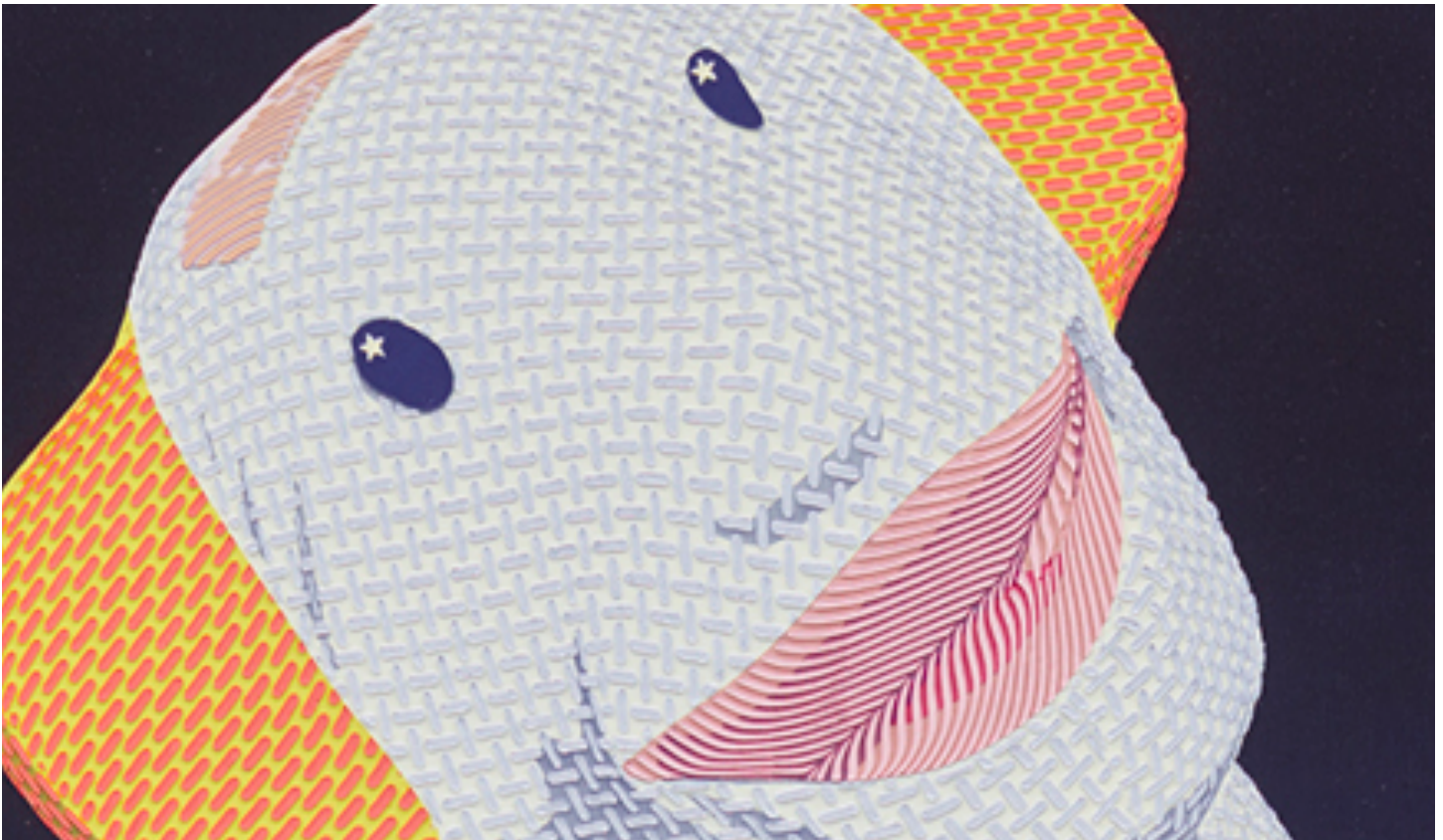


HALSEY MCKAY GALLERY

SPIRITS IN THE MATERIAL WORLD

DAVID KENNEDY CUTLER, ALEX DODGE, COREY ESCOTO,
NAOTAKA HIRO, MATT KENNY, JOSÉ LERMA, ROBYN O'NEIL,
SARAH PETERS, JIM SHAW, WILLIAM VILLALONGO



Detail image: Alex Dodge, *P.U.F. (Personal Universal Friend) Welcome Home!*

September 3 - October 30 | 11 am - 6pm | Friday - Sunday
For all further information please contact info@halseymckay.com

Halsey McKay presents *Spirits in the Material World*, a group show featuring David Kennedy Cutler, Alex Dodge, Corey Escoto, Naotaka Hiro, Matt Kenny, José Lerma, Robyn O'Neil, Sarah Peters, Jim Shaw and William Villalongo. The show takes its title from the song of the same name by The Police from their 1981 album *Ghost in the Machine*. While the lyrical choices of the song and record hint at poltergeists, the supernatural and magic, an undercurrent of psychological and political unrest is the real driving theme. The same can be said of the works in the show with references that slyly needle classicism, history, social media, imperialism and consumerism. The gallery is filled with images and objects that could be interpreted as literal possessions, each crafted with a possessed attention to detail. In paintings, collages, drawings and sculptures, inanimate objects take human form or are overcome by outside forces. Figures emerge in part from the atmosphere or stone, float suspended in ether, or manifest from digital space. *They're here.....*

In David Kennedy Cutler's work the most basic inevitabilities of existence—dressing, eating, touching, sharing, working, growing, deteriorating—are turned into artifice. In a culture saturated in images, in a climate where we are expected to proliferate our physical selves endlessly, our consciousness experiences a scattering, or stuttering. By projecting the self in perpetuity, we become dissociated from ourselves. Made using inkjet transfer on canvas, plaster, and Aqua-resin, his compositions are reconfigured until they feel as if they had accumulated into being without coercion. They exist in a material reality that is unburdened by truth, and yet their motifs are derived from the most basic and immediately tactile space.

Alex Dodge's paintings consistently explore the promise of technology as it interacts with and redefines the human body. His painted images are generated using a range of virtual systems and traditional tools, but ultimately rendered in thick layers of oil paint using laser-cut stencils. Working across mediums and often with imagery laden with textile patterns, his work implies that technology transcends cultural contexts.

Corey Escoto's practice is born from an almost Structuralist engagement with analog photography, as the artist delves into the decay of analog film and the rise of digital imagery. In his technically rigorous photo process, Escoto maintains an indexical relationship to the natural world, despite having no optical resemblance to it. His multi exposure polaroid photographs act as the structural blueprint for sculptural forms rich in tactile surfaces and material. This reversal of hierarchy in the traditional relationship between image and subject expands his engagement with form and image.

Naotaka Hiro's daily drawing practice has formed the basis from which his exploration of the body has generated an expansive set of ideas and images. His signature visual lexicon of contorted, self-examining forms and distended body parts, rib cages, hair, legs, genitals, are viscerally rendered at a scale approximately one half of the artist's body. Within this methodology, Hiro's reconstruction of his own form and image becomes defined by the limitations of his sight and reach wherein his body's position and movements within, around and upon materials drives his mark making. The results are recognizably corporeal yet conspicuously other.

Matt Kenny's varied practice spans photo-realist landscape, indexical mono-printing, quasi-abstract shaped panels, Google Earth manipulations, fakes, Venn diagram drawing and poetry. Through renderings of One World Trade Center, in the style of sidewalk artist caricature, Kenny anthropomorphizes the building into a menacing creature looming over downtown Manhattan. Kenny uses the monster's appearance in various emotional states, vantage points, times of day, and seasons to reflect the urban psyche, particularly that the greater New York area.

José Lerma collapses the historical with the autobiographical, making works that are part art history and part personal mythology. Several of Lerma's recurring themes deal with the tension between the heroic and the pathetic, as well as the rise and fall of great figures. His research examines the vast network of sociological, political, and economic forces that have shaped, and continue to shape, contemporary culture. Lerma portrays his subjects in ways that elevate the mundane and trivialize the grand. He connects influential figures from history through trivial absurdities, crafting a visual world that is both celebratory and absurd. Simultaneously rooted in classical European painting and lowbrow pop art, his works express the tragic comedy of global colonial and post-colonial cultural relations in eye-popping and instantly relatable ways.

Sarah Peters works show the psychic geography of people, through playfully narrative critiques of cultural authority, identity, and gendered power dynamics. There is an element of irony in her dismembered sculptures that is transgressive, transforming a variety of social, historical, and cultural symbols into an open-ended game. This visual language of play allows a freedom of expression that can exist in two states at once: figurative but abstracted, familiar though strange, contemporary yet historical. Peters' process becomes not unlike an anthropological dig, you may not know what mysterious object you'll find underneath the many layers, and yet, once found and recognized, the objects are material evidence of the most ordinary human activity: the expression of power through objects.

Jim Shaw's work draws from an expansive breadth of references and idiosyncratic associations to present a surrealistic take on American consumer culture. The pastiche of vintage film, advertising, and television imagery that Shaw poignantly combines in these works engenders them with a pervasive sense of nostalgia and critique for a mythologized, bygone era of American history.

Materializing from William Villalongo's black velvet cut-outs, Black and Brown skin, eyes, and appendages intermittently appear, swirling alongside turbulent incisions and collaged elements to form the disembodied figure. The texture of the artist's characteristic velvet reinforces the experience and sensation of spirits rising from extreme darkness, confronting conditions of their visibility. The resulting scene interrogates the tentative space held by the Black body in contemporary society and throughout history and art, balancing loss and agency over the Black self-image. Keenly aware of the limitations of skin color as a progenitor of meaning around the Black subject, the artist engages with strategic use of imagery and activity to create a context for seeing and understanding. Combining these dynamic components—both corporeal and from another world—Villalongo powerfully conveys the experience of the Black diaspora in the past and present while celebrating Black identity.

DAVID KENNEDY CUTLER received a BFA from Rhode Island School of Design in 2001. In the winter of 2018, he completed a live-streamed two-months solo show and residency at Halsey McKay Gallery in East Hampton, NY. Other solo exhibitions have been with at Derek Eller Gallery, New York; the Center for Contemporary Arts, Estonia in partnership with Art in General. He has recently been included in exhibitions at Andrew Edlin Gallery, New York; Cooley Gallery at Reed University, Portland, OR; The Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College, Clinton, NY; Locust Projects, Miami, FL; Lyles and King, New York, NY; and the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center, Philadelphia, PA. He is represented by Derek Eller Gallery in New York.

ALEX DODGE Born 1977 in Denver, Colorado, Alex Dodge currently works from Brooklyn, New York, and Tokyo, Japan. His recent shows include Alex Dodge (solo, Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, 2020); The Trauma of Information (solo, Maki Fine Arts, 2019); Programmed: Rules, Codes, and Choreographies in Art, 1965-2018 (Whitney Museum of American Art, 2018-2019); and Whisper in My Ear and Tell Me Softly (solo, Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, 2018). His works have been added to collections at The Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

COREY ESCOTO received a BFA from Texas Tech University and an MFA from Washington University in St. Louis and has shown nationally and internationally, with select solo exhibitions at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis; Regina Rex, Queens NY; and an upcoming exhibition at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, PA. His work has been included in exhibitions at Smack Mellon, Brooklyn; The ArtHouse at Jones Center, Austin; and international venues including ACC Galerie, Weimar, Germany; Seven Days Brunch, Basel; and FRAC Nord-Pas De Calais, Dunkerque, France. He is a recipient of the Gateway Foundation Grant and the Kala Art Institute Residency Program and Fellowship Award, and an Aperture Portfolio Prize finalist.

NAOTAKA HIRO lives and works in Los Angeles. He received his B.F.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1997 and M.F.A. from the California Institute of the Arts in 2000. Solo exhibitions include In the Ravine at Misako & Rosen, Tokyo (2019); Subterranean & Wanderer at Brennan & Griffin, New York (2019); and Peaking at The Box, Los Angeles (2016). Recent group exhibitions include Seven Stations: Selections from MOCA's Collection at MOCA, Los Angeles (2020); In the Meanwhile... at Santa Barbara Museum of Art (2020); 50+50: A Creative Century from Chouinard to CalArts, REDCAT, Los Angeles (2020); Le Hanger at Maison de Rendez-Vous, Brussels (2020); Made in L.A. 2018, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; A Modest Proposal at Hauser & Wirth, New York (2016); and Men in LA: Three Generations of Drawings: Naotaka Hiro, Paul McCarthy, and Benjamin Weissman(2014) at The Box, Los Angeles.

MATT KENNY earned a BFA from Rhode Island School of Design. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Halsey McKay Gallery, The National Exemplar, Karma, Derek Eller Gallery and 55 Gansevoort in New York. Recent group exhibitions include Smile, curated by Todd Von Ammon, Halsey McKay Gallery, Interiors, with Aaron Aujla, Cooper Cole Gallery, Toronto, ON; American Sculpture, The National Exemplar, Urbanities, James Fuentes, New York, NY; Ghost Current, V1 Gallery, Copenhagen, Denmark; Teste, Galleria Alessandra Bonomo, Rome, Italy among others. Kenny lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

JOSÉ LERMA is currently an Associate Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he has taught since 2009. He has had over twenty solo exhibitions at galleries such as Kavi Gupta in Chicago, IL (2020, 2017, 2014), Galerie Xavier Hufkens in Brussels, Andrea Rosen Gallery in New York, NY (2014, 2010, 2006, 2004), and at museums such as the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (2014), and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago (2013) His works are represented in numerous collections, including The Saatchi Collection in London, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

ROBYN O'NEILL lives and works in Los Angeles, California. She will be honored with a major solo exhibition at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth opening October of this year. O'Neil has previously had solo museum exhibitions with the Des Moines Art Center; the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; and the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem. She has been included in the Whitney Biennial and in exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; the Kemper Museum of Art; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; and "Dargerism" at The American Folk Art Museum. Her work can be found in the collections of the Dallas Museum of Art; the Menil Drawing Institute; Philadelphia Museum of Fine Art; and the Whitney Museum of American Art among others. Additionally, Robyn O'Neil hosts one of the highest-rated poetry & literature podcasts, "ME READING STUFF."

SARAH PETERS lives and works in Queens, NY. Peters was educated at Virginia Commonwealth University (MFA), The University of Pennsylvania (BFA), and The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (Certificate). The artist is a recipient of awards and residencies from John Michael Kohler, WI and New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA), NY (2011); The Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA (2010); and The Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation Space Program, Brooklyn, NY (2008). Solo and two-person exhibitions include Halsey McKay Gallery, New York, NY (2017); Eleven Rivington, New York (2015); 4 AM, New York (2015); Bodyrite(with Mira Dancy) at Asya Geisberg, NY (2014); Edward Winkleman Gallery, NY (2007,2010); and John Davis Gallery, Hudson, NY (2013). Group exhibitions include Objects Like Us, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT, curated by Amy Smith-Stewart and David Adamo (2018); Galerie Eva Presenhuber, Zurich, Switzerland (2018); and Rodin and the Contemporary Figurative Tradition, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, Grand Rapids, MI (2017), among others. Her work has been reviewed and featured in publications such as The New York Times, Art in America, Artforum, and The Brooklyn Rail.

JIM SHAW was born in 1952 in Midland, Michigan, and lives and works in Los Angeles and Milford, Connecticut. He was the subject of a major retrospective, The End is Here, at the New Museum, New York, in 2015 and participated in the 55th Venice Biennale in 2013. He has had additional one-person exhibitions at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams; BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, United Kingdom; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; CAPC, Musée de'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux; MoMA PS1, New York; Magasin, Centre National d'Art Contemporain, Grenoble; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; and Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Geneva. His work has been featured in important exhibitions at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; New Museum, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

WILLIAM VILLALONGO was raised in Bridgeton, NJ and now lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He received his B.F.A. from The Cooper Union School of Art, NYC and his M.F.A. from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University, Philadelphia. The artist is the recipient of both the prestigious 2021 Rome Prize and the 2021 American Academy of Arts and Letters Purchase Prize. Recent exhibitions include Yesterday's Tomorrow: Selections from the Rose Collection, 1933-2018, the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA; Living in America, curated by Assembly Room, at the International Print Center, NYC; Afrocosmologies: American Reflections, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT; Young, Gifted, and Black: The Lumpkin-Boccuzzi Family Collection of Contemporary Art, OSilas Gallery, Concordia College, Bronxville, NY, traveling to Lehman College Art Gallery, Lehman College, Bronx, NY; New Mythologies: William Villalongo, The Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts and Culture, Charlotte, NC; Greater New York, MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY; and the online exhibition, Life During Wartime, curated by Christian Viveros-Fauné, University of South Florida Contemporary Art Museum, Tampa, FL, among others. In 2023, Villalongo will have a solo museum exhibition originating at the Grinnell College Museum of Art, Grinnell, IA. He is the recipient of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptor's Grant. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art; Denver Art Museum; Grinnell College Museum of Art, Grinnell, IA; Princeton University Art Museum; the Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC; the Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT, among others. Villalongo is an Associate Professor at The Cooper Union School of Art, NYC.