

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

META-MAJESTY

September 28-October 21

Opening reception: Friday September 28, 7-9pm

at Explosivo/chashama

169 Avenue C at 11th Street

curated by Tracy Candido

Diane Barcelowsky, Dana Carlson, Kate Clark, Jennifer Coates, William Crump, Leslie Miller, Naomi Reis, Saviour Scraps, Jessie Rose Vala

We are experiencing a wave of culturally creative individuals that are projecting notions of fantastical, dream-like narratives upon their social communities. Wild imaginations translate waking life into hidden psychedelic worlds, leaving behind consciousness and diving deep into the metaphysical landscape. Gone, but not forgotten, are the days of Dungeons and Dragons. Contemporary artists Jessie Rose Vala, Leslie Miller, Dana Carlson, Kate Clark, Jennifer Coates, William Crump, Diane Barcelowsky, Naomi Reis, and the artist collective Saviour Scraps are forgoing the ten-sided die and instead creating their own personal escape into rich environments that use mathematics to invoke beauty, images of nature to confront human consumption, and monsters and hybrids to illustrate co-existing layers of non-reality.

“Meta-Majesty,” curated by Tracy Candido, suggests that perhaps this curious channeling of all things magical is a very real response to our current earthly chaos. This form of escapism is proposing a spectral reflection towards a nation diseased with war, ignorance, and environmental disregard. Jessie Rose Vala describes her installations and drawings as having themes of health including the vitality of the planet which she juxtaposes against the reality of living as an American; a predator to the environment, living amongst a garble of information. Her therapy is performed through fabricating the antithesis of these current conditions, by sliding into a landscape made purely of the fantastical.

Jennifer Coates' vividly colored, metaphysical paintings utilize the conventions of landscape as an anchor for hallucinatory visions that reference the mind and the body simultaneously. Expanses of sky or sea coalesce into pools of thought-like reflection, clouds of geometry warp into an ecstatic vortex, and horizons fissure and swell like skin.

Kate Clark's surreal taxidermy sculptures study the tension between personal and mythical realms by creating figures which synthesize the human face with the body of wild animals. The disruptive alignment of the intimate face and animal body asserts that human experience is mostly contained, a mask which is incomprehensible and psychologically complex. A single life, with its private and unique history, gazes back at us, seemingly frozen in a magical wild wood.

Dana Carlson's mark making method is employed to create paintings of puffy pink clouds, cats floating in a space-y seascape, and owls peering from a transcendental rainbow. Otherworldly landscapes are used to exhibit macabre images of death and destruction that are coupled with objects of life and vitality. The viewer is pulled through a psychedelic portal down a warped road to the intricate puzzle of Mother-nature.

Saviour Scraps is a Brooklyn based art collaborative that works with donated and reused fabric to create fantastical environments in immersive site-specific installations. Because fabric contains powerful personal and collective memories, it serves as a medium through which the artists can explore the cycle of creation and exchange.

William Crump's new body of work, titled “The Mountain of Fire and Miracles” draws from an odd sign for a Christian ministry William noticed at the top of a mountain while in Korea. He interpreted this sign as a promise of some higher world, an exit from a world below that is at odds with its own identity.

Diane Barcelowsky's intricate drawings weave together psychedelic folk tales that blur the boundaries of time, space, and reality. Diane's collage of characters, constructed with paint, marker, watercolor, and ink create a vibrant color palate, morphing into freaky patterns that shed a glimmer of blacklight on the artist's dreamy mind-trip.

Naomi Reis presents a nostalgic nod to dreamers of yesteryear, imagining a modernist building gone wild – proliferating, multiplying, spinning –stacking itself up into the sky, teetering dangerously close to the edge of ruin. The resulting monolith hangs vicariously in a see-saw act between our desire to create a better world, and the knowledge that reality will always render these dreams imperfect. Late capitalism has run its course and the world

is braced for what may come next –another world war, the destruction of the environment, widening gaps between rich and poor. Our collective dreams stack up in protest to our role as consummate consumers.

Leslie Miller, a graphic artist, conjures forth phases of the moon, dream states, and romantic transcendence to lift us from an earthly realm and into the divine. As humans, we pursue and explore definitions of control, awareness, and escape from the world. Mere mortals are we who seek to rise above the everyday by finding meaning in the stars, our dreams, nature, and mystical divinity.

Mere mortals are we who seek refuge from the fear of a dusky future. By engaging in notions of politics-as-play, the artists in “Meta-Majesty” recall notions of Dada and Japanese animation; they avoid being directly critical of the shadows within the fabric established by the system. They instead present dreamy landscapes, whimsical characters, crystals, domes, and portal-like tunnels as metaphors for their frustration. Through a projection of hope and a desire to reinforce the harrowed promise of “a better tomorrow,” these artists raise their fists by using fantasy as a form of protest for change.

Meta-Majesty is supported by chashama, a NYC arts organization whose mission is to support artists of all genres. chashama adopts vacant properties that are donated by their owners and converts them into theaters, galleries, studios, and window performance sites; chashama then regrants this space for free or at heavily subsidized rates. Since 1995, chashama has transformed more than 20 vacant properties and has given more than 5,000 artists access to space.

Explosivo/chashama is a temporary platform for contemporary art which follows an interdisciplinary exhibition program curated by Tracy Candido in partnership with chashama. The Explosivo/chashama art space is donated to chashama by the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board. UHAB supports self-help housing and community building in low-income neighborhoods by training, organizing, developing and assisting resident-controlled limited-equity housing cooperatives.

A special event for META-MAJESTY will take place on Friday, October 12th at 8pm featuring a live music performance by FOREST FIRE.

Explosivo/chashama’s hours are: Thursday-Sunday, 1-7pm. For more information about the exhibition or upcoming exhibitions at Explosivo/chashama, please visit www.explosivoartshow.com or call 516.510.3292.