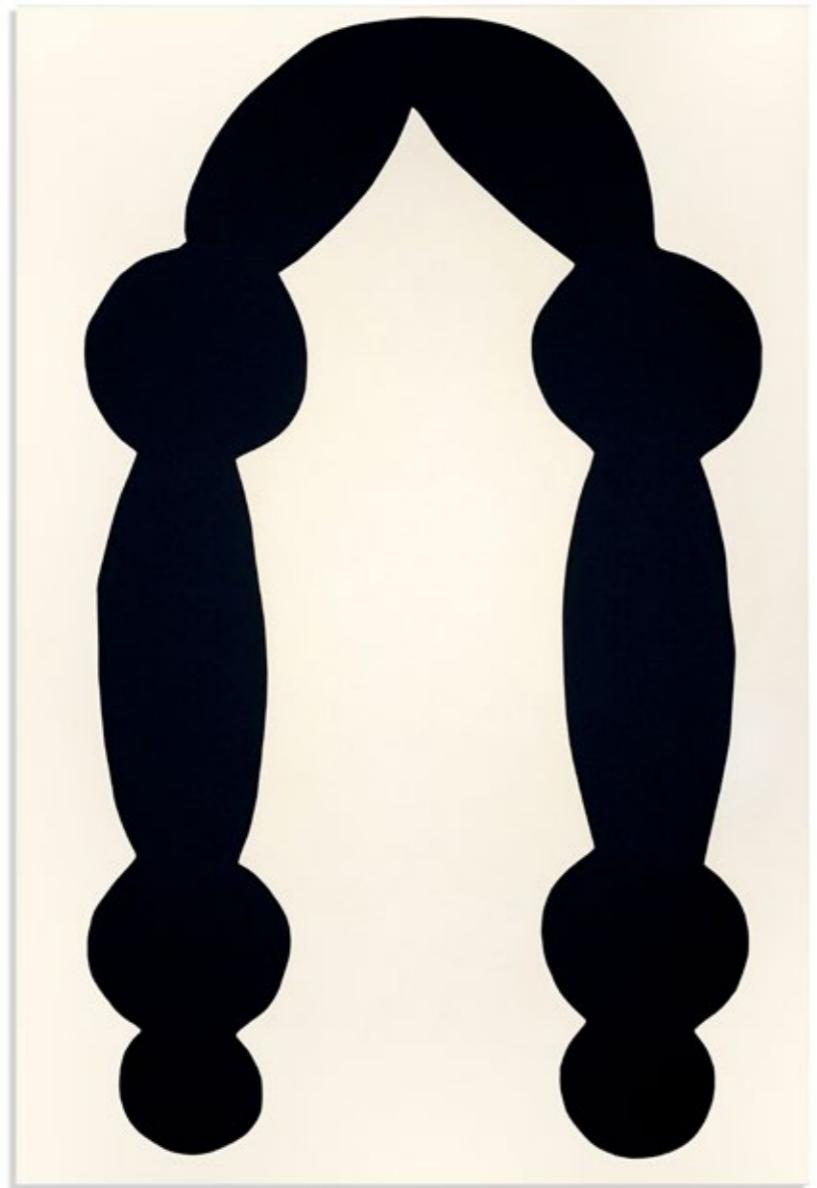
Image:

Cut from their Cloth
collaged fabric/ painting
230 (h) x 210 (w) x 10 (d) cm

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ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: curated selection

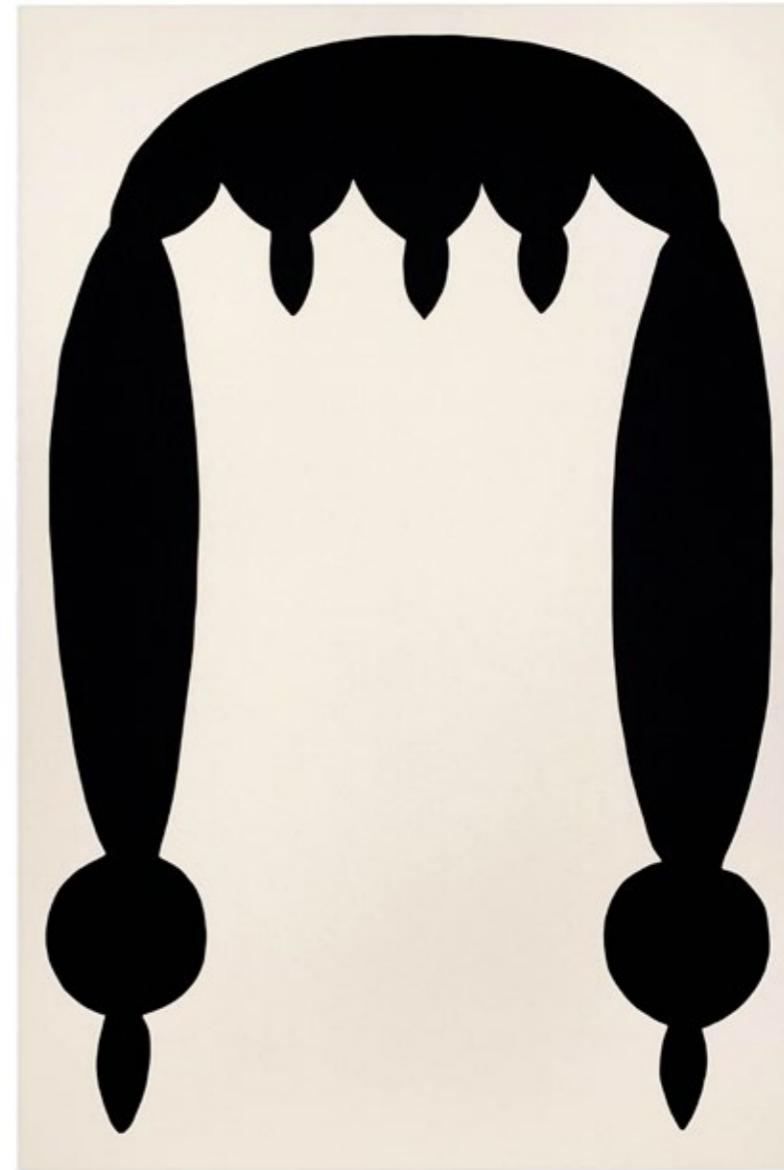
Stacey Beach



www.staceybeach.com

Image:
Midnight Shelter
cotton, canvas and thread
72 x 48 inches

80



Stacey Beach (b.1977) is a Californian artist who sews two-dimensional textile works that explore form and composition as well as the material itself in its relation to feminine identity. Inspired by the anonymous histories of female textile artists, the decorative arts and American folk art, Beach's work explores concepts of beauty and anti-beauty, high and low, form and void, the domestic and the feminine.

Image:
She Wolf
cotton, canvas and thread
72 x 48 inches

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ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: curated selection

D e b o r a h D r u i c k



www.deborahdruick.com

Image:

Beach Days
acrylic on linen
30 x 24 inches

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Deborah Druick is a Canadian born artist living in the Bronx, New York. Druick has exhibited her work in Hong Kong, China and Macau, as well as in the United States. 2020: New American Paintings curated by Jerry Saltz, edition #146. Artist Interview: Visionary Art Collective Magazine. Vermont Studio Center Residency Grant Recipient. 2019: Group Shows: Pulse Miami, Vellum Projects, Miami Beach, Florida Art Market Hamptons, The Bridgehampton Museum, Bridgehampton, NY. Red, Yellow and Blue Exhibition, Van der Plas Gallery, Lower East Side, NY. Unseen, curated by Akili Tommasino, Collar Works, Troy, NY; Velvet Ropes, curated by Charlie Roberts, Shrine, NY. Saturated: An Eye for Color, curated by Michael Rooks, Barrett Art Center, Poughkeepsie, NY. 2018: Group Shows: Signal, Katonah Art Museum, Katonah NY; Clio Art Fair, Chelsea, NY.

My work addresses issues of gender definition, self-identification and female objectification, using stylized figuration and high-key color. I emphasize and exaggerate concepts of precision, perfection and beauty in femininity. My females are faceless, eliciting questions about identity, self-awareness and sentiment.

Image:

Periscope
acrylic on paper
24 x 18 inches

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ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: curated selection

Nadine Lohof



www.lohof.cargo.site

Nadine Lohof was born in Kassel, Germany, and lives and works in Berlin. After studying philosophy and gender studies in Berlin she is currently a student of Jutta Koether's painting class at the University of Fine Arts Hamburg.

Her works circle around ideas of mimesis, excess, digestion, transgression, social codes and internal power relations.

Image:

Urbeber eines Übels (Creator of an evil)
acrylic and oil on canvas
155 x 145 cm

Catherine Repko



www.catherinerepko.com

Catherine Repko, b.1990, is a London based artist

I am working on a series of paintings based on the relationships between myself and my three sisters. The studio became filled with cheap print-outs of pixelated faces of my three sisters, faces from different angles, photographs of us together, now as women: embracing, hands held, fingers intertwined—a deep connection, empathy, love and history. I am interested in the space between us, our relationship growing up together and what connects us as now as adults. For me, what is at stake here is how we support each other and what these female relationships mean to me as a woman now. Though sisterhood is at the root of my current work, I am thinking also about being daughters, about motherhood, our humanity. I am bringing togetherness to the forefront in my work and I do this at a time that is increasingly polarised both socially and politically. I am the third of four sisters. These women are the foundation of my very identity. They represent, quite literally, what it means to me to be a woman: the ineffable experience of girlhood, the subsequent passage from girlhood to womanhood—all this bound and intertwined by a shared history with these three women. Thinking about the space between us now, as adults and what these female relationships mean to me as a woman now, I began painting. Four women.

Image:

Sisters
oil on canvas
180 x 120 cm

Catherine Lette

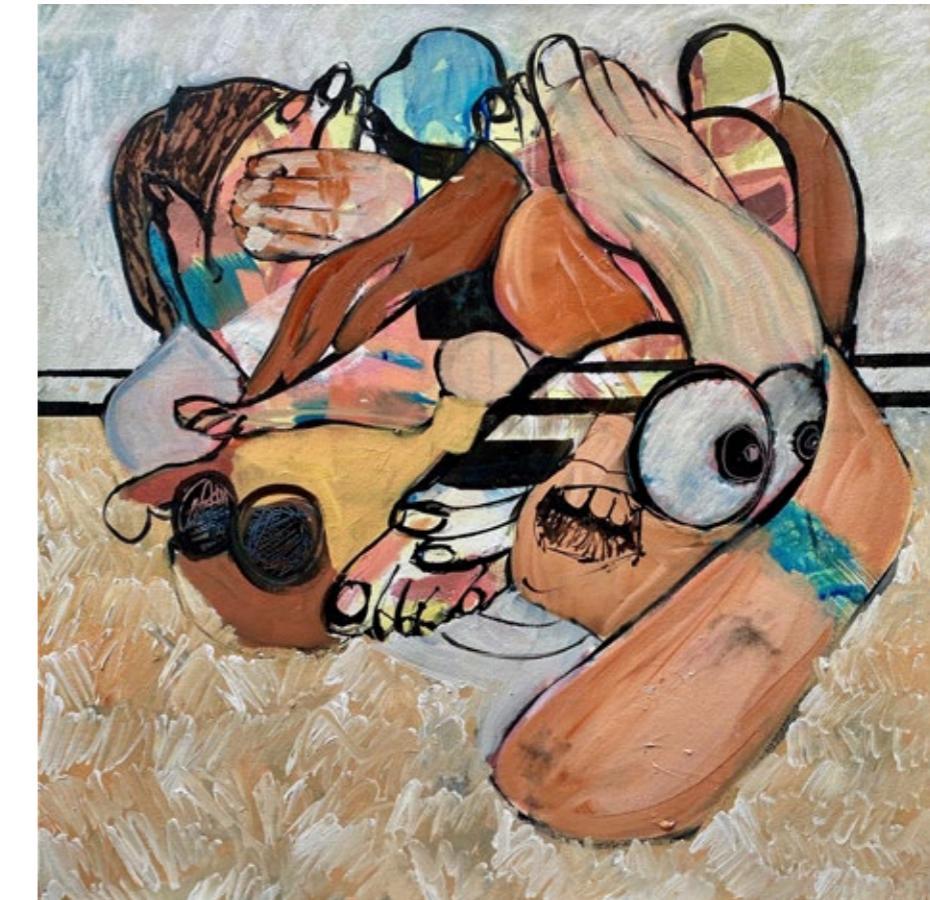


www.instagram.com/catherineletteart

Image:

Invasive
acrylic and graphite on cotton canvas
90 x 90 cm

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In today's multi-layered environment we can be simultaneously in one space and another, embodied and disembodied. I paint and draw figures dissembled in relation to my gaze, framed by the real and virtual spaces we occupy. We are bombarded with imagery, semiosis, simulacrum and a constant noise of interruption that should be more surprising than it is. Drawing from life and on-the-go photography my compositions are populated with the figures around me moving between a state of painted real and unreal, often broken down or frozen in a parody of their own activities, mixing humour and irony with an underlying question about societal anxiety.

Drawing is at the heart of my practice, a daily activity that connects my looking to life around me and allows a sense of the journal or album to begin to permeate the work. When sketching figures within real-time I let the line layer over itself, my hand following my distracted gaze which flicks like the movement across a mobile screen, sometimes pausing, at others swiping. As drawings develop from drawings they form iterations that mimic the taking and editing of digital snaps. The pictures become similar to screens, their palette and composition playing between the interaction of the natural and the artificial. The dominance of drawing within the painting and the handmade gesture conflicts with the mechanic of a stencilled or taped mark creating a language of duality which is reflected in the composition. Figures are seldom fully realised, often reduced to the detail of a fleeting glance or caricature. Compositions echo the necessity to reconsider things from different perspectives in a world where so many iterations are layered over each other. At times the final image is drawn from multiple perspectives turning the canvas or page within the process, just as we rotate and move our digital devices. This allows the finished picture to be turned giving the viewer a choice, offering up differing angles of perception. The resulting narrative oscillates between the recognisable and the ambiguous screened in a frozen state of flux.

Catherine Lette is a practicing artist living and working in Camberwell, London. She graduated with a BA in Fine Art from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design and has now joined the Turps Offsite Painting Programme.

Image:

Outbreak
acrylic on cotton canvas
90 x 90 cm

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ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: curated selection

Svetlana Fialová



www.svefialova.blogspot.com

Born in 1985, Svetlana Fialová completed a BA at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Košice, Slovakia; an MA in Prague; and a PhD in Bratislava. She's contributed work to twenty-five group exhibitions and fifteen solo shows in cities including Paris, Vienna, Budapest and London. As well as receiving the Jerwood Drawing Prize in 2013, she was the finalist for the 2011, 2015, and 2020 Painting of the Year Award and the Art Critics Award of Young Painting in Prague, and was nominated for the Essl Art Award CEE.

In her practice, Svetlana Fialová continually develops drawing as a medium, while she tries to push its customary boundaries and confute speculations about its exhaustibility. Fialová likes to appropriate formal features of national and world history of fine arts and blend them with current visual trends. Usually, her own life and stories come to the thematic foreground alongside such topics as (self) mythology, irony, pop culture, feminism, gender and body image. Spontaneous inspiration from media and everyday banality mixes with a deep, harsh self-criticism, the boundary between which blurs and subsequently turns into two viewpoints of the same thing. Compositionally multilayered works that are full of specific iconography and immanent metaphors are often shrouded in mystery with a strong psychological profile.

Image:

from the Aisbiteru series
mixed media on wood
40 x 30 cm

Beatrice Dahllof



Beatrice Dahllof
Pole Chabru
oil on canvas
35 x 45 cm

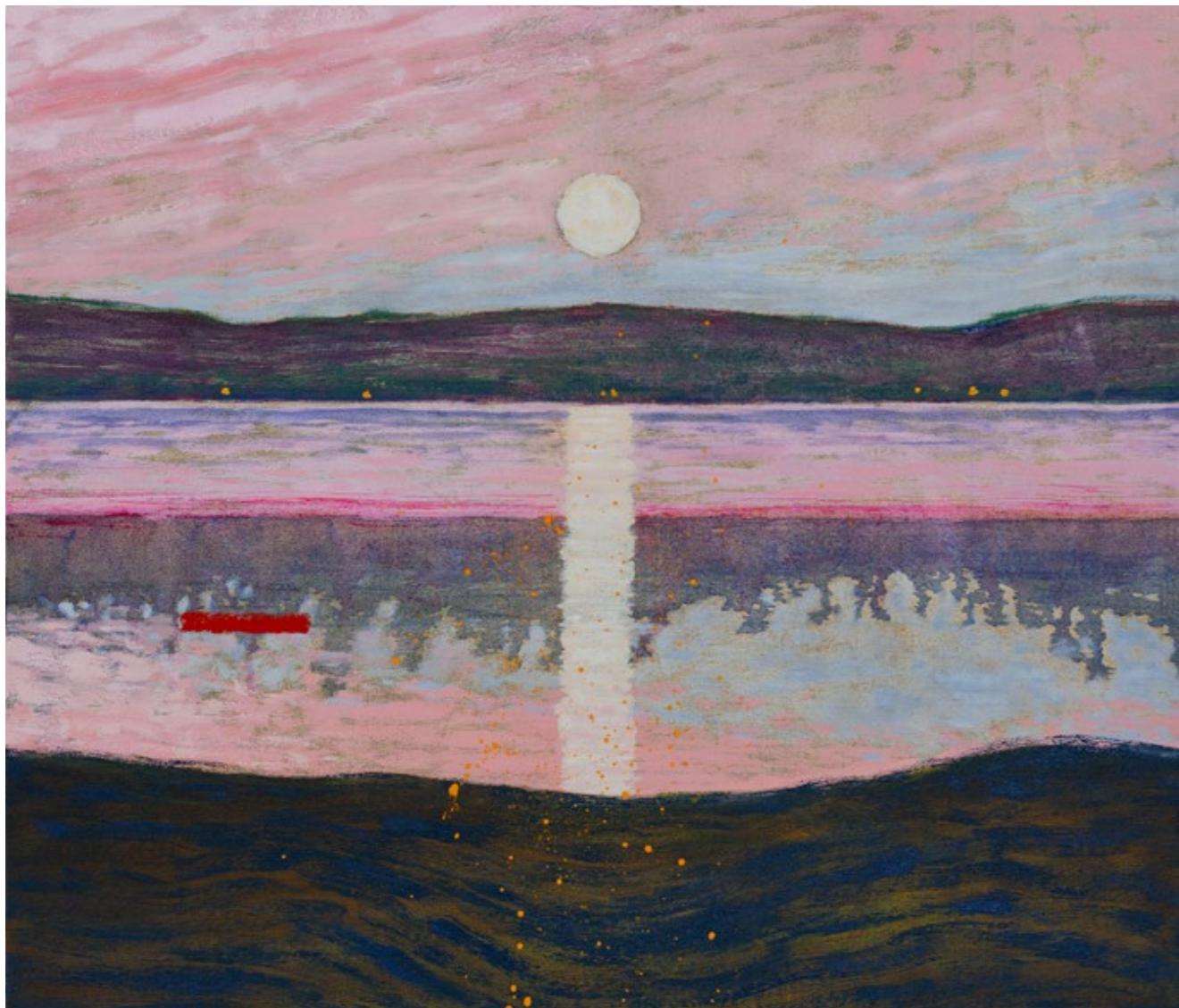
www.beatricedahllof.com

With a focus on both painting and object making, Dahllof completed her BFA Honours at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in 2020. Her current studio practice is focused on figurative painting. She is interested in the use of historical narrative art to explore the human condition and the relationships forged between people. Her work explores ideas around heritage, grief, interaction, isolation, ritual, and tradition.

Image:

How's it Feel
oil on canvas
40 x 40 cm

Jamie Morse



www.studiomorse.com

Image:

Mirror in the Sky
oil on canvas
24 x 28 inches

90



Jamie Morse (b. 1982) uses the imagery of land as a language to explore emotions that arise from contemplating our existence. The universe, and our presence within it, is a mystery. Contemplating our existence gives rise to the full spectrum of emotion. That we exist at all is both terrifying and joyful, beautiful and hideous, constructive and destructive. Our existence is mystifyingly confusing while essentially simple and easily understood. It is difficult to discuss such contradictory emotions with words. Images and music explore and express feelings with a nimbleness that words do not. Landscape is a vocabulary that is universal to all cultures. We all come from the land, are nourished by it, and eventually return to it. The land is our oldest metaphor. Using on-site studies from life rather than photographs, Morse creates expressive landscapes that embrace imperfect renderings made with the hand and eye alone. Composing poetry with landforms, he uses a visual language that is more felt than understood.

Emotions arising from interaction with the landscape are intuitive reactions to the world that do not require conscious reasoning. These are the ancient emotions. A wide, clear field feels calm. A small lake enclosed by trees feels safe. Birds returning in the spring bring relief from the worry that winter will never end. The moon's soft presence is like the comfort of friendship. Approaching storms stir helplessness, confusion, and fear. Giant trees made ill by blight cause us to consider the cyclical process of growth, death, decomposition, and the nourishment of new life. We wonder what is down the road, over the hill, or around a river's bend. Reflections on the surface of water inspire us to contemplate ourselves.

Morse's work is not intended to describe scenery the way that a photograph does. Instead, a visual record of thinking and feeling emerges on the canvas. The paintings are very flat—striving to look like something made of paint—so that there is no confusion about the illusion of pictorial space. These are objects of response to the ontological assumption that we exist. The canvases show the process of struggling to understand the space we exist within by retaining evidence of geometric grids, the modification of composition and color choices, and the accumulation of thought as the artist attempts to comprehend that we are part of a world that we are somehow consciously detached from. In this sense, the paintings document the world's contemplation of the artist, as much as they record the artist's contemplation of the world. Hopefully, this intensity of observation helps the world to better know itself.

Image:

Blush in the Branches
oil on linen
24 x 30 inches

91

ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: curated selection

Hannah Kim



www.seouldongja.com

Hannah Kim (b.1996) is an artist based in Seoul and London. She is currently studying MA Painting at the Royal College of Art, London. Awards and Grants: The Grand Art Exhibition of Korea 2020, the second prize, KR 2020; The Biscuit Factory Foundation Open Contemporary Young Artist of the Year 2020 Shortlist, London, UK. Press: Ladies Drawing Club, Open Call 2 Issue #3 2020; Where's the frame, Editorial November 26, 2020.

My practice starts from my own experiences and memories about the houses I lived in. A desire to remember and recall them to be more exact. My family including me have experienced many relocations since when I was young due to a series of urban development plans and reconstructions. But I'm not able to relive the duration which has vanished. It's impossible to remember them exactly and they don't need to be. I just want to create a sort of imaginary and nostalgic space that allows me to recall those houses endlessly. Those spaces are not always joyful, sometimes they grieve me. What I try to recall about the house is not only how it looked like but all about my feelings, thoughts and even some little happenings in there and they become a thread of narratives. The house is not just a three-dimensional space where my body stays in but the abode of my consciousness and memories. Talking about the house is to clarify the world in which I live and myself at the same time. There are always some conflicts or void space between my memories, but this uncertainty makes a process more interesting.

Image:

Username 208
acrylic and oil pastel on canvas
100 x 100 cm

Ryan Orme



www.ryanorme.com

Ryan Orme is a London based artist working across painting and sculpture. He studied sculpture (MFA) at the Slade and was selected for Bloomberg New Contemporaries 2019.

My work explores the relationship between internal and external landscapes, and the role geographies have in shaping who we are. I like to use place as a way of exploring something personal and relational. I often come back to a feeling of scale, or distance; how we fit into a much larger picture. I think I use art as a means of reconciling things I find confusing, such as how we as individuals can belong to something as vast as a civilisation. I have an intuitive approach to making that leads me through a range of processes and subject matter. I hope to make work that is as much felt as it is understood.

Image:

The Morning Trail
oil on aluminium
14 x 18 cm



Born in 1981 in Tehran (Iran), lives and works in Paris.

Upon discovering Nazanin Pouyandeh's paintings, we are confronted with an enigmatic form of narrative figuration that constantly raises questions. The viewer is instantly immersed inside the image – the imagery even (a smooth rendering and a myriad of details) – with a clear sense of dramatisation, and yet the mystery and a continuing doubt remain. [...] The singularity of her paintings emerges from this very sense of the elusive; in the manner of our dreams that bring the opposites together, this enigmatic approach produces open-ended scenes giving free rein to our imagination and our own phantasmagorical projections. Pouyandeh's "petrified temporalities" or "freeze-frame" paintings allow the viewers to initiate an investigation, immersing themselves in an extremely diverse pictorial repository (ancient painting, primary arts, but also comics, photography, film, television, video games, and the Internet) that gives her paintings their extremely vivid dimension. [...]

All in all, Nazanin Pouyandeh's cultural hybridisation—a phrase that could serve as a possible definition for the syncretism orchestrated by this "painter-film director" creating a coherent universe from several different cultures—brings her closer to a teller of tales, taking the viewers that we are on a dizzying journey through time, history—both major and minor (hers and ours), cultures and continents.

text by Vincent Delaury

Image:

Notre dame de la mer
oil on canvas
81 x 100 cm



It is all about communication.

A person trying to understand one of its own species, but also one of another la pet or a wild animal. Relationships are building blocks of our life. A partner, a mother, a grandmother, a neighbor, an employer. More or less tight, intimate, public, secret, for show or real. You can find that out if you look closely, it's in the gestures and poses, and looks. Look for them in my paintings, as I try to understand this language. It's not about realistic portrayal but rather capturing the essences. By meanings of shapes, I want to tell those kinds of universal stories. Everyday I learn by observing strangers and friends alike. Observing myself! Now my paintings relate to the considerations of a woman approaching the age of 30. Expectations of crossing this age, hopes, and dreams that seem to never come true again due to the passing time. On the one hand, these are the expectation of oneself, on the other expecting of society. They are stories about making difficult decisions and often about the consequences of those choices. About loneliness, about trying to be independent, and about the necessity of identifying my needs and desires. About the need to care, about the need to give, about the need to create. About the pressure of time and passing. About motherhood, relationships, attitudes to ecology, and politics. About everything that I have an idea of now, and I did not have 10 years ago, or what did not bother me at all.

I was born in a small village called Stara Łubianka in the center of Poland. I started my journey with painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk. After two years of education, I moved from the seaside city of Gdańsk to Wrocław in the south of Poland to continue studying at The Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design.

Image:

The First Man
mixed media on cotton canvas
150 x 180 cm

Clara Bolle



www.clarabolle.com

As a philosopher I view my writings and art as tools to do research. My main question in relation to thinking and making is: What does it mean to be your body instead of having a body? My aim is to think of bodies in a non-medical, anti-capitalist way and look for other ways to experience our bodies. I draw my inspiration from great philosophers, writers and artists. A major inspiration for me is Metamorphoses by Ovid concerning the change of bodies, especially the figure of Daphne who changed into a laurel tree to escape violation. There's also a strong social interactive dimension in my work, in the sense that I like to work with others to give them a voice of their own.

Image:

The Wheel of Fortune
acrylic paint on canvas
60 x 40 cm

96

Katia Kesić



www.katiakesic.com

Katia Kesić was born in Moscow in 1986, and moved to London in 2012. Presently she is working as a full time architect and all her spare time is dedicated to artwork.

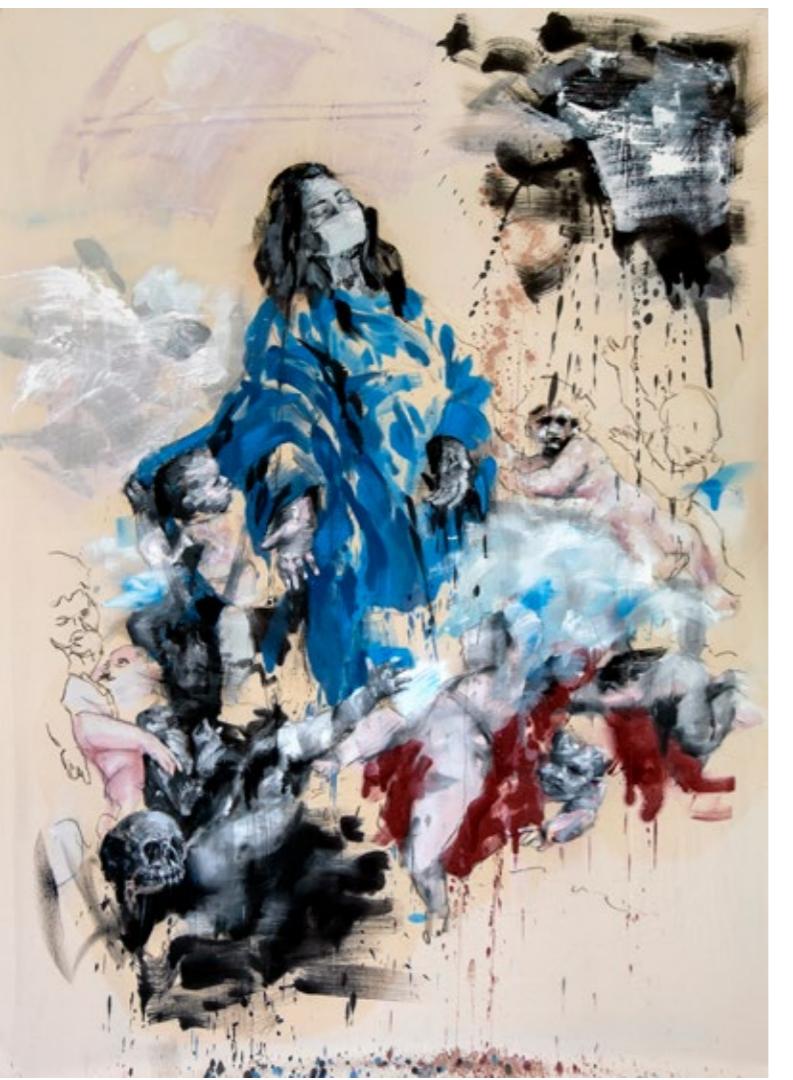
Katia explores the human body as a memory vessel which collects traces of one's reality/inner subjectivity and the imagination. The African fabric patterns of Brixton, memorised view from Moscow flat, cosmic and esoteric symbols of media/fashion trends and their aesthetics—she is using all this information stream as a source for work. By converting these influences into independent elements she is creating one's own mythology. Katia is distancing herself from the layers of memory and associations in order to get to their essence, whilst speculating on how much our personal identity is influenced by the inner or the outer world; be it immigration, sexuality, connection to the environment etc. Hands-on experience/process is equally important as an idea.

Image:

Look no further
underglaze on stoneware
40 x 30 x 30 cm

97

ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: curated selection



T o b i a s R o s s - S o u t h a l l

www.tobyross-southall.co.uk

Image:

Saint Rosalie Interceding For The Plague-Stricken Of London
charcoal, oil, spray paint and red wine on canvas
200 x 150 cm

98



Tobias Ross-Southall is an award-winning British artist and filmmaker, living and working in London.

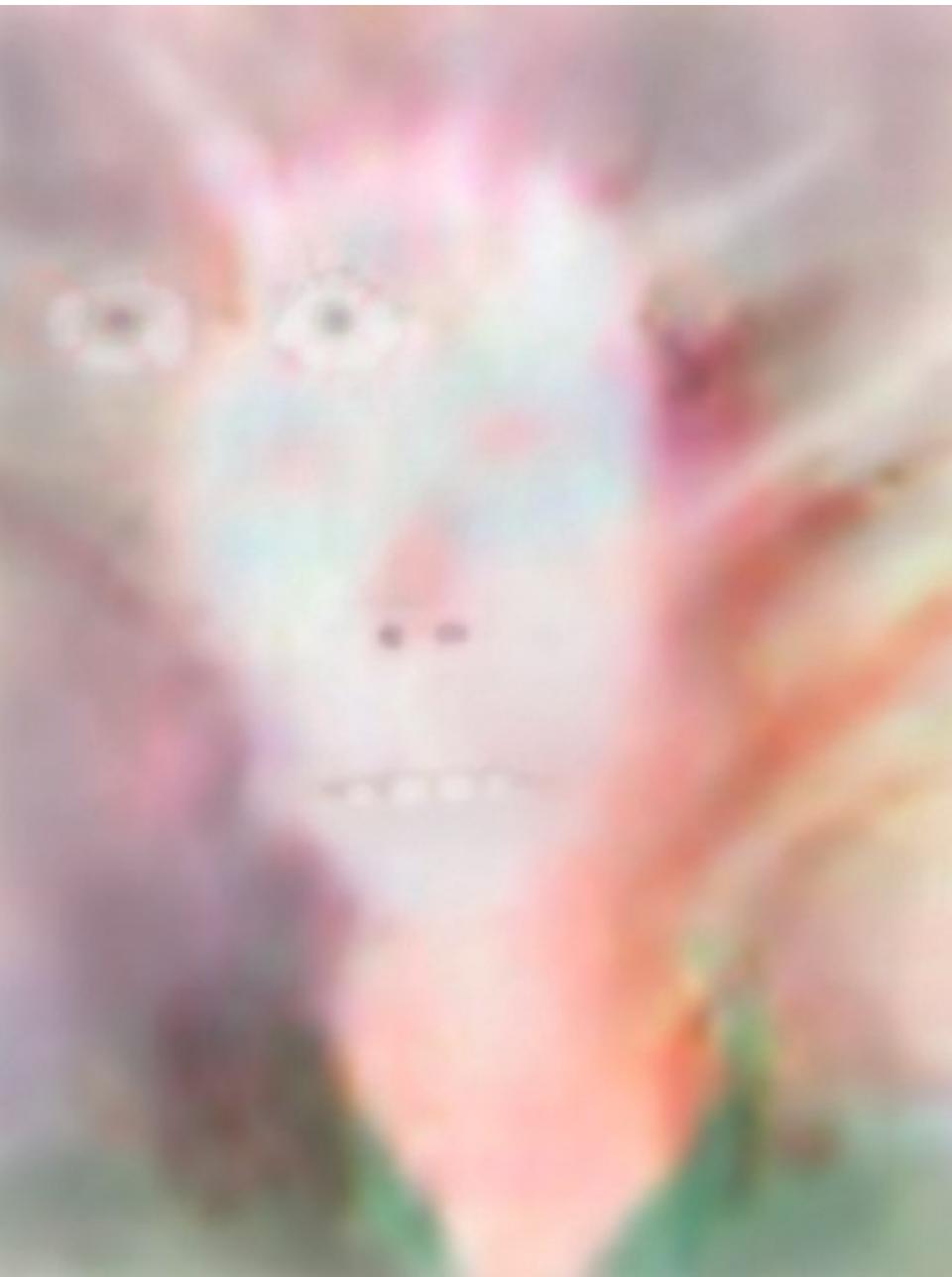
Image:

Sesh With Death
charcoal, oil and household emulsion on canvas
180 x 240 cm

99

ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: curated selection

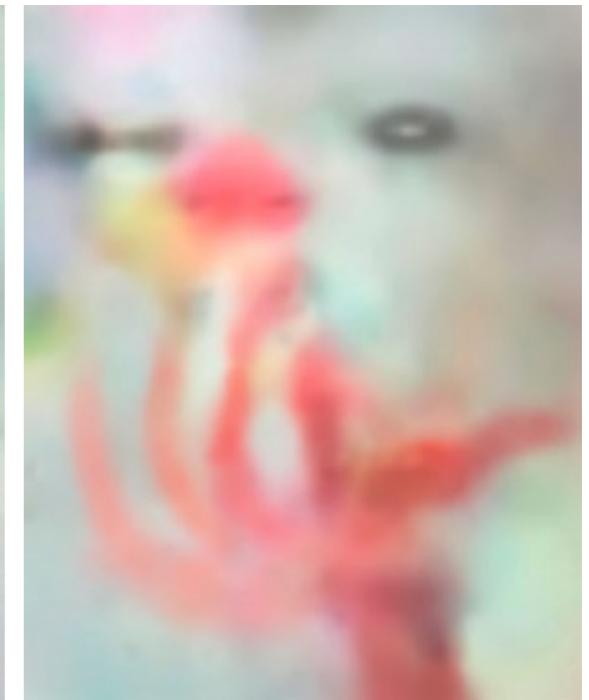
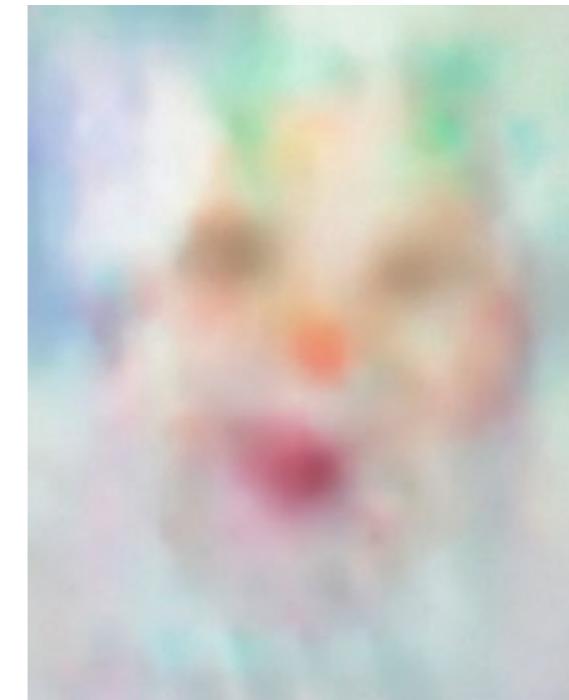
Travis LeRoy
Southworth



www.travisleroyouthworth.com

Image:

I worry lines away #1
pigmented print on paper
24 x 18 inches



Travis LeRoy Southworth (b. 1979, Honolulu, Hawaii) is a visual artist based in New York City. Solo and two person shows include Undercurrent (Brooklyn), Mixed Greens Gallery (NYC), Dock Gallery (Basel), AHN/VHS (Philadelphia). Recent group exhibitions include Museum of Contemporary Art Long Island (NY), Ortega y Gasset (Brooklyn), Index Art Center (Newark), Trestle Gallery (Brooklyn), Martha Otero Gallery (Los Angeles), Thomas Robertello Gallery (Chicago), The Drawing Center (NYC) and The Bronx Museum of the Arts (NYC). His work has been written about in the New York Times, The Museum of Contemporary Digital Art, Basler Zeitung, and ArtSlant. Southworth participated in the Artist in the Marketplace (AIM 29) Program at the Bronx Museum of the Arts (2008) and received a BRIC Media Arts Fellowship (2009). He was awarded a NYFA Fellowship in Photography (2010) and residency in Switzerland that involved a project with the Large Hadron Collider at CERN (2013). Southworth holds a MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2007), and a BFA from the University of Arizona (2004).

We live in a strange world, where we touch screens more than the ones we love. By day, I work as an image correction specialist in the beauty industry, spending several hours in a dark room, carefully removing facial imperfections. This work profoundly informs my art practice as I stockpile hundreds of digital blemishes and color adjustments to construct new portraits. I integrate these elements into my work to open up discussions of image manipulation, computerized labor, and self-perception.

In my series "New beginnings, old endings, secrets secreting", I collaborate with a neural network to explore alternative methods of art creation and digital outsourcing. I used my past work "Color, Balance", as a data set to train a machine in my paintings' style. I then feed the network specific portraits I find online. The result of this process provides the base for new paintings I further alter in Photoshop. When a neural network produces images, computer scientists often refer to them as 'dreams' due to their soft surreal-like quality. Considered a stepping stone in the search for artificial intelligence, hopes and fears surrounding these technologies act like barnacles on a ship—attaching themselves to ideas larger than any individual advance. Will AI create a new digital revolution freeing people of menial tasks or bring the end of humanity itself? The subject prompts consideration of my dreams and nightmares; real and imagined, small and large, wholesome, and vapid. I pair each work with a specific hope or fear of my own.

Image (left): Image (right):

Clown Cloud #1 *Distance is the new intimacy*
pigmented print on paper pigmented prints on paper
20 x 16 inches 30 x 24 inches

A n t h o n y P a d i l l a



www.anthonyzpadilla.com

Image:

Calla lily and the moon
oil on canvas
14 x 18 inches

102



Anthony Padilla is an American painter based in Brooklyn NY. In his recent work, he explores the complexity and chaos of nature. Inspired by Georgia O'Keeffe, Henri Rousseau and Wassily Kandinsky's work, Anthony depicts minimalistic and overwhelming close-ups in the kingdom of nature where flora and fauna are sovereigns.

Anthony's artwork is "to highlight the abstract and surreal qualities of our natural world by using the elements found in nature, specifically the jungle, as a means to do so." His paintings are forbidden invitations to enter the glorious, yet hazardous, realm of nature in which humanity does not seem to belong. Self-taught, Anthony built his reputation through a meritocratic approach. He also participates in several solo and group exhibitions where he sells his work to private collectors.

Image:

Iris
oil on canvas
16 x 20 inches

103

ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: curated selection

Clara Lacy

www.claralacy.com



Image:

Forest Island
graphite
10.5 x 14.8 cm

104

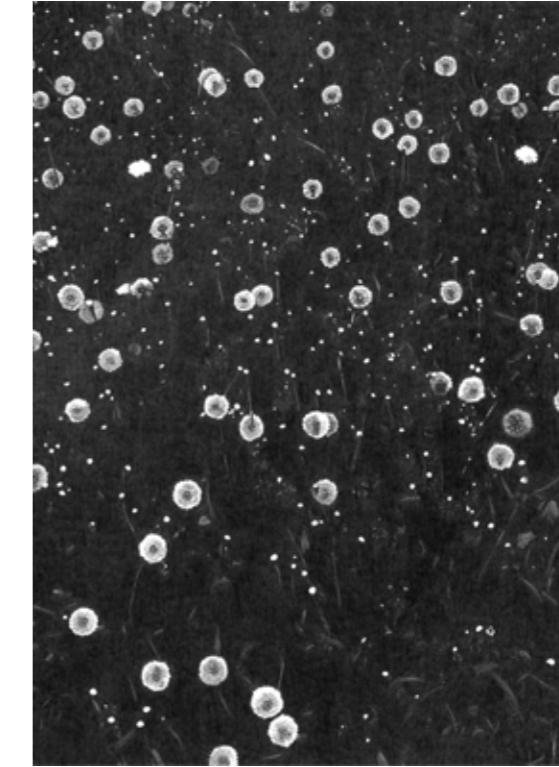


Image:

The Intimate Nature of Space
graphite
33.5 x 40 cm

105

Clara's work is inspired by the natural world around her, rendering in pencil and watercolour her fascination with the beauty and strangeness of biology and evolution. Recent works in graphite are focused on travel. Clara carves up the paper into positive and negative space, creating shards of light and dark. Embracing the diagnosis of Essential Tremors, her wavering line takes you on the artist's journey of mark making with the condition.

Leaving London, her home of 23 years, for Hong Kong in 2016, Lacy began a journey of unknown length—the same one that finds her in Australia now. Inspired as ever by her committed passion for wildlife and the environment, she set about creating new artwork in a new location.. As she did so, she found that her instinct had shifted focus—zooming in to examine the plant-life that once created a stage for her animal protagonists, and defined their habitats. The intricate feathers and mosaic scales of her previous work have departed, leaving the delicate play of shadow and texture between overlapping leaves to fill the page or canvas. A world of stillness, or gentle movement that nourishes and houses the migrants, pollinators and crawlers of the animal kingdom. Moving first to the east, and then heading south, she found herself fascinated by the mixture of stark contrasts and gently morphed continuities that she saw in the flora that she encountered in different places. And the newly transient artist took reassuring comfort in the grounding stability of plants—as they extract everything they need for life and growth from their immediate surroundings and play critical roles in symbiotic relationships with other organisms and species.

As these symbioses range from the rhythmic complexities of flowering Atacama cacti providing essential water for migrating flocks, to the quantum 'magic' of photosynthesis and the simple necessity of creating the oxygen we all breathe—so Clara's drawings and paintings hold the simple and complex in a balanced suspension. From the leaf-like qualities and resonances of the paper itself, to the subtle variations of form in the clustered foliage, the painstaking detail in shape and shade gives a form to Clara's own symbiotic relationship with her subject. A subject she sees as so much more than simply the backdrop for the comings and goings it enables.

"Second Nature" is the artist's journey from fauna to flora, the naturalist's transition from one hemisphere to another, the traveller's discovery of a new habitat in which to take root.

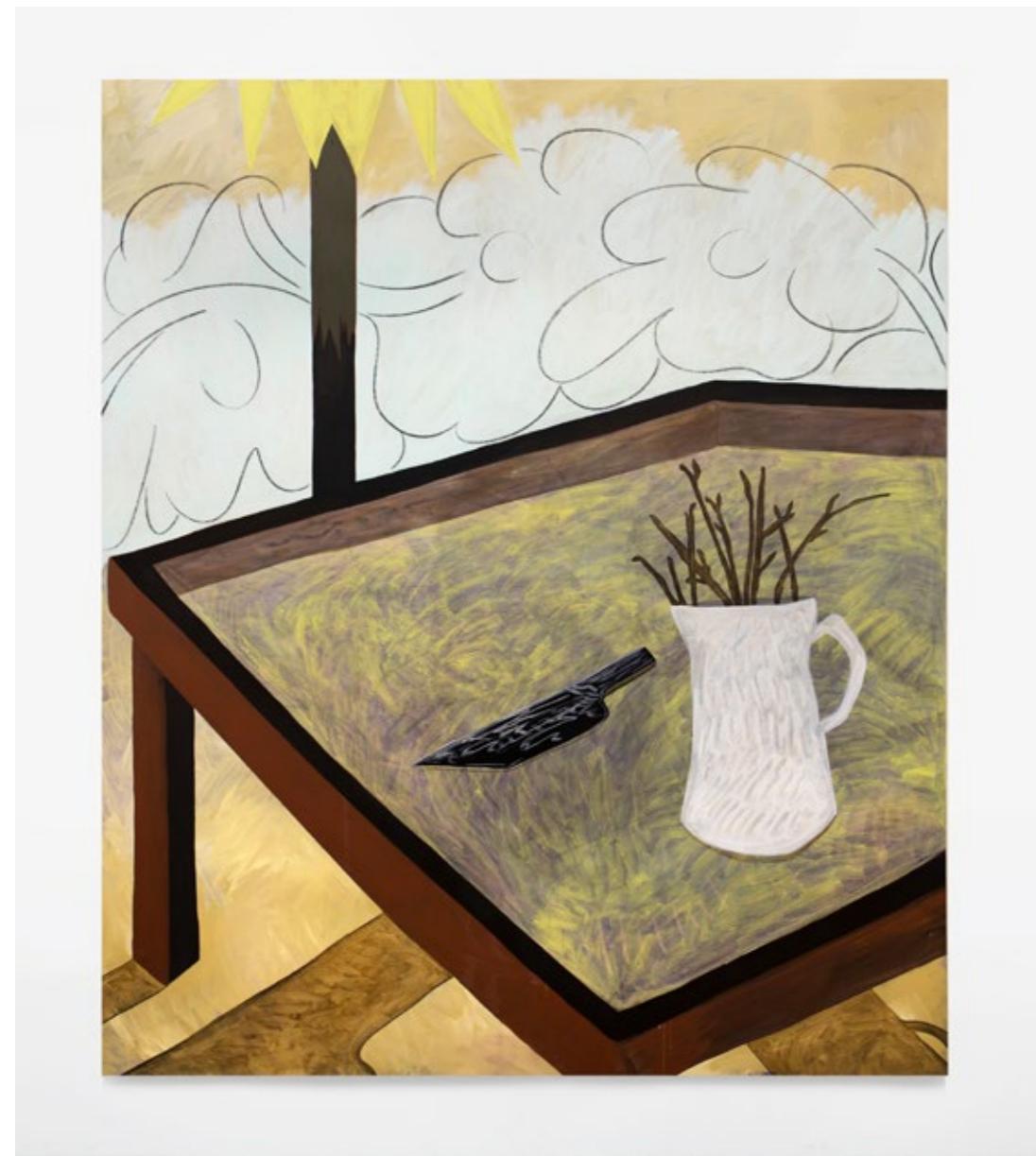
ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: curated selection

editorial selection of works

Featured image:

Cheri Smith
Yowl
oil on bookcover
29 x 21.5 cm
more on p. 118





www.sophielourdesknight.com

S o p h i e L o u r d e s K n i g h t

Image:

Trouble
acrylic and charcoal on canvas
200 x 170 cm

108



Sophie Lourdes Knight is a multidisciplinary artist from California, USA working in painting, drawing, sculpture, and photography. She received a BFA in Painting & Drawing from California College of the Arts in 2014. She currently lives and works in London, UK where she is an MFA candidate at the Slade School of Fine Art. She is a 2019 and 2020 Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation awardee.

Within the studio, Sophie's core interests revolve around notions of failure and ideas of what success could be, attempting to overcome 'failure' by making and remaking; failure as success, as subject, as object. She considers her practice to be multidisciplinary, using photography and sculpture as painting aides and accomplices. Subject matter is constructed with loose characters and objects inhabiting barren interiors and exteriors in an exploration of familiarity, sentiment, and the bizarre.

Image:

Halley's Shadow
acrylic on watercolor paper
60 x 48 inches

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ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: editorial selection

Rene
Gonzalez



www.instagram.com/rene_thatapainterguy

Image:

Fox
acrylic on canvas
60 x 50 cm

110



Rene Gonzalez is a London based artist whose work explores myth, folk art and magical realism, painting dream-like landscapes and characters that can evoke the otherworldly or the subconscious. His canvases feature references to classical painting, folklore from different cultures and they may at times reveal storytelling structures carried on from his background as a graffiti artist and mural painter in Costa Rica. The echoes of tropical forests in his theatrical compositions are filled with decorative textures, intricate details of foliage and expressive playful colours.

Rene was born in Montreal Canada and lived most of his life in Costa Rica before moving to the UK in 2012. He graduated with a BA (Hons) in Fine Art Painting at City and Guilds of London Art School in 2015. Since coming to London he has exhibited in solo and group shows in galleries and different art events across Europe and America, including exhibitions with Messums Wiltshire, Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery, the Rebecca Hossack Gallery and Great Western Studios. He was awarded first place in the Clyde & Co LLP Blank Canvas Prize 2015. He produced a mural displayed in the area of Seven Dials as a tribute to the legendary junction in 2019, and has collaborations with entities such as AucArt, The Auction Collective, All Mouth Gallery, Bowes Parris Gallery, The HALO Trust, MADE.com, NewPlatform, Art, the NBA London and Clarks, including his own limited edition shoes with the latter, the "Desert Wu" and a custom design on a skateboard from House of Vans.

Image:

There was once a tiger striped cat
acrylic on canvas
195 x 245 cm

111

ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: editorial selection

Jonathan Torres



www.jonathantorres.net

Torres was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1983, received his BFA in 2009 from the Escuela de Artes Plásticas, San Juan, and his MFA from Brooklyn College in 2012 under the mentorship of Vito Acconci. Nominee of the Joan Mitchell Foundation grant, Torres was selected for the Biennale Mercosul (Brazil 2016), won the Charles G. Shaw Award (NY, 2012) and the Arcos Dorados Award (Argentina, 2011). Torres has been exhibiting in solo and group shows between New York and Puerto Rico for over ten years. His work has been featured in Flash Art, Beautiful/Decay, and Art Observed, among other publications. Torres lives and works in Brooklyn, NY and his work belongs to important collections such as the Museum of Fine Art, Boston and Museo Contemporáneo de Puerto Rico.

I'm a Puerto Rican artist from San Juan and now based in Brooklyn, NY. Working with paintings, sculptures and video, a re-occurring feature in my works is the indication of otherworldliness as well as living in a diaspora. Many of my paintings depict distorted faces; the figures undergo or have completed metamorphosis—they are a recognizable character yet transformed to a new persona. With this, I reflect on my own identity as a Puerto Rican and someone who left the island, but also on living in a rough city like New York. In both places, beauty and happiness exist, but the absurdity and the anxiety is present, both personally and politically. In my works, I want the viewer to be absorbed into this world intertwining anxiety and beauty. The vulnerable, ugly figures resembling both monsters and humans are sculpted as much as they're painted. My process to depict the bizarre paradises is created by emphasizing a materialistic ritual that explores the variation of the materials used, such as wax, oil skin, fiber fill, silicone, fabrics, faux hair, lace, feathers, pigmented surfaces in acrylic and oil. Even though depicting something recognizable, abstraction is present, with elements of it shown in my works through emotional intensity. I use my own personal experiences and memories and trauma, at the same time inherently commenting on the collective and the socio-political climate.

Image:

Baker Boy
mixed media
44 x 48 inches

Cai Ruei-Heng



www.cairueiheng.com

Cai Ruei-Heng's (b. 1989) enigmatic paintings are characterized by the combination of figurative depiction and anxious-like quality. He paints with personal memories from the times with his pet dog, which represent the metaphor of the confusion he feels in life. He also questions the capability for humans and dogs to maintain the sense of self, which he continues to search for through the similarities between both lives.

I'm somehow obsessed with a wandering status. Perhaps this is a result of some sort of mischievous attitude I have being at the mercy of current circumstances while acting apathetic. It's like a needle pressing on the skin's surface without a sting or blood, precisely and intensely. It could be painful, however I believe some people enjoy such pain. Or, this is merely no one else's concern nor the manipulation of anyone. If you can't breakaway. Too Bad. It's your own business. Nobody cares. Can acting 'cute' solve the problem of feeling stuck and suffering in life? My paintings process a renewed combination of collapsed worlds, angering about inability to change the status of self, and turning into a rogue-like blend. This disintegration is not only entirely from myself, but also usually composed by media and imagination. The work shows those feelings that the "incompetent" world is collided by the huge mechanical gears of the real world, being torn, destroyed, being crushed. Incompetent people are broken, crashed, and swayed by impact, and ineffective panic. Social systems and rules have triggered a sense of chaos in my life, and this sense of chaos has formed a disintegration and laceration. I reorganized on the image and tried to respond with a different tone from reality in paintings.

The picture is often chaotic and comical, confusing and unintelligible feelings that people feel about life.

Image:

Ziqian Rd
acrylic on canvas
44 x 49 cm

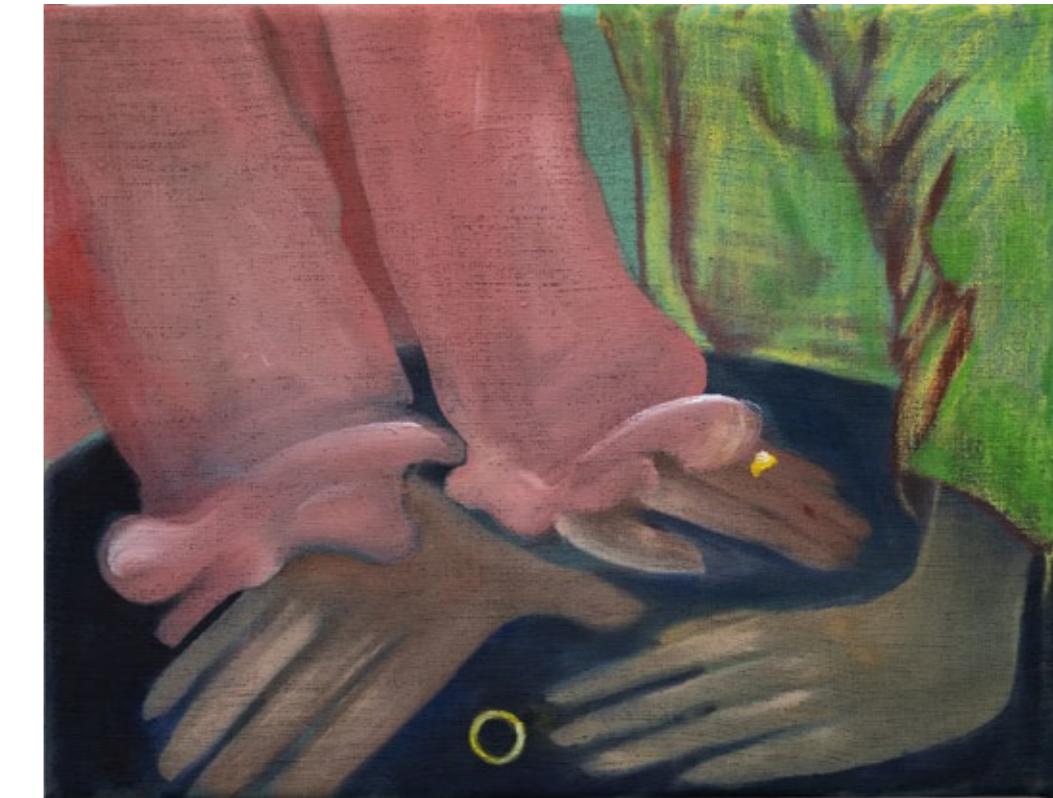


www.kyvelizoi.com

Image:

Nostalgia for a drink in a cafe
oil on linen
50 x 70 cm

114



Kyveli Zoi (b.1993 in Athens, Greece) is a painter and multidisciplinary artist that currently lives and works in Athens, Greece. She completed her BFA at the School of Visual Arts (New York, USA) in 2016, after attending the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2014, and Central St. Martin's College of Art and Design, London in 2011-12. Her multi-faceted practice evolves around diverse audiences within a wide spectrum of mediums and forms. Her collaborations include the National Theatre of Greece, the Michael Cacoyannis Foundation, Blackbird Productions and Film Director George Panousopoulos. She has held three independent solo shows and has participated in numerous group exhibitions both at independent and established art venues between New York City, and Athens, Greece. She was a resident of DNA Residency Program in Province Town, Massachusetts USA, in 2018. She is the co-founder of an artist-run project space in Athens, that will start running as a platform for Visual and Performative Arts in 2021. Her work is part of private collections worldwide like the OCEANA and OUSIA Restaurants, in Manhattan NYC owned by Livanos Group NYC. Kyveli's work was recently included in the White Columns 14th Online Exhibition 'El que busca encuentra, y sigue encontrando' curated by Daniel Baez of MECA Art Fair.

My practice revolves primarily around painting. I draw inspiration from my divergent cultural background, split between two continents, East and West (Greece and US), therefore my work is infused with the colors and the struggles of the people surrounding me, presented through the prism of traditional folklore combined with contemporary life elements. In my paintings, I question and revisit the notions of individuality, identity, humanity, tradition and evolution. All the different characters and cultures I encounter are represented by a variety of patterns, textures or zoomed in gestures that are inspiration and points of emphasis in my work. Throughout all my collaborations with theatre productions, my practice has been interrelated to a theatrical performance. Therefore, I approach my canvas as my stage, and there I unravel all the emotions and idiosyncrasies that take place within my daily surroundings.

Image:

Divorce
oil on linen
35 x 45 cm

115

ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: editorial selection

Monika Chlebek



www.instagram.com/monikachlebek

Born in 1986, Krakow, Poland. A graduate of the Faculty of Painting in the Academy of Fine Arts in Krakow. Diploma in 2011 from the studio of Leszek Misiak. Lives and works in Krakow.

In my work I process images of everyday objects and scenes. I paint motifs that attract my attention. I draw inspiration from many sources, books, films, Instagram, situations from everyday life. All this has an impact on my work. I am particularly motivated by the actions of other artists. Repeated themes in my painting are animals, bodily details, undefined faces, deserted places. This is what makes up the stories, which remain torn off and unspeakable. I am interested in the difficult and unpleasant side of human experiences. However, I do not limit myself to a pessimistic vision of the world. I try to leave gaps in painting in the form of a joke or irony. Juxtaposing my works with each other—putting them together, building content and visual compositions is a very important aspect of my work. In this way I build new contexts, tensions, understatements. Using sketchy form, I paint simple compositions with limited perspective, rather subdued in color. The stories I draw appear as scattered fragments of an unknown whole.

Image:

strike
oil on canvas
35 x 30 cm

Raphael Barratt



www.raphaelbarratt.com

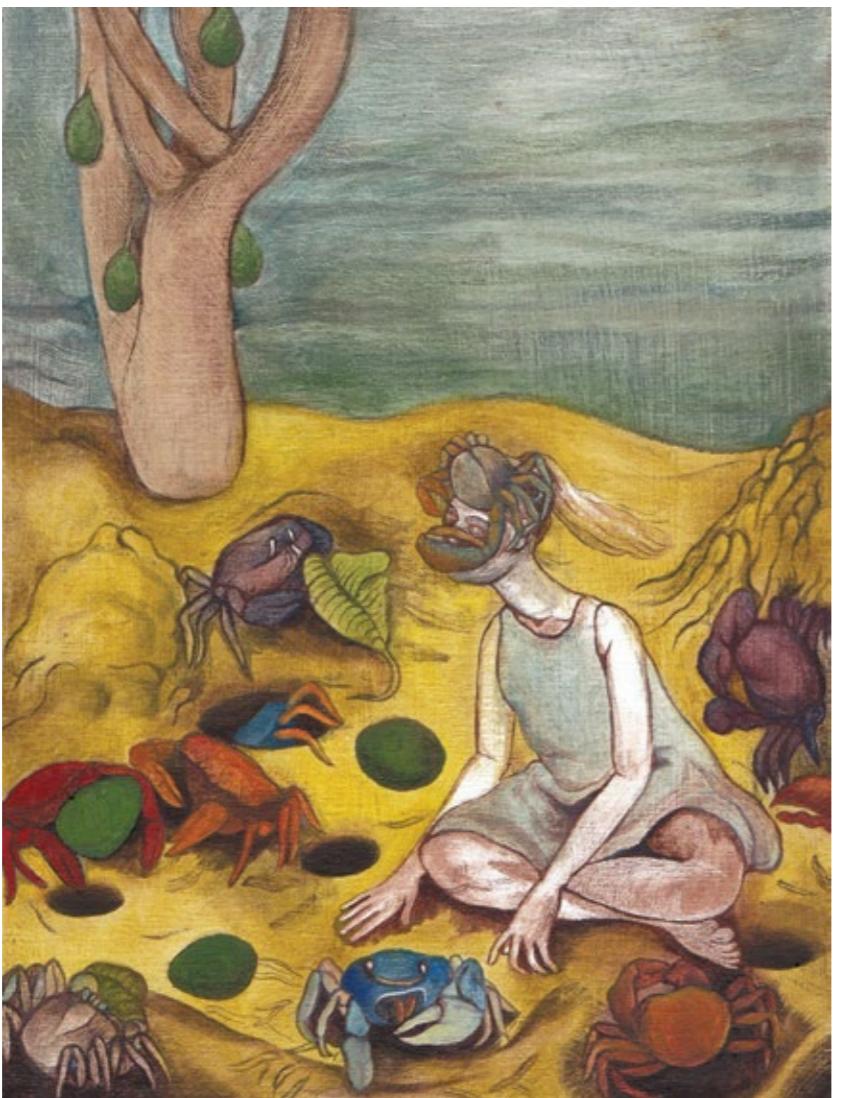
Born in 1994 in Kent, Raphael Barratt studied Painting at Camberwell College of Art before going on to do a postgraduate at the Royal Drawing School.

A puzzling sense of space and strange shifting landscape is a fundamental element within my work. Often hovering in the hinterland between abstraction and figuration, the work weaves together the psychological landscapes of memory with direct observation, moving between the two worlds and treading a line between narrative and non-narrative. Often drawing from memory the paintings are built from a visual language that begins with my early relationship to the ancient landscape of my childhood home in rural Kent. The drawings shift through different times of day: early morning, deep night, or hot afternoon, and observe different moments between the figure and the land. They involve both the private internal landscapes and figures of my imagination and the collectively understood imagery of certain paintings. I pay close attention to the compositional, colour and narrative techniques of early Renaissance painters such as Piero della Francesca and am fascinated by the colour and visual methods of Indian miniature painting. Figures in my work often appear in the form of singular bodies, echoing the atmosphere of the landscape, or sleeping quietly though a dream of colour and form. A quality of both calm stillness and strange tension holds the figures in the landscape as they continue to tread the line between narrative and nonnarrative, drawing from the mythical, verging on the sculptural and giving no more away than the mute trees and spaces they temporarily inhabit.

Image:

Woman In Red
oil on paper
122 x 155 cm

Cheri Smith



www.cherismith.co.uk

Cheri Smith (b. 1991 Essex, UK) currently lives and works in London. She studied at Norwich University of the Arts, and then later at the Royal Drawing School. In 2019 Cheri was the recipient of a residency at Hanover Grange in Jamaica where she delighted in meeting various plants, frogs, crabs and coral reef inhabitants. In 2020, Cheri's work was selected for the Sunday Times Watercolour Competition, and exhibited as part of Fortnight Institute's Winter Solstice.

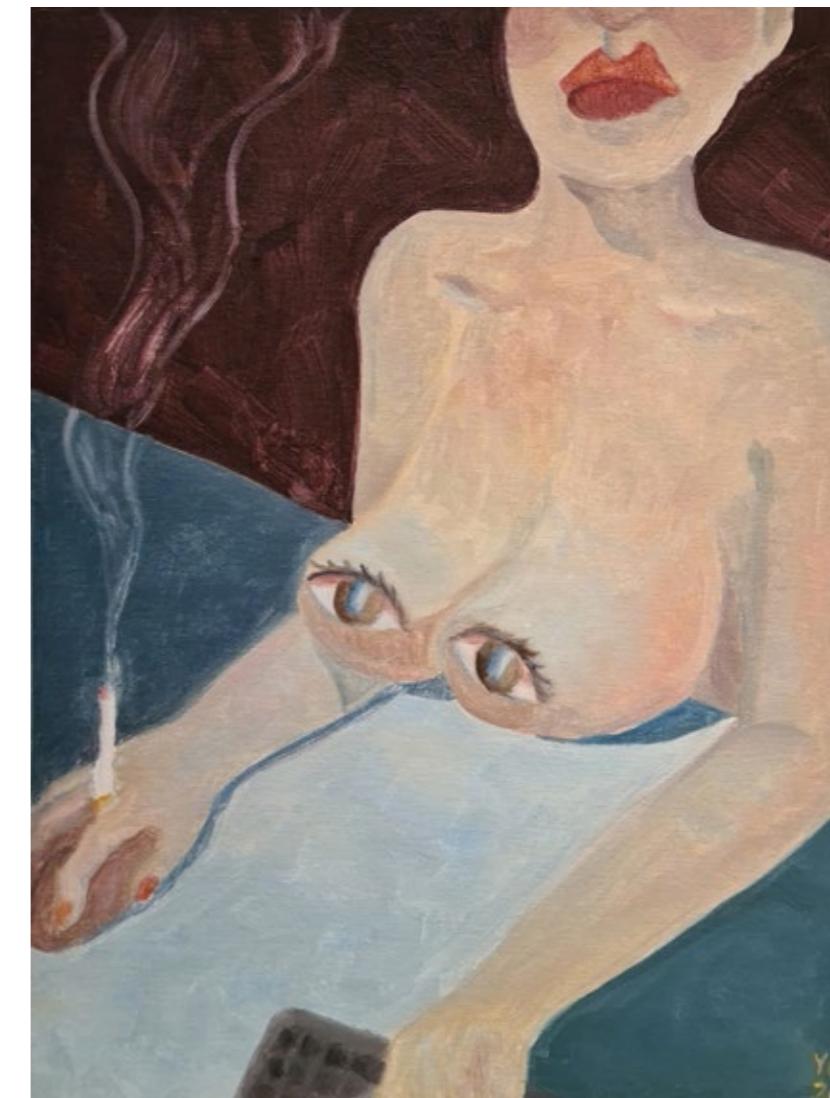
Cheri's practice is a personal attempt to access and understand nature, through drawings made with pencil and pastel, and paintings in oil, egg and glue. At the core of this is an investigation into the relationship between looking and knowing, and the history of how humans have looked at the natural world. She is drawn to the tangled, interconnected, mysterious and ultimately unknowable; it is this nature of things which her works aim to illuminate. Recent works explore themes of wildness, animality, embodiment and strangeness. Cats yowl, frogs jump, girls creep and squat. Her images emerge through material, observational and imaginative means and they exist somewhere between portrait, still life and landscape. They possess detailed textures, sinuous line, sprawling patterns and an intense clarity of focus.

Image:

Unearthing
oil on board
20 x 15 cm

118

Yuqiao Guo



www.yuqiaoguo.com

Yuqiao is a Boston-based artist and architect. Born in Beijing, China, Yuqiao studied Studio Art and Environmental Analysis at Pomona College in California, before earning her Master's Degree in Architecture from Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Through a variety of mediums and formats, Yuqiao processes her eclectic interests in space, materiality, religion, environment, body, and notions of the self; bordering on contradiction and provocation, Yuqiao's visual language speaks with an intimate sense of humor and fantasy. Besides visual art, Yuqiao works with wood, and is an amateur guitarist focusing on Renaissance and Baroque music.

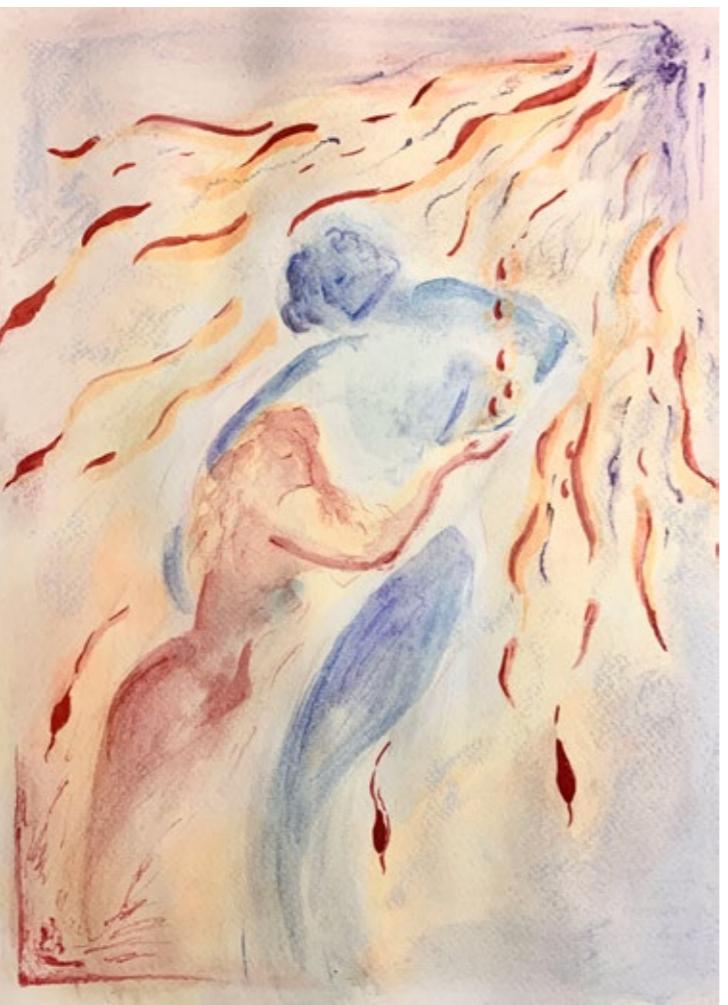
Image:

Overtime
oil on canvas
12 x 16 inches

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ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: editorial selection

Salomé Wu



www.salomewu.com

Salomé Wu b. 1996, is a multi-disciplinary artist whose practice involves oil painting, printing on silk, installations, and performance. As a teenager, Salomé admired a teacher who encouraged her to pursue training in calligraphy and painting. Her work examines otherworldliness through translations and ever-evolving reinterpretations of a mythology, formed from her observation of time, fragility, and the interplay between reality and the unseen. Understanding herself primarily as a global citizen, Salomé works to keep her art devoid of contemporary models of identification and taxonomy, relying on obliquely biomorphic figures to populate her work. Across mediums, she presents a nonlinear journey, weaving together seemingly disparate moments to unveil previously concealed narratives.

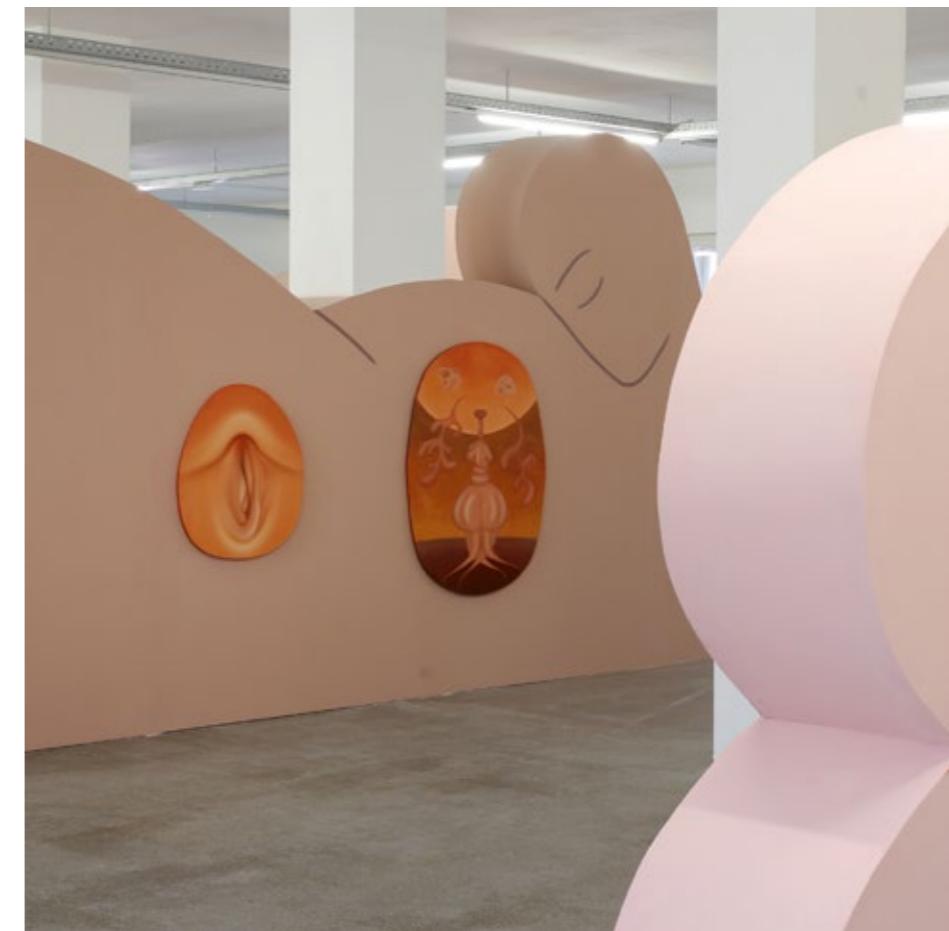
Salomé lives and works in London, UK.

Image:

Serpentine
mixed media on paper
24 x 32 cm

120

Marianne Vlaschits



www.mariannevlaschits.com

Marianne Vlaschits is an Austrian artist who focusses on painting and installation. She received several awards and grants in the past years and her work has been shown in numerous exhibitions. In her current installation "A Body That Lasts", we encounter an exhibition setting consisting of three opulent body constructions that become carriers of single works. The round shapes with their indicated limbs refer to bodies of human origin, but they are apparently beings from another time and dimension. Like spaceships that have laboriously landed on earth and are now in a state of hibernation, these beings tell stories about their existence based on the images on their bodies. They show us pictures of other planets with amorphous vegetation and several moons, of living creatures entwined with each other, like future symbionts united into a collective form with their environment. These now resting beings traveled through portals that appear as human orifices or the ovaries of plants.

"Maybe, but only maybe, and only with intense commitment and collaborative work and play with other terrans, flourishing for rich multispecies assemblages that include people will be possible. I am calling all this the Chthulucene—past, present, and to come." Donna Haraway depicts the dawning age, which should be a possible way out in the near future. Only in the sympoiesis—in the interaction of several life forms—the new cooperative system is conceivable in the age of the Chthulucene. A system not aiming at the particular advantage of a species, but rather on survival across species in general. It could be that the sleeping beings derive from the oracle of the Neolithic hypogeum, in which tiny figures of sleeping and full-bodied women were found. The underground, three-story cave labyrinth on Malta consists of 23 small temples, with the oracle chamber and the lowest temple forming the center. The walls are decorated with ochrecolored paintings depicting winding tendril patterns, discs, hexagons and spirals. It is still unclear for what exactly this place was used for, but it is believed that the sleeping beings are represented in a kind of spiritual transformation phase.

One would like to believe that Marianne Vlaschits' sleeping creatures tell of a future that lies ahead. However, the state of their rest not only indicates a phase of recovery from a journey that has already been made, but also the next departure into unknown worlds. They are in an intermediate stage between what has already been there and what has not been told yet. In their state of constant indolence, they report on the world of imagination and on a utopia of a present. Both at the very same time. Text: Karolina Radenkovic

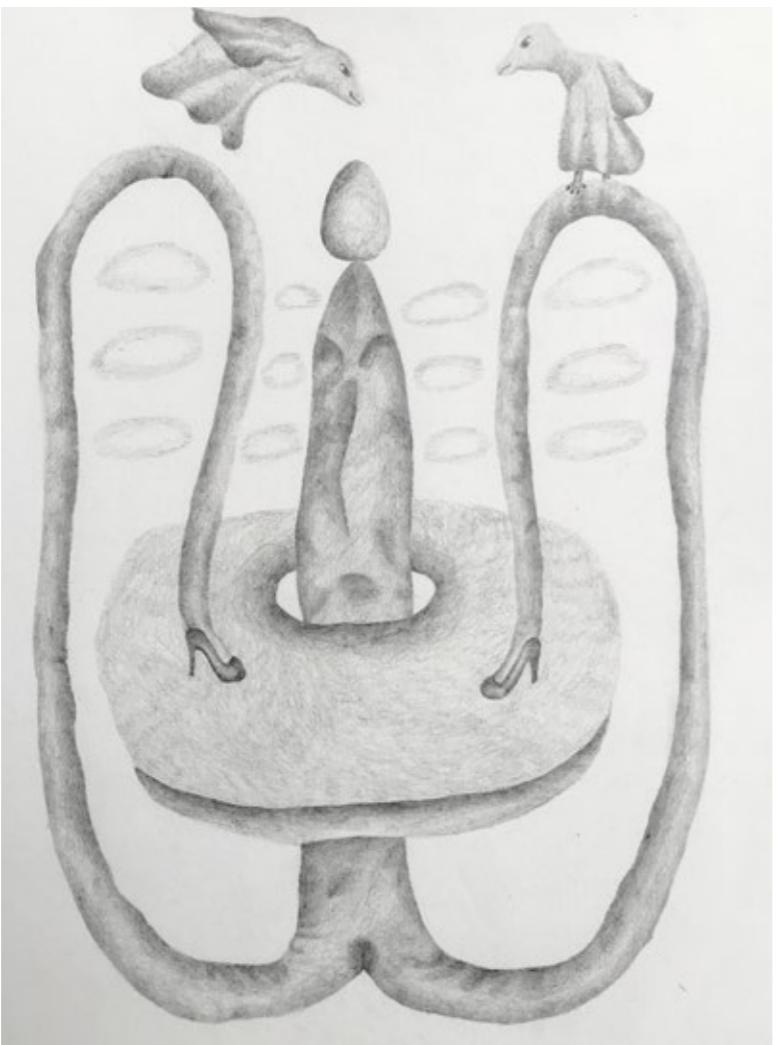
Image:

A Body That Matters
Installation view 2
various dimensions

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ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: editorial selection

A d a R o t h



www.adajroth.wixsite.com/mysite-1

I try to lend a sense of aliveness to the objects and creatures that wind up in my art. Visualizing beings that have spiritual existences of their own, rather than just utilitarian identities, helps me to form a more intimate relationship with the imagery in my work. I tend to use recurring symbolism and patterns that emerge from dreams, reveries, states of meditation or childhood memory, exploring what I think of as the Uncanny Mind. The imagery often winds up being strange, sometimes sexual, sometimes even funny. To me, it is 'strangely familiar.' I am a self-taught artist from a family of self-taught artists, which I feel helps to reveal a purity and singularity of style and expression.

Image:

Birth
graphite on paper
9 x 12 inches

122

E v e S a i n t J e a n



www.evesaintjean.com

I live and work in Montreal. After completing a DEC in Visual Arts at Cégep Lionel-Groulx, I studied in various university programs such as the Bachelor of Architecture at UdeM and the Bachelor of Environmental Design at UQÀM. I also completed a certificate in Art History at UdeM. Having acquired various knowledge within these varied disciplines, I chose to pursue my career as a self-taught visual artist by integrating these multiple artistic visions explored. Since 2017, I have participated in various group exhibitions in Montreal and New York. I've also had the opportunity to present several solo exhibitions in Montreal such as at Galerie AVE, The Letter Bet and more recently at the Maison de la Culture Notre-Dame-de-Grâce.

As a multidisciplinary visual artist, I am interested by the archetypes that shape human existence and from which result the complexity of our current societies. In brief, my work is based on two processes: deconstruction and dialogue, both of which are essential to the conception of a universal vision. I explore the notion of deconstruction through the pictorial, by transposing figurative visual archetypes to the abstract. I also translate this notion through the reappropriation of archaic moral ideals that shape our society and our collective unconscious, to make them more actual, neutral and universal. The notion of dialogue is translated in my creations by the exploration of the echo that is created between figuration and abstraction, the digital and the material, the thoughtful and the spontaneous. To do so, I mix different artistic disciplines such as painting, illustration and 2D animation. Visually, the pictorial techniques that I use play a catalytic role in the pursuit of my approach. I pay particular attention to shadows and light, both rival and complementary, but also to colors, rich in their symbolism and emotions, without forgetting the composition, which structures both the work and my subject.

Image:

The Birth of Venus
acrylic and oil on canvas
18 x 24 inches

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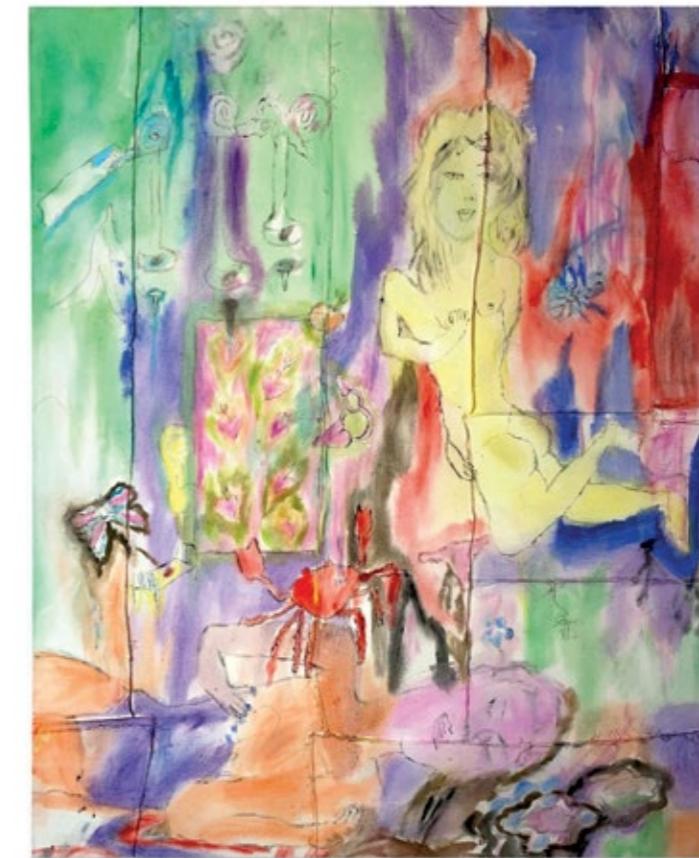


www.nannakaiser.com

Image:

Auf der Suche nach ewiger Jugend
oil on canvas
150 x 170 cm

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Nanna Kaiser, born 1991, is a visual artist based in Vienna.

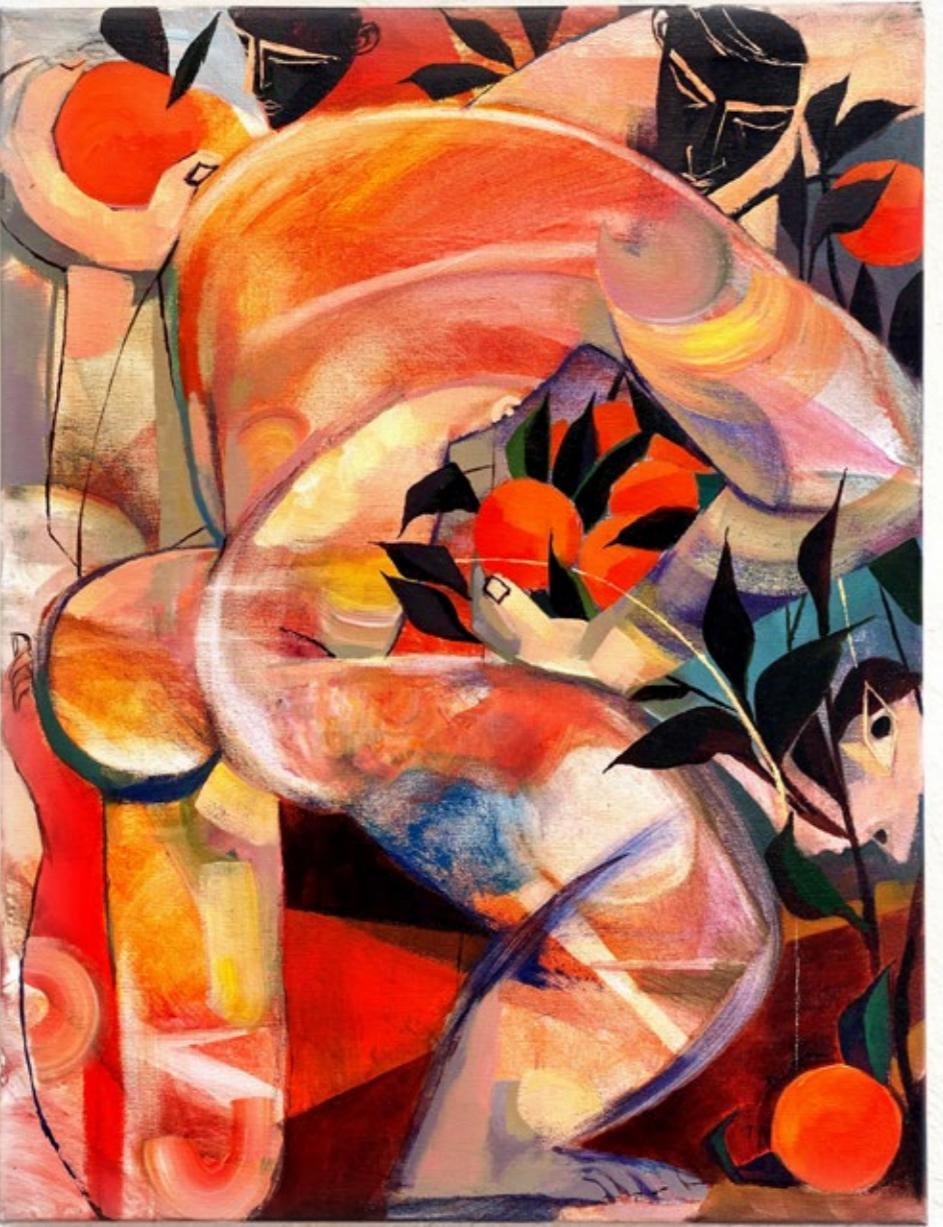
Since a very young age I have unlimited access to a digital archive and have been shaped and influenced by all sorts of media. Being aware of this I'm trying to process and reconsider those influences, with particular interest in the sexualization and mystification of the female body. I'm playfully taking up role models, which have been created by society, to question the existing structures and to reclaim and liberate the image of the female body. Since I am living in a culture which is switching between virtuality, social media and reality with such ease, it's sometimes hard for me to separate these worlds from each other. I'm allowing myself to focus on diverse topics and approaches, sharing stories and thoughts about the world in a spontaneous, unfiltered way, rather than over-analysing it. In my work I'm dealing with brutality, pain, sexuality and other stuff that scares me, never trying to hide naive or cheesy approaches. I would expect my paintings to look very dark, but surprisingly I can see that they are full of hope.

Image:

Die Gabe
oil on canvas
110 x 140 cm

125

ArtMaze Magazine Issue 21: editorial selection



www.jcarinoart.com

Image:

Gathering Fruit
acrylic on canvas
18 x 24 inches

126



J. Carino is the pseudonym of a New York based figurative artist working in a variety of mixed-media. He is a graduate of Parsons School of Design and an award-winning illustrator and animator.

I am interested in the interactions between people and nature, and how the creation of our sense of self is connected with the natural world. I have particular interest in how, for queer people like myself, our "natural" is often seen as "unnatural", and the reflection of this marginalization in our experience of nature. In my work there is a process of uncovering the human history of a natural landscape, literal and symbolic, as well as the uncovering of the reflections of natural landscapes in our bodies and the ways we see ourselves. I like to play with distortion and abstraction, losing and rediscovering the figure and the landscape as I work on a piece, and how that evolution presents itself in the finished work. Like many queer people, there is a dichotomy of wanting to be seen as a whole person, sexuality included, but also the fear of people seeing too much. My figures, often self portraits, inhabit landscapes of abundance and fertility, lush with ferns and fruit, like an eden where these fears dissipate. Through my work, I explore the complicated influence of intimacy, sexuality, and being seen, especially as it relates to gay relationships and our ability to connect with one another and ourselves.

Image:

Lovers
acrylic on canvas
16 x 20 inches

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www.harukasawa.com

Image:

Home Sweet Home
oil on canvas
51 x 61 cm

128

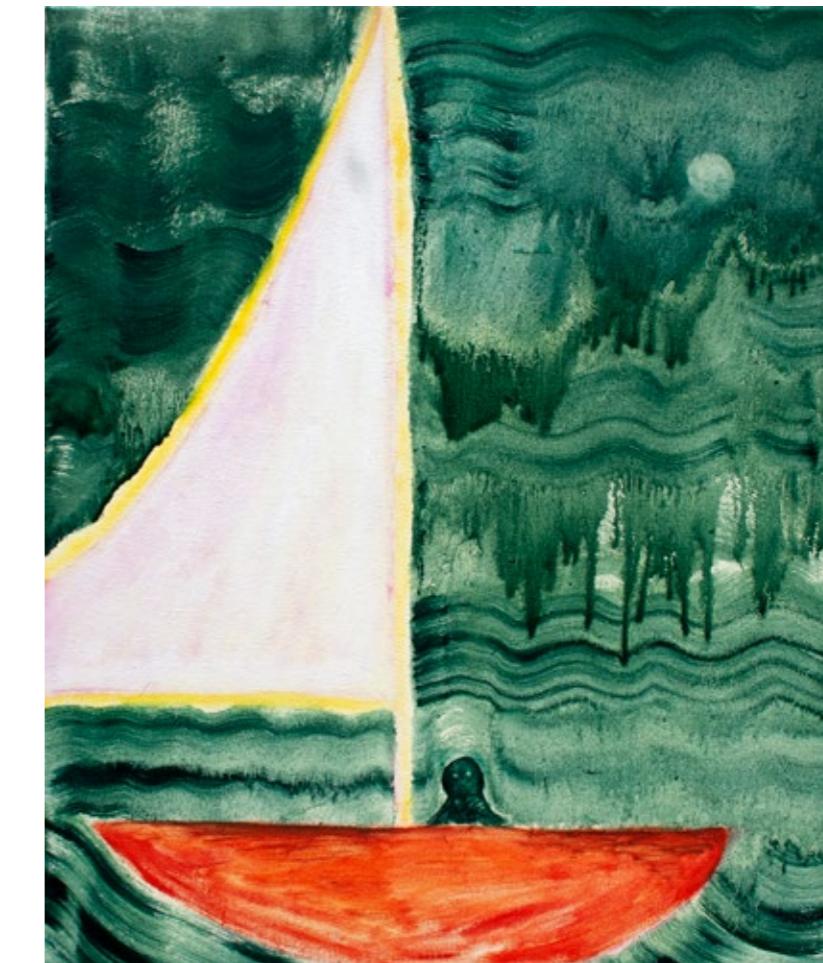


Image:

Crossing The Sanzu River
oil on canvas
51 x 61 cm

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Haruka Sawa predominantly works with ideas of mortality and the everyday through various mediums including painting, installation, photography and sculpture. She was born in Japan and now lives and works in Melbourne, Australia. She has exhibited in galleries including Daine Singer Gallery, Bus Projects, Boxcopy, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane Emerging Art Festival, Powerhouse and has been the recipient of the Clayton Utz Award and Sidney Myer Foundation Grant.

The contemplation of death in daily life was present in my formative years. In Japan, where I grew up, Buddhist ideas are embedded in everyday routines and rituals, many of which bring attention to the fragility of life and the passing of time. Themes of mortality and meditations on impermanence have become a recurring part of my art practice. Life is finite, however, we attempt to forget, by telling ourselves that we have infinite time. Triggered by moments in the present, our thoughts and memories colour our perceptions of the future. While we slip unconsciously between distant memories and present moments, this convergence forms the foundation of our experiences. To observe this phenomenon is to meditate on our malleable perceptions of time and to ultimately consider our impermanence. My recent paintings act as a meditation on past events, my subconscious world and its relationship to life in the present moment.

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