

Shapeshifters

Craig Calderwood & Terri Freidman & Cathy Lu & Cate White

October 28 - December 4, 2021

On October 28th the George Adams Gallery will open an exhibition of paintings, drawings, sculpture and textiles by Craig Calderwood, Terri Friedman, Cathy Lu and Cate White. Despite the range and variety of their respective media, all four are united by their interest in using untraditional materials and probing personal identity. The title, *Shapeshifters*, refers to a strategy of complex layering or disguising that each artist utilizes, which forces the viewer to engage with each work through a process of decoding. Fundamentally, personal experience is the starting point for all four, whether via social conventions, autobiography or a consideration of race/class relations. The juxtaposition of so-called “high-brow” and “low-brow” materials and techniques leads to a maximalist approach that can simultaneously critique or amuse, yet ultimately, the depth of insight each piece reveals is deeply satisfying.

Calderwood’s drawings and paintings address queer identity and life, pulling from the coded languages of underground communities to craft poignant scenes that celebrate “otherness.” As a predominantly self-taught artist, they make use of a range of materials that often have personal significance, for example *Notes on ♀ on ♂ from my Eight-Year-Old Self*, 2018, which combines stitched, painted, appliquéd and drawn images on fabric, to create a tactile, dimensional surface. The complex patterning within these works reference a myriad of sources – and are in a way miniature narratives themselves. However, by confusing or obscuring the figure in parts, Calderwood looks to move away from traditional ideas surrounding gender.

The over-sized wall hangings that Friedman produces push the limits of what weaving can accomplish. Friedman considers herself more a painter/sculptor, moving between abstraction and figuration: shifting textures, colors and forms from flat to dimensional, thin to thick, subtle to bold, all within the limitations of a woven structure. Embedded within these elements Friedman adds references to her personal experiences, either through text or the suggestion of body parts. In *Thank You Aneurysm*, 2018, one of her largest works at 102 x 96 inches, the title has been woven into the fabric and though at times obscured, apparent tears and draped and hanging strands over the surface seem to illustrate the potential threat of the titular aneurysm.

Choosing to work in ceramic enables Lu to explore the stereotypes that surround the medium, both cultural and material, through her identity as Chinese-American. Considering the tradition of Chinese ceramic techniques, forms and imagery and filtered through an American lens, she questions ideas of authenticity and ownership held by herself and others. A common motif for Lu is the peach – an object with both Chinese and American connotations. In her sculptures the fruit becomes an environment to host an array of similarly conflicted tropes, questioning how fundamental such assimilation is to the larger American identity.

The portraits White paints - of herself and others - reflect her own upbringing in rural California and an intimacy with what she considers the “cultural margins.” She addresses class, race, gender, trauma, morality and power in an empathetic and democratic, often caustic style, with works such as *Weez in the Cell*, or *Celeste Guap Selfie*, which both specifically reference the ecosystem of Oakland politics. More broadly her paintings mediate between social strata, engaging with multiple cultural touchstones from pop culture to art history and beyond, providing a narrative that is personal and universal, comic and tragic.

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Craig Calderwood

Notes On ♀ On ♂ from My Eight Year Old Self, 2018

Dimensional paint, thread, upholstery on fabric

51 x 46 inches

CrCp 02



Cate White

Remote Olympia, 2019

Acrylic, latex, spray paint, glitter, collage on canvas

34 x 60 inches

CaWp 02



Terri Friedman

Pause, 2020

Wool, cotton, acrylic, metallic, hemp, chenille fibers

132 x 50 inches

TFx 03



Craig Calderwood

How's Your Jesus Christ Been Hanging?, 2018

Dimensional paint, thread, upholstery on fabric

58 x 46 inches

CrCp 01



Cate White

Weez in a Cell (Struggle on the Rise), 2017
Acrylic, latex, spray paint, glitter on canvas
78 x 72 inches

CaWp 03



Craig Calderwood

Untitled (Immature), 2018
Dimensional paint, thread, pen, upholstery on fabric
77 x 66 inches

CrCp 03



Cathy Lu

Untitled (Tall Peach Incense Holder), 2021
Glazed stoneware, incense sticks
35 x 29 x 29 inches

CLus 03



Cate White

Self-Portrait (After Alice Neel), 2018
Acrylic, latex, spray paint, glitter, plastic gems on canvas
65 x 45 inches

CaWp 01



Terri Friedman

Thank You, Aneurysm, 2018
Wool, acrylic, cotton, hemp, jute, metallic fibers
102 x 96 inches

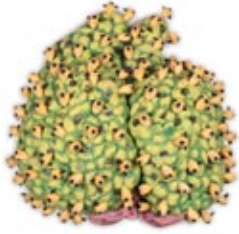
TFx 02



Cathy Lu

Peach #2, 2019
Glazed stoneware
17 x 19 x 5 inches

CLus 02



Cathy Lu
Peach #8, 2019
Glazed stoneware
19 x 19 x 10 inches

CLus 04



Terri Friedman
Your Heart is the Size of Your Fist, 2020
Wool, cotton, acrylic, chenille, metallic fibers
62 x 70 inches

TFx 01



Cate White
Country Lyfe, 2017
Acrylic, latex, glitter on canvas
76 x 48 inches

CaWp 04



Craig Calderwood
Untitled, 2019
Ink on paper
15 x 11 inches

CrCd 05



Craig Calderwood
Urinal Cakes, 2019
Ink on paper
14 x 11 inches

CrCd 03



Terri Friedman
I Loved My Friend, She Went Away from Me,
2020
Wool, cotton, acrylic, metallic, chenille fibers
72 x 92 inches

TFx 05



Cathy Lu

Nuwa's Hands, 2021

Glazed stoneware

45 x 35 x 25 inches

CLus 01



Cate White

American Hippie, 2017

Acrylic, latex, spray paint, glitter, dimensional
paint, mica, collage on canvas

65 x 45 inches

CaWp 08



Cate White

Celeste Guap Selfie, 2017

Acrylic, latex, glitter on canvas

54 x 50 inches

CaWp 05