

### ***Pump Up the Volume***

**Including works by Barry Anderson, Carolyn Castaño, Freddy Chandra, TJ Dedeaux-Norris, Cynthia Ona Innis, John Jurayj, Andy Kolar, Brendan Lott, Hung Liu, Dean Monogenis, Maria E. Piñeres, Pepa Prieto, Vojislav Radovanović, Lezley Saar, Nike Schröder, Katherine Sherwood, Lisa Solomon and Dana Weiser**

**8 July - 18 August 2023**

**Opening Reception: Saturday, July 8, 3-7pm**

For our summer group show, Walter Maciel Gallery presents *Pump Up the Volume* featuring large-scale works by several of our gallery artists including Barry Anderson, Carolyn Castaño, Freddy Chandra, TJ Dedeaux-Norris, Cynthia Ona Innis, John Jurayj, Andy Kolar, Hung Liu, Brendan Lott, Dean Monogenis, Maria E. Piñeres, Pepa Prieto, Vojislav Radovanović, Lezley Saar, Nike Schröder, Katherine Sherwood, Lisa Solomon and Dana Weiser. The show includes a variety of mediums and surfaces such as oil and acrylic painting, paper pulp sculpture, textiles and stitched threads, beading on silk fabric, plexiglass with resin coating, photography and mixed media with found objects.

Many of the works in the show depict figuration referencing art historical imagery as well as fictitious characters. Katherine Sherwood's version of *Grande Odalisque* by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres was made as one of her original Venus paintings recreated with a flat style rendering of the brown body and a simple black outline on the backsides of art history reproductions. The figure is reimagined with a disability much like her own but with an artificial forearm holding the peacock feathered fan that hangs down to a patterned surface. The gaze of the female nude is replaced with a brain scan collaged over the face. In the last six years of her life, Hung Liu referenced photographs of the American photographer, Dorothea Lange who documented humanistic moments, often of life in poverty. Two images from the same photo shoot capture an impoverished woman seated in a migrant tent with her dirty infant child seated at her feet. Liu captures the anguish of the mother's love for her child while worrying about the outcome of their survival with the use of gray, yellow and earthtone pigments. The paintings are intended to be two separate works, but we are showing them together as a diptych revealing a progression of time and comparison of emotions and emphasis of care and concern. In conversation, Lezley Saar presents a large-scale banner portrait entitled *Illumination of a capsized sun* with a mixed-race albino woman staring solemnly away from the viewer with her pale green eyes and contemplative gesture. This painting is from a recent series that references the avant-garde French poet Antonin Artaud's *Black Garden*. The poem uses references to nature to create a scene that resonates with Saar for its Gothic, melancholic, and surrealist vision. The works from this series reflect the artist's inner life played out in a fantastical space set within a Victorian period that provides Saar a visual space to explore mixed-race identity, gender and sexuality. Maria E. Piñeres depicts fictitious renderings as well, but her women are wrestlers presented in a graphic style using the camouflage patterns from various military uniforms from around the globe. The two figures are caught in match with their bodies entwined and are distinguished by different colored uniforms with slightly varying patterns. The work entails Piñeres's ongoing interest in patterns and techniques as well as her love for nostalgia and pop culture. Similarly, Carolyn Castaño is interested in patterning with an emphasis on collage. The overall composition of her mixed-media painting depicts a loose pattern of the V-neck shape of the opening of a ruana, the poncho worn by laborers through Central and South America, with a square interwoven design based on Pre-Columbia textiles and pottery repeated on the surface. Castaño takes an experimental approach reconfiguring the overall shape of the ruana with the addition of colorful foliage, native birds and a large gold-foiled sun that are created with the use of watercolor, gouache, sequins, synthetic fabrics and embroidered appliques.

Another group of artworks included in the exhibition explores notions of architecture, abstract forms and geometric marks. A large colorful painting by John Jurayj includes imagery of urban destruction in Beirut during the Lebanese civil war. Using oil on canvas, he develops surfaces that at first appear abstract but then resolve into scenes of bombed out buildings set within a hot pink background and lush landscape. Through the rebirth of these destructed cityscapes, Jurayj revisits the feelings of loss of the past and the desire to recreate for the future of his father's native country.

Working more comprehensively with the subject of architecture, Dean Monogenis depicts imaginative and surreal environments merging urban scenes and modern buildings with natural elements. Our show includes the diptych, *Long Gone* with a grand mirrored staircase curving up to a landing but detached from its presumed architectural space. The stairs hang over a fence and all markings are painted in black shadow with the background split between looming blue sky and an aqua-green wall evoking a mood of a dreamy utopian life. Using architecture in a digital realm, 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 but with areas of water and hidden relics. The video is from Anderson's *Fragments of Space* series and is projected on the entire wall creating a virtual reality experience of traveling through the animated space. Brendan Lott uses architecture as his backdrop for the oversized photograph included in our show. Continuing his observations of his neighbors captured with his camera in mundane moments at home post pandemic, Lott captures a nude woman seen from behind holding a long necklace loosely tangled into her hair. Her body fades away with the reflection of light within the messy environment of her living space. This is the first print from the series shown in an oversized scale taking the scenes usually shown in a frame like a real window out of context. Scale is often explored in Andy Kolar's abstract paintings entailing the implicative and relevant moments made with combining oblong forms within specific-colored backgrounds. Kolar uses acrylic and oil paint to make his forms using a flat even coat of each color to define the space of the pictorial field. The three elongated blobs have soft hues of blue, beige and lavender and are gathered with two deep purple bands atop a crimson red background. Pepa Prieto creates a fertile ground for experimentation trying to recuperate meaning while at the same time imbuing the formal gestures with personal significance. She builds intuitive links through her painting using narratives that weave her personal experiences together with those of others occupying the same space. The composition of the four-panel painting interlinks a reoccurring pattern using two different color sequences creating an image that resembles the mechanism within a jewelry box but upon close inspection is a harmonious abstraction.

The remaining artists focus primarily on process and materials often stemming from notions of personal experience or identity. Cynthia Ona Innis creates abstract paintings using acrylic paints and different fabrics that are influenced by her relationship to landscape and nature. Her work often delves into the geographical phenomena of different places, in particular her home state of California and the unique weather patterns, fault lines and volcanoes. The painting included in our show is entitled *Sombre* and includes bands of painted canvas and fabrics stitched together horizontally alternating the front and back sides to make the stitched lines. The blended color and layering of surfaces are reminiscent of the shadows created on the coastline looking at the horizon captured in Innis's memory of growing up in Point Loma in San Diego. Materiality takes part in Nike Schröder's thread works as seen in her diptych, *Fragments 15 (A&B)* with reoccurring earthy colors transitioning across both the large and smaller panels. Stitched areas on the surface of the panels form a gradual jagged line like an abstract mountain scape while the threads gather in tangled form like a gushing waterfall hitting the surface of a lake. These works were initially inspired by the warm light and intense sunsets in Southern California. TJ Dedeaux-Norris is a mixed media artist using painting, fiber, performance and music as their medium critiquing systems of race, sex, gender, religion, education, healthcare and class. They use different identities that represent the works

made during specific periods of their career and recently put to rest one of their personas, Tameka Jenean Norris - their black politicized American identity and birth name. Titled *Cc*, the large tapestry included in our show is sewn together with scraps of found fabrics, bedsheets, discarded clothing and canvas and hung from ceramic knobs. The piece tells the story of Dedeaux-Norris's connections to the South including her childhood in Mississippi, the destruction of a family home from Hurricane Katrina and her complicated family relationships.

Greatly influenced by the Light and Space movement, 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. Our show includes the work, *Apparition* which is mostly grayscale in palette with a hint of pale green, and the vertical composition is unique in its placement within the corner of the gallery. In contrast, Vojislav Radovanović's large-scale artwork is derived from found materials that have been reconfigured as the surface for the artwork. His general art practice of collecting debris from numerous dump sites throughout the desert as well as his personal collection of toys and objects are the materials used for his inspirational starting points and musings. Radovanović creates symbolic fantasy and the construction of new identity in places and objects that have been displaced from their original meaning much like his family history of being displaced and adapting in Serbia, his home county. Personal experience and new techniques are also ongoing interests for Dana Weiser as noted in her hand-beaded work, *I'm not racist or anything but...* The work directly responds to her experience as a Korean adoptee into a Jewish American family and the inherent racism she continually encounters. For this series, Weiser taught herself traditional beading techniques and perfected her skill to make the letters using pearl beads on large sheets of vintage lace and satin. She questions the ways in which her identity can create a perceived culture by altering temporality and a traditional Korean narrative. Lisa Solomon often works in new ways using innovative techniques and new materials while giving voice to her experience being bi-racial with a Japanese mother and a Jewish American father. Her work, *25 Tea Cups* exist as a sculptural installation documenting the complete number of Internment camps that were unjustly built to house Japanese Americans during WWII in the US. As a reflection of the importance of tea in Japanese culture, Solomon discovered there are 23 traditional tea bowl shapes. In this piece she made 25 tiny tea bowls out of white paper clay using the 23 different shapes leaving them white as if to act as a ghostly reminder. Each tea bowl has the name, active dates and number of internees written in gold on its face and is placed on a long wooden shelf.