

Craig Calderwood
Ambrosia Salad, Bad Panacea and Other Works

November 3 - December 22, 2023

The George Adams Gallery is pleased to announce our first solo exhibition of recent work by Craig Calderwood: *Ambrosia Salad, Bad Panacea and Other Works*. The exhibition includes a series of intricate tapestry paintings and drawings that explore themes of queer identity and life. These works bring together elements drawn from fantasy, video games, and Calderwood's own personal history, providing a reflection on their experience of processing grief over the past several years.

A predominantly self-taught artist, Calderwood's work is heavily autobiographical, referencing their childhood and identity as a queer and trans individual. Their use of materials, specifically textiles, is essential to Calderwood's practice and evokes memories of their father, a skilled upholsterer and craftsman. By fusing aspects from their personal life with fantastical imagery, Calderwood creates enigmatic visual tales enriched by intricate patterning and symbolism. These form a coded communication deeply rooted in the historical lineage of language utilized by queer and trans communities. This unique approach is meticulously honed through historical research, personal anecdotes, and moments drawn from popular culture.

Among the works included in the exhibition is *The Light Bulb Sound* (2022) a large-scale tapestry painting that depicts an attempt to light two electric candelabras. The figure's facial features are deliberately obscured by a dense floral pattern animated with googly-eyes and a mocking smile as if to acknowledge the absurdity of the situation. The work is framed by an intricate border that contains coded queer references as well as images of plants and insects in cycles of decomposition that introduce the theme of mortality.

The drawings included in the exhibition, all pen and ink, portray in high detail personal stories and specific instances from childhood. For example, *Christina's Revelations* (2021) explores Calderwood's experience living with their father and the profound impact of his recent passing. The composition delves into various aspects of their father's personality, notably his physical intelligence and creativity as a skilled lamp maker. In this drawing and other works on view, Calderwood meditates on their own upbringing and contemplates the intricate ways in which people negotiate their lives, especially when confronted with personal fears and uncertainties about the world.

Calderwood's work made its debut at the gallery in *Shapeshifters*, an exhibition of four artists from the Bay Area in 2021. In 2022, they were honored with a Eureka Fellowship, and served as the Art+Process+Ideas (API) artist in residence at Mills College, Oakland, where their work was exhibited at the Mills College Art Museum. In the past year, Calderwood was featured in *Figure Telling* at the di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art in Napa and *Fight and Flight* at the Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco. Their work is currently on view in *Bay Area Now 9* at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Calderwood was selected by the San Francisco Arts Commission to create artwork for the three-story atrium of the Harvey Milk Terminal at the San Francisco International Airport, and their mural is set to be unveiled in 2024. Currently, Calderwood is an artist in residence at Recology, San Francisco.

Craig Calderwood was born in 1987 in Bakersville, CA, and raised in California's Central Valley. Calderwood relocated to San Francisco, CA in 2011, where they currently live and work.

Ambrosia Salad, Bad Panacea and Other Works will be on view from November 3 through December 22, 2023. A reception for the artist will be held on Friday, November 3 from 6 to 8 pm.

For inquiries regarding Craig Calderwood, please contact Charlotte Kahn at ck@georgeadamsgallery.com.

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