

ESSEX FLOWERS

19 Monroe St
New York, NY 10002



Still from *Miraculous Disasters*, three-channel stop-motion video, 3:00 min loop, 2021–ongoing, with Paola Di Tollà's
Encyclopedic Sound Score: Audible Tracings from Pliny The Elder's Natural History, 78 AD (2019).

Hell Mouth

Laura Bernstein

October 7 - November 6, 2022

Opening Reception: Friday, October 7, 6-8pm

Essex Flowers is pleased to present *Hell Mouth*, an installation comprising textiles, puppets, watercolor paintings and a three-channel stop-motion video, by Laura Bernstein.

Hell Mouth opens wide, a threshold exposing a procession of hybrid creatures, hand-stitched from repurposed textiles. Stop-motion animations display the convergence of monstrous and miraculous events taking place within the materially layered world of the tent. *Hell Mouth* draws on medieval theater traditions that employed the image of the mouth of Hell as a way to visually dramatize the demise of the damned. Bernstein uses this image juxtaposed with worldly animals – the bears fleeing the American West, the murder hornets invading the Pacific Northwest, the spotted lantern flies swarming the Northeast — as an analogy for our current moment of upheaval: the ongoing pandemic, climate catastrophe and the rapid displacement of animal species.

Hell Mouth explores mythologies of metamorphoses and origin stories of beasts in relation to Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, *The Book of Miracles* and contemporary natural disasters. Can we call disasters natural anymore? What beasts will be unearthed or preserved as these ecological crises unfold? How will technological and biological advances shape the anatomy and somatic experience of future populations? Is our current society reverting back to a medieval mindset, where tradition takes precedence over reason and science, and alternate reality overpowers logic?

Gallery hours: Saturdays and Sundays from 12-6 PM and by appointment
For appointments and inquiries please email info@essexflowers.us

Laura Bernstein is a multidisciplinary artist and arts educator based in Brooklyn, NY. She holds a BFA from Rhode Island School of Art and Design and an MFA from University of Pennsylvania. Solo exhibitions include: *Hybrid Ecologies* at the Children's Museum of The Arts Bridge Projects Space, *Becoming Beast* at NURTUREart, *Illuminator* at Y2K's Projects Space. She has been awarded residencies at Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, The Lighthouse Works Fellowship and The Bronx Museum's AIM program. Bernstein is a grant recipient of the Toby Devan Lewis Fellowship and The Franklin Furnace Fund. She directed and produced *A Speculative Performance* presented by *The Institute of Super-Species Research and Experimentation* in conjunction with the BRIC Biennial: Volume III, South Brooklyn Edition. Most recently, her Miracle Tapestries project was presented at ArtYard as part of their HATCH Biennial, in collaboration with Rebecca Pristoop and The Moving Company and Friends.