

For Immediate Release

In the Groove: Persistence and Endurance

15 Year Anniversary Exhibition

9 January – 6 March 2021

Opening Afternoon Reception: Saturday, January 9th, 2:00 – 6:00pm

Walter Maciel Gallery is pleased to present a group exhibition entitled *In the Groove: Persistence and Endurance* celebrating our 15-year anniversary with works by the n in our program. The title of the show riffs off of our inaugural exhibition, *As Good As Your Next Gig* and our ten year anniversary show, *A Star Is Born: Ten Years Later* marking our momentous gallery celebrations with titles that reference the different levels of an actor's career. The associations to Hollywood draw parallels to the gallery's formation in Northern California where Walter was raised and started his art career and the overall perception of LA being home to an abundance of actors and other workers in the Hollywood industry. The name of our inaugural exhibition reflected the state-of-the-art world in 2006 with a thriving market, record breaking auction results and the excitement of taking risks associated with emerging and mid-career artists while our ten-year anniversary's show title commented on our survival stemming from the downturn in the market as a result of the biggest economic recession since the Great Depression and the changes we endured to adapt to new formats in the gallery business. The more recent years have been focused on less art fair participation and mounting community driven shows that celebrate LA's thriving and important art community. We have also had to learn to adapt to the restrictions and provisions of the Covid-19 pandemic and map out our survival tactics. The current art world continues to be on the rebound with new challenges, expectations and developments which we have embraced with the same overall support and commitment to our artists that was in place in our early days beginning 15 years ago.

Our anniversary show celebrates our success with works by the 24 artists represented by the gallery: **Barry Anderson, John Bankston, Carolyn Castaño, Freddy Chandra, Colin Doherty, Doug Hall, Cynthia Ona Innis, John Jurayj, Andy Kolar, Hung Liu, Brendan Lott, Greg Mociłnikar, Dean Monogenis, Timothy Paul Myers, Rachael Neubauer, Maria E. Piñeres, Pepa Prieto, Robb Putnam, Lezley Saar, Nike Schröder, Katherine Sherwood, Lisa Solomon, Jil Weinstock and Dana Weiser.**

A large part of our program supports artists who draw on their personal experience and identity as the main subject of their work. Based on her experience of repression while being forced to live with a peasant family as a young woman during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Hung Liu paints imagery inspired by found photographs from difficult historical periods in China giving her subjects a dignified sense of pride and power. The painting, *Golden Mean* presented in our show is more celebratory and depicts a group of four ballerinas in pose as commentary on the Russian influence of ballet in the early 20th century for a small elite audience in Shanghai. More recently she has been using the archive of the great American photographer, Dorothea Lange to depict images of the harsh reality of American life during the Great Depression and the years that followed. Lezley Saar creates work using paint, collage and mixed media that comments on her experience of being mixed raced and the perceptions of her being perceived as white. Recently, she developed an imaginative body of work based on the 19th century novel, *A Rebours (Against Nature)* by French novelist, Joris -Karl Huysmans with subjects referred to as conjurers shown as mixed race and capable of special capabilities or powers. An example of one of her large banner paintings and a free-standing sculpture are included in the show. Carolyn Castaño makes work that relates to her Colombian heritage and her family experience having been born in Columbia and raised in Los Angeles. Inspired by maps, botanical illustrations and topographies of early Northern European explores and painters, her newest work depicts versions of the goddess Columbia taken from early personifications of America always depicts as a bountiful, reclining nude like ripe fruit for the taking by the explores. Castaño regularly uses mixed media material like sequins, appliques and synthetic fabrics to build up layers of texture within the surfaces of her paintings. John Bankston has developed a signature style of carefully rendered mixed

media paintings that look like blown up pages from a child's coloring book with heavy black outlines filled in with scratchy, vibrant colors. His narrative paintings tell the ongoing story of a plain-clothed protagonist character who ventures into fairy lands where he is met by persuasive groups of men in dress codes or elaborate costumes. All of the subjects in Bankston's works are black and depict his personal experience of his race as well as his experience of being gay. Katherine Sherwood repurposes the linen-lined backsides of mass produced reproductions of art historical paintings once used as a teaching tool at UC Berkeley where Sherwood is a professor emeritus. She recreates her versions of famous nudes and still-life subjects incorporating imagery that relates to her personal history of paralysis resulting from a brain hemorrhage in 1998. Having trained herself to use her left hand to paint, Sherwood includes prosthetic limbs, canes and braces for the figures as well as collaged scans of her brain in the still-lives that have been reconfigured into flowers in sepia tones on rice paper.

A number of our artists focus on identity while exploring the use of various materials and techniques as seen in the work of John Jurayj. The overall subject of his work is based on his Lebanese heritage and explores the ongoing turmoil and destruction at play primarily in the capital city of Beirut. Jurayj often portrays the humanistic downfall with works like the large format image of a dead woman's body that is included in our exhibition. The victim of a tragic bombing, the figure is made from a mixture of gunpowder and ink that is silk-screened on to a polished stainless-steel panel and intentionally shown leaning against the wall in a life-like, upright format. Viewers engage with the subject while seeing reflections of their movements as a reminder of life and vitality. Lisa Solomon explores her identity based on the cultural differences between being Jewish and Japanese while employing the use of color theory and materiality. Her most recent body of work focused on the harsh reality and inequality of the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. Featured in our show is a long shelf with 25 small format vessels made from paper pulp using the shapes of traditional Japanese pottery, each with the name of the official camp, the dates in operation and the number of residents. Maria E. Piñeres also works in a variety of mediums with her most recognizable being traditional needlepoint. She often chooses subjects such as celebrities, porn or popular culture as a way to redefine the traditional subject matters portrayed using the medium with a focus on pattern and color. The work included in our show is from an earlier series entitled *Libertango* named after a popular Grace Jones album *I've Seen That Face Before (Libertango)* and includes repetitive imagery of gay male nude pinups from a similar time frame of the album's release. Much of Dana Weiser's work comments on the inherent racism she has experienced being a Korean adoptee into a Jewish American family. Trained in ceramics at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago and UCLA, Weiser has shown her clay work at our gallery in addition to other works made using traditional craft techniques that she learns to master for each body of work. The piece included in our group show is an example of her intricate embroidery works that were part of a larger series shown two years ago. Done on traditional Korean hanbok fabrics, the piece features two embroidery rings, each with a portrait of a male and female figure shown in traditional Korean dress with the removal of their heads and hands thus eliminating any traits of their true ethnic identities. Nike Schröder's most recent body of work explores the use of many materials such as painting, stitched thread, cast bronze and soft sculptures commenting on notions of femaleness and motherhood. The work depicts images of reconstructed nipple forms that hung in groupings from the ceiling as well as placed individually on pedestals as on homage to the seductive yet nurturing qualities of the female breast. Schröder's signature works include sequences of different colored rayon threads that explore notions of movement and light as they hang in lengthy formats from custom wood panels.

A group of our artists focus primarily on process and materials including the work of Cynthia Ona Innis who creates abstract paintings using acrylic paints and different fabrics that are influenced by her relationship and experiences in nature. Her work often delves into the geographical phenomena of different places in particular her home state of California and the unique tectonic plates, fault lines and volcanoes. The painting included in our show is entitled *Wyo* and is from a body of work made after completing a road trip visiting national parks in Idaho and Wyoming. Also influenced by nature, Rachael Neubauer creates beautiful abstract forms with luster glazes using stoneware that are reminiscent of natural elements like

mountain ranges and rock formations. The work included in our show is part of a series of ceramics completed while Neubauer was regularly visiting the Eastern Sierra and processing the loss of her father. Jil Weinstock primarily uses pigmented polyurethane as a medium which she pours in liquid form over carefully placed materials that cures into a rubber surface. The works included in our show are from a series using zippers which reflect the appropriate colors seen in the nature based on their titles, fall and winter. The linear stripes of the zippers make reference to modernist painting while the surfaces show evidence of the pliable material with divots throughout the exterior layer. Greatly influenced by the Light and Space movement of Southern California, Freddy Chandra uses plexiglass panels with airbrushed pigment and varnish that allow for the penetration of light. The translucent panels float on the wall in predetermined layouts with the surfaces fluctuating between glossy and opaque finishes. The piece included in our show is in a large vertical format and extends around a corner of the gallery. Robb Putnam uses found fabrics stitched together with the threads left hanging long and uncut to create playful sculptures that depict or reference animals. His work in our show includes new forms entitled *Orphan Suits* which hang on the wall like childhood costumes or a toddler's onesie, two hang limp and one exaggerated with its arms and head gesturing forward. Putnam's work explores the psychology of childhood memories and experience.

Architecture and place are common themes for some of our artists as seen in the work of Timothy Paul Myers who creates life-sized interior spaces constructed like a set using found objects and furniture that have been covered in monochromatic-colored felt. The work in our show is a small prototype wall sculpture taking the form of the corner of a mantle adorned with random kitschy objects that have all been covered in hot pink felt and flocking. These works were originally shown in conjunction with a large living room tableau complete with a fireplace and furnishings completely covered in gray felt. Barry Anderson creates video animations that explore virtual environments and constructed spaces. The moving imagery pans through vast spaces connected by hallways like a maze. The projected video included in the show is part of his earlier *Fragments of Space* series and the scene is set over water. Dean Monogenis depicts imaginative and surreal environments merging urban scenes and architectural constructions with natural elements. He juxtaposes details of sleek modern structures with landscapes made of rocky cliffs, lush forests and looming skies all derived from his imagination but based on his observations from travels around the world. Entitled *Powerhouse*, the painting included in our show portrays a modern home seen from the outside evoking a mood of a dreamy utopian life. The work of Colin Doherty focuses on his environment and location that was further perpetuated by a move from Los Angeles to Lexington, Kentucky several years ago. After settling into his new home he began a series of quaint paintings depicting the vast geographic space and open skies of the Midwest. The painting, *Carneal* reveals a painted snapshot of a suburban neighborhood with a row of perfectly manicured houses lined up under an ideal blue sky. The photographs by Doug Hall reveal an investigation of the overall design, construction and purpose of public spaces while at the same time documenting the lifestyle of their inhabitants. The photograph in our show displays an aerial view of the Red River in Hanoi with several traditional floating markets made of provincial fishing boats seen in the foreground and newer built high rise buildings in the background. Hall captured these images in the early 2000s with a large format camera and used Photoshop (then a new digital tool) to manipulate the images often rearranging or adding objects. Brendan Lott's grouping of work is a visual observation of the current Covid-19 pandemic with photographs taken from his DTLA loft of the residential building across the street. He became entranced with peeking into the private lives of others to capture their behavior and activities in candid moments while spending so much time at home. These images are not portraits and capture the often mundane activities during a time of great uncertainty and fear.

The final artists in our program create abstract works that focus on painterly elements like form, line and color as noted in the work of Andy Kolar whose paintings often include oblong forms banded together in groupings. While these clusters allude to actual objects of one sort or another they never quite reveal the original source. The compositions explore the relationship between abstraction and figuration by questioning referential, implicative and relevant potentials within the totality of the painting. A group of recently exhibited abstract paintings by Pepa Prieto are shown in a grid as a comparison of symmetrical

fields with areas of color and hand drawn lines intersecting across the surfaces. The chalky texture of each painting reveals the meticulous application of oil paints on the raw linen. Greg Mociłnikar's work entails notions of space but interpreted into abstractions conceived from realistic renderings based on his experiences. The work featured in the show is entitled *Beyond Recognition 2* and was initially included in a solo show of artworks that started as smaller renderings with detailed areas that were enlarged and reinterpreted into the larger geometric shapes with a physical presence of layered paint.