

ALICE BLACK

'Twilight of the Idols'

Private View: Thursday 16 January 2020 (6-8PM)

Date: 17 January – 29 February 2020

Gallery address: 47 Berwick St (1st Fl), Soho, London W1F 8SQ

Opening hours: Tuesday to Friday 10am-6pm, Saturday 11am-4pm & by appointment

ALICE BLACK will welcome 2020 with **'Twilight of the Idols'**, a group exhibition which explores the theme of Apollonian & Dionysian duality through a contemporary art lens. The exhibition features a strong international line up of both emerging and established artists: Sol Bailey-Barker, Blue Republic, Joy Bonfield-Colombara, George Condo, Mary Reid Kelley & Patrick Kelley, Sasha Okun, Sola Olulode, Irvin Pascal, Anousha Payne, Tristan Pigott, Adam Popli, Harriet Poznansky, Blue Republic, Frankie Roberts, Alexander Rosenberg & Chica Seal. Bringing together painting, sculpture, video, installation, ceramics, works on paper, metal work, photography and performance art, the exhibition will launch with a Preview at our Soho, London space on **Thursday 16 January 2020 (6-8pm)**, All Welcome.

"It is by those two art sponsoring deities, Apollo and Dionysus, that we are made to recognize the tremendous split. Developed alongside one another, usually in fierce opposition, each by its taunts forcing the other to more energetic production...until at last the pair accepted the yoke of marriage."

[Friedrich Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy, Francis Golfing transl. 1844 – 1900]

Apollo & Dionysus, two figures handed down to us from antiquity are familiar in name but their significance is in need of renewed examination. Apollo - god of the Sun, embodies order, balance and logic; Dionysus - god of wine and dance represents excess, the pursuit of pleasure and careless abandon. Seated at opposing ends of a spectrum, the characters represent our dual natures. But the Ancient Greeks did not consider them to be rivals and Friedrich Nietzsche saw their fusion as ideal. In the context of the marked polarity in the life and politics of the external world, this exhibition seeks to reflect and express our inner situation - a pendulum is in constant motion between Bacchanalian escapism and self-sought Apollonian mindfulness, with the potential to internally ground us in the face of external flux.

"Everything always has its opposite within itself."

[Heraclitus of Ephesus c. 535 – c. 475 BCE]

Despite Apollo & Dionysus binding all of us in human nature, its depictions throughout art history have been notably limited. Apollo - body perfect, appears poised and self-possessed; wearing a crown of laurels he represents the ultimate in youthful beauty, balance and elevated morals. Meanwhile, Dionysus - rosy cheeked and plump with wine glass in hand and crowned with vine leaves is personified by his state of intoxicated pleasure and his wild dance. 'Twilight of the Idols' seeks to expand beyond the traditional exclusivity of this representation by dissecting old preconceptions and proposing a more complete representation of polarity and duality and the potential for reconciliation. An exhibition ripe with all the contradictions of life, it gives prominence to the point at which the Apollonian coalesces with the Dionysian as our multifaceted selves are revealed.

Sol Bailey-Barker (b. 1987) is a British multi-disciplinary artist working primarily with sculpture, sound and performance. His works are striking composites which combine aspects of ancient symbolism, mysticism and worship with objects relating to modern warfare, industry, agriculture and technology. Together they reflect the entwining of our Apollonian desire for self development and the potential for Dionysian destruction which comes with this human advancement. Recent notable exhibitions include: *Food of War*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Bogota, Colombia (2019); *Artificial Nature*, Internet Moon Gallery, Wrong Biennale (2019); *Sisyphus in Retrograde*, Curated by Aindrea Emelife & Gabriella Sonabend, London UK (2019).

Blue Republic is a collaboration by **Anna Passakas** and **Radoslaw Kudlinski**, based in Toronto and Krakow (formed 1992). Their research is concerned with discourses around globalization, contemporary experience and disruption of the binary that divides art from a broader social space. Recurring themes include issues of entrapment in games of power and violence; contemporary “hyper-complexities;” a sense of being homeless in the world. Their practice consists of site-specific installations, public interventions, land art, performance and participatory projects. Notable Public Collections include: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Galeria Arsenal, Poland; The Donovan Collection, St. Michael’s College; University of Toronto, Toronto; Doris McCarthy Gallery, University of Toronto at Scarborough; RASTER Gallery, Warsaw; CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw; Vera List Center for Art and Politics at the New School, New York.

Joy Bonfield-Colombara (b. 1989) graduated from Jewellery and Silversmithing at the Glasgow School of Art (2014) and the Royal College of Art (2019). Through a practice which transcends art and jewel, she seeks to express a continuum in which the past is always present, time never static and personal change actively welcomed. Repurposing the motifs of damaged, but surviving artefacts from ancient Rome and Greece, her works feature missing limbs or facial features which serve as memento mori and agents for metamorphosis. Bonfield-Colombara was awarded the Richard Hubbard Prize, (2014). Her work is included in several significant private collections; she has partaken in residencies at Hiko Mizuno in Tokyo, KCUA in Kyoto and Make Works in Scotland.

George Condo (b. 1957) lives and works in New York City. Condo has described his portraits as composites of psychological states which reflect the madness of everyday life; he calls this, ‘Artificial Realism’. Riffing on old master painting through to contemporary American popular culture, his works are distinguished by a cast of characters which span the spectrum of human kind. With bulging eyes, bulbous cheeks and proliferating limbs, they all stare confrontationally from his pictures - this is the human condition laid bare, for all its flacid underbelly. Today, Condo’s paintings are held in the collections of The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Rubell Family Collection in Miami, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Mary Reid Kelley & Patrick Kelley Mary Reid Kelley, in collaboration with her partner Patrick Kelley, combines painting, performance and a distinctive wordplay-rich poetry in her polemical, graphically stylized videos. Mary Reid Kelley (b. 1979) in Greenville, South Carolina USA, received her BFA from St. Olaf College, Minnesota, and an MFA in Painting from Yale University (2009). Resurrecting characters that embody particular facets of ideas in time, her historically specific tableaux enclose dilemmas of mortality, sex, and estrangement which are navigated by the characters in punning dialogue that traps them between tragic and comic meanings. Reid Kelley’s work is held in public collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Hammer Museum Los Angeles; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; and Kadist Foundation, Paris, France.

Sasha Okun (b. 1949) Leningrad (St. Petersburg) Russia, lives and works in Jerusalem, Israel. Okun trained at Solomon Levin, Pioneer Palace Studio (1960–65) and Mukhina Higher Industrial Institute of Art, Leningrad (1966–72). Depicting human figures in all shapes and conditions, Okun studies his subjects, searching underneath their flesh and beyond their anatomy. It is not just painted flesh, but a bodily component that is the essence of the art and the psychological and social message it conveys. Okun is not interested in the idealised body – his commitment is to revealing the real, often challenging truth beneath. Okun’s is an art of contradictions, of dissonances, of beauty and ugliness, of good and bad, of appropriate and inappropriate, of humour and seriousness. Permanent collections include; State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia; Albertina, Vienna, Austria; Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel; Stieglitz State Academy of Art and Design, St. Petersburg, Russia; State Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia; Museum of Art, Vitebsk, Belarus.

Sola Olulode (b. 1996) lives and works in South London. Olulode’s paintings are nuanced and tender visions of intimacy and community. Her celebrations of black identity, womanhood, femmes, and

non-binary people are distinguished by their use of gestural brushwork, indigo dye, wax, oil bar and impasto, which speak of her Nigerian heritage. Allowing the body to take centre stage, she gives prominence to movement, gesture and dance as binding forces which reflect both personal and collective experience, individuality and common strength. Her trademark blues and yellows become metaphors for a state of mind, energy & harmony, dance & meditation, joy & contemplation, love & desire, which reveal the complexity of identities within her communities. In 2018 Olulode was short-listed for the Evening Standard Art Prize (Final 10) and awarded the Lewisham Arthouse Graduate Studio Bursary. Notable exhibitions include: VO Curations 12th Floor, London (2020); Brixton Library, London (2019); *Moving in the Bluish Light*. von Goetz, London (2018).

Irvin Pascal (b. 1987) lives and works in London, he holds a BA in Architecture (2008) and MA Fine Art, University of Brighton (2017). Pascals multidisciplinary practice explores the representation of the black body, the nature of masculinity, sexuality, personal agency, the place of community and the reverberations of art history. From performance work, to arresting sculptural work constructed from ebonised wood, through to paintings which utilise his own unique material Pascollar, Pascal's work is a direct reflection of his experiences as an artist, a boxer, and a man of African and Caribbean roots. Pascal was included in Bloomberg New Contemporaries (2017). Notable recent exhibitions include: *The Nenaissance*, Niki Cryan, Lagos (Eko Atlantic), Nigeria (2019); *Young Monsters*, curated by Marcelle Joseph, Lychee One, London (2019); *The Sweetest Taboo*, GNYP Gallery, Berlin (2018).

Anousha Payne (b. 1991) lives and works in London and graduated from Camberwell College of Arts with a BFA in 2014. Working between sculpture and painting, her preferred materials are ceramics, textile, plaster, epoxy and watercolour. Payne's current research focuses on the anthropological notion of new animism - the notion that all objects inanimate and animate have spiritual essence and agency. Harnessing an ongoing interest in Tamil mythology and folklore, Paynes works are intended as hybrid objects which act as a reminder of the fluidity and shared qualities between humans, animals, the natural world. Recent exhibitions include *Disir* with Lucy Evetts and Aisha Christensen curated by Kris Day, and *Into the Soft* with Camilla Reyman in Copenhagen, and a residency at Villa Lena. She has an upcoming solo show at Indigo + Madder in London in June 2020.

Tristan Pigott (b. 1990) received his BA Painting, Camberwell College of Arts, London (2012) and MA Sculpture, Royal College of Art, London (2019). Pigott is interested in the construction of personal identity and the way the natural and the artificial coalesce to create hierarchies of illusion and reality, which he explores from both an anthropological and technological stand point. Taking his contemporaries as his subjects, Pigott's practice is a conflation of the hyper-real, surreal, pop and painterly, through which he riffs and spins off the past and present to reflect how image is constantly chopped up, repackaged and beamed back at us through the smoke screens of modern culture. In 2015 Pigott was shortlisted for the BP Portrait Award and featured in the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition. Notable exhibitions include *Slippery Gaze*, ALICE BLACK, London (2018); *Juicy Bits*, Cob Gallery, London (2017); *Yellow Sun: The New Contemporaries*, Lagos/Port Harcourt, Nigeria (2014) and *Hyperion*, New York, USA (2016).

Adam Popli (b. 1992) is a London based visual artist and environmental activist with a BA in Digital Media Production, University of Arts Bournemouth (2015). Through the mediums of painting, immersive installation, photography and performance he activates discourse around human action and consequence, with a particular focus on climate change as the central issue in our modern world. Popli's ongoing photographic series 'Tripping on Infrared' poetically and sensitively addresses ideas of human entitlement, suppression and the potential for preservation and regeneration. Recent notable exhibitions include: V&A Late, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK (2019); *Tripping on Infrared*, Level39, Canary Wharf, London, UK (2017); Danube Video Art Festival, Austria (2016).

Harriet Pozanansky (b. 1990) is a British Artist based in London having recently moved back to the UK from Oakland, California. She received her MA at The Slade School of Fine Art, London and School of

the Art Institute Chicago, SAIC (2014). Pozanansky's recent work is driven by a fascination with bodily experiences and the judgements they accrue, for example pleasure becoming associated with shame or fear with disgust. Her work speaks of the fear of the alien, infection that rises from assimilation between state and individual, the body politic as forever present, but with no clear indication of where the head lies. Her works can be seen as acts of protest, unraveling the messy emotional reality of disempowerment, depicting the chaos of systems and refusing to conform to the mass-propagated idea of the body. Selected exhibitions include *Simmer*, Root Division, San Francisco (2018); *Wild is the Wind at TI-155*, San Francisco (2017), *What Do We Do When Things Break Down*, The Flight Deck Oakland, (2016), *Pandiculate! The Joy of Stretching*, The Koppel Project, London.

Frankie Roberts (b. 1989) is an interdisciplinary artist born in Cambridge UK, she graduated from Slade School of Art (2018). Frankie's work draws on observed personal histories and narratives, using humour and hysteria to investigate the flippant mechanics of human emotional experience. Compelled by her experience working in a homeless hostel and training as a nurse in an HIV/AIDS unit where there is no veneer or faux niceties, her works reflect the bodily, raw, angry, naked, terrifying, hysterical, often bizarre reality of every day experience in these places. Roberts has exhibited at Crypt Gallery, Electrowerkz and Small Press Project and performed at That's What She Said. Frankie lives and works in London, UK.

Alexander Rosenberg (b. 1991) lives and works in London. Through a multidisciplinary practice which spans sculpture, installation and performance Rosenberg explores the relationship between authorship and authenticity and the inherent ironies that lie in our conflicted sense of self and its inward and outward manifestations. From children's pop-up books, through to diagrams and MRI technology, he is interested in our understanding of our bodily objecthood that sits somewhere between two and three dimensions. Harnessing a background in sculpture and neuro science, he actively searches for making processes that allow him to harness a playful discomfort. Awards include: Air Open, Visitors' Choice Award (2019); Stanelco Prize (2006); JNF Prize, (2004). Publications include: *The White Cube of the Brain*, *On Drawing; Painting With Bullshit*, *The Inking Magazine*; *Opinion: Alexander Rosenberg on Art and Neuroscience*, UAL News, 2013.

Chica Seal (b. 1991) lives and works in London. Seal received her MA Fine Art Painting, Brighton University, UK (2015) and BA Fine Art Painting, Falmouth School of Art, Cornwall, UK (2011). A painter and sculptor, Seal draws on the female perspective from mythology, medieval folklore, storytelling and popular culture to present a wry and witty commentary of the turbulence of the human psyche. Replete with extended metaphors and veiled meanings which are intentionally ambiguous, her recent work draws from a cast of real life characters to reflect the contemporary disconnect between mind and body. Presenting body parts as object based relics separated from their contextual landscape, they become a metaphor for the individual in society. Notable exhibitions include: *A Fish Wives Tale*, London (2019); *Modern Miniaturists*, Parntership Editions, London, UK (2018), *Desert Island*, Southgate Studios, London, UK (2018); Seal was awarded the Nagoya Painting Award (2015).

"Art owes its continuous evolution to the Apollinian-Dionysian duality"
[Friedrich Nietzsche: 'The Birth of Tragedy', 1872]

Notes to Editors:

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