

***An Artist Age Mess***

May 18–June 15, 2020

**Week 1: D’Ette Nogle, Sam Lipp, Joel Dean, Em Rooney**

Week 2: Carlos Reyes, Rose Marcus, Covey Gong, Dena Yago, Gene Beery

Week 3: Elizabeth Orr, Andy Meerow, Naoki Sutter-Shudo, Jason Benson

Week 4: Whitney Claflin, Zoe Barcza, Alexandra Noel, Orion Martin

Every age is an artist’s age.  
World war? Artist age.  
Global pandemic? Artist age.  
Fewer and fewer artists without independent wealth finding a place in an ever increasing consolidation of exhibition spaces at the top? Artist age.  
Environmental points of no return? Artist age.  
Inequality chasm? Artist age.  
If we are forced to go underground, it will be an artist age.

—D’Ette Nogle, *An Artist Age Mess*, 2020

At 8PM on March 22 New York went into a state of “PAUSE.” Since then our gallery, like many businesses throughout the city, has been closed to the public. The absence of a physical space to highlight art, in propositional exhibitions, has been an imperfect echo of a collective difficulty making sense of a new reality. Some of us find art to be more important in a moment like this, while others find the idea of seeing, or even enjoying an exhibition out of sync.

The vacuous glow of the online viewing room has lit a path forward, but in doing so has also illuminated the possibility that the process of experiencing art, which historically has in so many cases been tied to the confines of looking out from a living body, is, in its new mediated form, at risk of becoming a process more akin to online shopping.

What can an exhibition be, if not a collection of ideas held together by time and space? What does it mean to make art in a moment that to some is a life or death emergency and to others a vacation? What does it mean to make art in a moment that highlights the vast resource imbalances we live within?

*An Artist Age Mess* is a presentation of singular works or bodies of work by the artists closest to us. The works presented here are either new works created in isolation, works intended for exhibitions that were recently canceled, or older works that have now taken on a new meaning.

The program takes its title from D’Ette Nogle’s video *An Artist Age Mess*, which explores the aforementioned themes in depth as well as the passive expectation or perhaps optimistic hope that artists have a response to every current event, crisis and non-crisis alike. The video is a presentation, of sorts, that compares two projects having to do with screens. One is Heimo Zobernig’s Documenta X project in which he designed a type of internet viewing room intended to be a neutral space. Artists made content for a special Documenta website and exhibition-goers could visit computer stations within Zobernig’s room to explore. The other project is Lutz Bacher’s *Modules*, which was on view at University of California, Irvine at the end of 2019.

Central to D’Ette’s video is the comparison between a) D’Ette and her newlywed husband’s failed budget that could not support a honeymoon to Europe to see Documenta X in 1997, b) a successful budget to support a 20 year anniversary trip to Europe to see Documenta 14 in 2017, and c) two trips to see Lutz Bacher’s *Modules* at UCI.

Sam Lipp's untitled painting was originally shown in 2015 amongst four other almost identical paintings whose central variant was color saturation. The one included here is the most desaturated, a nearly pure greyscale. The text sits within a graphic borrowed from contractor signs that describe details of construction projects throughout the city and although the statement appears straightforward, it oscillates between utilitarian prose, ambivalent poetry, and a political imperative. Like much of Sam's work, the series addresses the relationship between individuals and the frequently obscured superstructures that shape their lives.

Joel Dean's *Path Morphology and Core Individuation in Centrifugal Expansion Models (Ambrosia)* is the most recent in an ongoing series of wall mounted apple sculptures. Joel exhibited five of these apples in the fall of 2018, each using the same titling convention—*Path Morphology and Core Individuation in Centrifugal Expansion Models*— followed by a parenthetical label of an apple cultivar (Gala, Jazz, Empire, Fuji, Ambrosia, etc). Like a real apple, each sculpture has a peel and core. The cores are envisioned to be atomized reflections of the ever-expanding space surrounding the apple, beginning right outside its peel. They are an attempt to intuitively crystalize a psychological and physical relationship to the present moment in a contained microcosmic environment. The apple's peels are made with a layer of beeswax, allowing the sculptures to remain sensitive to their environment similar to the way a real apple would.

*Ambrosia* is a black and white apple with a core made up primarily of English language letter blocks. At the center, a plane of worn, faded graphemes cover the background, from which emerge the numbers 1–7. For the most part, the numbers increase in height the closer they are to the center of the apple, with the number 1 being the tallest. A web of organic tendrils connects the protruding numbers to the surrounding apple structure.

We originally planned to show this work in Japan this past March as part of a collaborative group show with other international galleries, but as it slowly became clear that this exhibition would not take place, the apple for Japan evolved into an apple for New York, and in this image it is installed on the boarded up window of the Dior shop in SoHo.

Em Rooney's new work, *Specter Pale Like Beech Trees*, is a pair of photographs taken on the property she's been the caretaker of for the past 2 years. One is a fire pit, the other a mountain laurel shrub dusted with snow, both framed in silver-leaved poplar and pewter. Em's work is frequently a product of editing, combining new imagery with photos from an archive she started building in her teens. These two negatives, however, were chosen from recent film—a result of cancelled travel, the omnipresence of her surroundings, walks through the woods behind the house, and the non-human world.