

A SECRET THEATER

MAGGIE KING JOHNS, ADAM MILNER, BLAKE O'BRIEN, MACK SIKORA

February 3 – March 4, 2024

Opening reception: Saturday, February 3, 2024, 6pm – 8pm

Press Release

Greene House Gallery is pleased to present *A Secret Theater*, a group exhibition curated by Blake O'Brien featuring work by **Maggie King Johns**, **Adam Milner**, **Blake O'Brien**, and **Mack Sikora**. *A Secret Theater* opens Saturday, February 3, 2024 and remains on view through March 4.

O, what a world of unseen visions and heard silences, this insubstantial country of the mind! What ineffable essences, these touchless rememberings and unshowable reveries! And the privacy of it all! A secret theater of speechless monologue and prevenient counsel, an invisible mansion of all moods, musings, and mysteries, an infinite resort of disappointments and discoveries. A whole kingdom where each of us reigns reclusively alone, questioning what we will, commanding what we can. A hidden hermitage where we may study out the troubled book of what we have done and yet may do. An introcosm that is more myself than anything I can find in a mirror. This consciousness that is myself of selves, that is everything, and yet is nothing at all - what is it?¹

A Secret Theater presents four artists who examine the preservation, exhibition, or containment of the subject against its observation or representation. Ancillary devices such as the pedestal or frame extend beyond their utility and become a critical component of the work, both aesthetically and hermeneutically. The object contained may be merely an anti-vessel for the frame to be a frame; a secret incarnate, hidden and inaccessible to a viewer; or a relic of some synecdochical inbreeding—an abstract Pieta of a vestigial childhood cradling itself.

These internal components of the artworks present themselves as viscera, imbuing their overall construction with an anthropomorphism—an inner likeness of the maker and, likewise, the viewer. A magic mirror for any experiencing thing, reflecting a being with a god long dead, making its toys in its own mysteriously machinal image. These allusions to interiority point to the chamber of consciousness in each of us. The artworks become proxies for our bodies and their held forms for our minds or souls or organs or the contents of a purse or the notes in a journal. The soul of the bear is a miniature bear that lives in its head.² Making art gives us moments of conscious and malleable access to our own interior, secret theater. Sharing the art allows others' access, and we can find correspondence in one another through these echoes of our insides.

¹ Jaynes, Julian. (1976). *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. Houghton Mifflin.

² Calasso, Roberto. (2016). *The Celestial Hunter*. MacMillan Publishers.

Maggie King Johns is a visual artist primarily working in painting and sculpture. She was born in Birmingham, Alabama and is currently based in Washington, D.C. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art with a minor in Art History in 2014 from the University of Virginia and a Master of Fine Arts in Painting from Boston University in 2020. Her work has been shown throughout the Northeastern and Southeastern United States including at Olympia Arts and Spring Break Art Show in New York, New York, Area Gallery in Boston, Massachusetts, and the Wiregrass Museum in Dothan, Alabama. In addition to making work, Maggie is passionate about art and accessibility. She has taught visual art at various nonprofits over the years including Studio by the Tracks, a studio in Birmingham, Alabama, dedicated to providing free art instruction to adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Space One Eleven, an art space providing free or discounted classes to children in downtown Birmingham, Girl's Global Academy, a public charter school in Washington, D.C, and University of Maryland Global Campus, a hybrid based University that has long standing ties to veteran populations.

Adam Milner is an artist centering the accumulation and preservation of everyday leftovers. Culled from the processes of living—from sleeping and eating, to walking, working, circulating blood, and having relationships—intimate fragments are contemplated and recontextualized, taking form as sculpture, drawing, intervention, text, and image. As parts are combined and recombined in the artist's home studio, archives or assemblages emerge that offer new ways of considering material and social worlds around us. Drawn from the museum, home, and hoard, methods are borrowed and distorted to challenge expectations and hierarchies surrounding caring and keeping. Milner's work has been exhibited in galleries, museums, public space, and at home.

Blake O'Brien received a BFA from The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS, and an MFA from Indiana University, Bloomington, IN. Recent exhibitions include: Alphabet Soup, Essex Flowers, New York, NY; Staring into the Sun (solo), Kent Place School, Summit, NJ; Friend of a Friend, pop-up curated by Tiffany Wong and Montserrat Mayor, Brooklyn, NY; Spooky Show, Greene House, Brooklyn, NY; The Patriot, O'Flaherty's, New York, NY; Tactile Sublime, Dōdōmu Gallery, Brooklyn, NY. His work has been included in New American Paintings issue #141 and Artmaze Magazine issue #20. O'Brien lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Mack Sikora was born in Pasadena, California and currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. In 2020 she graduated with an MFA in Painting from Boston University, and received her BA in Art and Art History from DePauw University in 2017. Two-person exhibitions include Sneak Show with Davis Arney, Greene House Gallery, New York, NY (2022) and Is This Okay? with Julian MacMillan, Gallery 5, Boston, MA (2019). Selected group exhibitions include The Sun Through Closed Eyes, Greene House Gallery, Brooklyn, NY (2023); is it a dream or a memory?, Marathon, Ellenville, NY (2023); Superbird, Paradise Palase, New York, NY (2023); Trite and True, Dream Clinic Project Space, Cincinnati, OH (2022) and MAIL, OLYMPIA, New York, NY (2020). She was featured in Patron Parlor with Paradise Palase at Future Fair, New York, NY (2023) and will be exhibiting a two-person booth presented by Turley Gallery at Future Fair, New York, NY in Spring 2024.

Checklist (clockwise from left)



Maggie King Johns

Primary Objects (Piano house 2), 2024

Air Dry Clay, epoxy, Flash and acrylic paint on foam and wood panel

34 x 38 x 3 ½ in

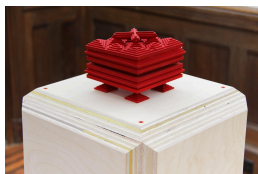


Mack Sikora

Adam's Box, 2024

Flashé on wood with metal hinges, 50 drawings (ink and gesso on wrappers)

5 x 5 x 3 ¾ in



Adam Milner

Red Drawings, 2020–2024

50 drawings (ink and gesso on wrappers)

Dimensions variable



Mack Sikora and Blake O'Brien

Reliquary 1 (relic undisclosed - 2009), 2022-23

Flashé on wood with metal hinges, oil on board

11 x 7 ¾ x 2 ¼ in



Adam Milner

Untitled (Flowers and eyelashes), 2018

Tinted plaster, my hair, stainless steel, interior latex

31 x 23 x 1 in; shelf: 1 x 23 x 4 in



Adam Milner

Untitled (Flowers and eyelashes), 2018

Tinted plaster, Fred's hair, stainless steel, interior latex
31 x 23 x 1 in; shelf: 1 x 23 x 4 in



Maggie King Johns

Primary Objects (Piano house 1), 2024

Air Dry Clay, epoxy, Flash and acrylic paint on
foam and wood panel
34 x 38 x 3 ½ in



Adam Milner

Untitled, 2019–2024

Pink marble, stones, quartz, porcelain tooth, disco ball
fragment, plastic gemstone, Swarovski crystal, agate, mole
hand, 3D printed bronze cherry stem, plastic glasses, wax
11 ½ x 7 x 5 in



Mack Sikora

Maggie's Frame, 2024

Flashé on wood
6.75 x 5 x 1 ¾ in

Maggie King Johns

Primary Objects (blue and orange flower), 2024

Flash on wood
2 x 3 in



Blake O'Brien

Herma (Anyone Can Grow Roses), 2021-2024

Oil paint, book, burlap, Apoxie-sculpt, canvas, wood, and
found furniture fragment

72 x 27 x 2 ½ in (182.9 x 68.6 x 6.3 cm)



Mack Sikora

Reliquary 3, 2022

Flashé on wood with metal hinges

7 ½ x 10 x 2 ¼ in