

GREENE NAFTALI

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JOHN KNIGHT • BRANDON NDIFE • TOM BURR • DIAMOND STINGILY

March 24 – April 29, 2023

Ground Floor

This cross-generational group of artists puts conceptual strategies to quietly subversive ends, making found materials and imagery speak to broader social forces in American life. Departing from familiar objects—of commerce, domesticity, or the built environment—their work stirs the repressed or unsanctioned narratives contained in a given form.

JOHN KNIGHT's *Worlddebt* (1994) demonstrates culture's complicity with the ills of globalization, raising fundamental questions of value in the free market and the art world alike. The work consists of 165 facsimiles of credit cards, each representing a member state of the IMF or the World Bank. The slightly oversized cards sport lithographed scenes—lifted from travel brochures or the pages of *National Geographic*—that traffic in visual clichés of national identity, and Knight's sly interventions extend to all aspects of a card's design: his linked initials replace the trademark symbol on each card's surface, and the account number is substituted for the bank's hotline to report fraud. The corruption inherent to this financial system is detailed in the fine print on the cards' reverse, which outlines how debt is routinely used to sustain all manner of inequalities.

BRANDON NDIFE also fashions charged replicas of everyday items, anchoring his sculptural assemblages in pieces of household furniture. A set of cabinets and a wooden bed frame appear to be overrun with sprawling tree limbs; some live cuttings, others cast in synthetic resin and ingeniously hand-colored to fool the eye. The dense tangle of branches that sprout from the bed resemble the roots of a mangrove, a coastal plant that grows in the brackish water where two ecosystems meet. The bed's design is similarly composite, carved with the tropical flora of French country decor and seemingly mired in a swamp; the natural world left to run roughshod over the vestiges of a colonial past. The wanton organics of Ndife's work—rife with signs of propagation and decay—also underscore the symbolic weight of the double bed: a primal scene of both sexuality and the workings of the unconscious.

DIAMOND STINGILY's spare, emotive vignettes hinge on the commemorative power of objects. The artist is often drawn to materials that nod to her own family history, treating the readymade tradition as a spur to both introspection and collective experience. Her 2021 installation *dead Daughter* features elaborate faux-floral arrangements, modeled on those in funeral homes or in the windows displays at her aunt's Chicago hair salon, where Stingily spent much of her childhood. The bouquets' disquieting feel is heightened by the bronze and wax fragments strewn below—casts of the artist's own hands and feet, arranged on the plush carpet like votive offerings. The work was inspired by Stingily's reading of a 1950s French novel that treats themes of mortality and resurrection, and she has described her own fascination with the specter of death as more galvanizing than morbid.

TOM BURR's career-long interests in public space and queer histories converge in *Walt Whitman Park, Brooklyn* (1996/2023), a new iteration of a work not seen since its debut in the 1990s. The installation was the last of a series he made in response to a Robert Smithson text on Central Park's storied Ramble, which drove Burr to explore its alternative use as a cruising ground for gay men. Walt Whitman Park was known to serve a similar unofficial purpose, and Burr's non-site companion to this small urban green space pays tribute to its namesake: the Brooklyn-based writer whose celebration of same-sex bonds has made him a rare queer voice in the 19th-century canon. The installation contains copies of the standard-issue park signage that aimed to regulate after-hours behavior, as well as stray bits of litter and other dreck that Burr gathered and saved, left behind by the park's former occupants. Burr's restaging of the work decades later points to the losses incurred in the interim, of a sense of the commons that has since been eroded by gentrification and the passage of time.

GREENE NAFTALI

John Knight, Brandon Ndife, Tom Burr, Diamond Stingily

March 24 – April 29, 2023

Ground Floor

Front Gallery:



John Knight

Worlddebt, 1994

Lithography on aluminum

165 parts, 3 1/8 x 5 1/8 inches (8 x 13 cm) each

Main Gallery:



Diamond Stingily

dead Daughter, 2021

Fabric, wood, oil paint, paper, bronze and wax

67 3/4 x 216 1/2 x 216 1/2 inches (172 x 550 x 550 cm)



Brandon Ndife

Capricious Green #1, 2023

Wood, epoxy clay, paint, and hardware

28 3/4 x 40 x 35 inches (73 x 101.6 x 88.9 cm)



Brandon Ndife

Southern Comfort, 2023

Cast insulation foam, epoxy clay aquaresin, resin, wood, plastic, silver leaf, scenic moss, keys, sneaker, and organic material

43 x 95 x 53 1/8 inches (109.2 x 241.3 x 134.9 cm)



Brandon Ndife

Capricious Green #2, 2023

Cast insulation foam, epoxy clay, aquaresin, resin, wood, plastic, silver leaf, scenic moss, and hardware

35 1/2 x 20 1/2 x 29 inches (90.2 x 52.1 x 73.7 cm)

