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THE DEVIL IS A CLOWN

SEPTEMBER 24 – NOVEMBER 5, 2023

F is pleased to present *The Devil is a Clown*, a group exhibition of drawing, painting, and sculpture by Stephanie Boone, Will Boone, Steve DiBenedetto, Jamie Fletcher and Pacca Conrad, Tuomas Korpijaakko, Lisa Lapinski, El Franco Lee II, and Jenna Thornhill. The exhibition is on view from September 24 – November 5, 2023, at 4225 Gibson Street, Houston TX, 77007, with an opening reception on September 24, from 2–5 pm.

Horror comes in many forms, inextricable from humanity's knowledge of itself. If Judeo-Christian moralism split good from evil, through a post-Nietzschean lens, horror is endless and expansive, possibly extraterrestrial in origin, intrinsic and all encompassing. The artists in this exhibition confront darkness with childlike playfulness, as anecdote or purification, through the idiosyncratic and coded languages they have developed over time. Their approaches vary, but each artist explores the lines between a moralistic horror ruled by symbolism, horror in cosmic scope, and the existential attempt to present life as it is, at times in works that reject darkness altogether. The devil, in his many guises, is in the details.

Steve DiBenedetto makes gloopy, psychedelic paintings and drawings that flatten and pull apart the human figure in marks that meet the surface's plane. His three drawings *Interface I, II, and III* (all 2023) are constructed like portraits that peel away the skin of the face to expose a nightmarish interior of ectoplasmic muck, skeletal systems, and abstract forms. In contrast, **El Franco Lee II** creates interwoven tableaus through the stark depiction of real-life events. Lee's acrylic painting *Situations Where Life is a Living Hell* (2005) depicts various violences: a school shooting, a pet tiger devouring its owner, a parking lot robbery, and the infamous Tyson/Holyfield bite, alongside portraits of three of the artist's friends from adolescence, now living behind bars and on death row. **Stephanie Boone's** assemblages combine objects she has collected over the past two decades, drawing from her Gulf Coast childhood where she was raised by a teen mother who was the daughter of southern Baptist missionaries. Her works variously string together seashells, day-glow crosses, beads, and dried roses, mimicking the rosary, the confessional, or the wreath, in forms through which the religious has been exhumed. In a Southern Gothic homage to the memento mori, **Will Boone's** red-hot monochrome *Et in Arcadia Ego* (2023) has a cow's skull mounted prominently to its oil and resin-soaked canvas.

Jeanna Thornhill makes resin-coated Challah bread sculptures of quirky allegorical scenes, transforming a weekly Jewish rite into artistic ritual. Combining Judaism with the Zodiac, *Chai Chai Capricorn* (2021) is a Challah ram with the Hebrew number 18 painted twice on its haunch; in Hebrew, 18 or "Chai" is synonymous with "life." **Lisa Lapinski's** works present an iconographic archive, conjuring deconstructed domestic and artistic life alongside pop culture symbols that pick apart the language and methodologies of her southern California roots. In Lapinski's tabletop sculpture *Untitled (Transformer Pig)* (2011), a selection of these symbols appear painted on layers of vintage wallpaper, affixed to a handmade caned-box armature painted in pastel colors. **Tuomas Korpijaakko's** oil painting *Patient-in-waiting* (2023) is whimsical, almost naïve. Like an apparition, the head of the figure in the painting is missing or painted out, dissolving into a mist of Korpijaakko's Scandinavian dread. Daughter and mother **Jamie Fletcher and Pacca Conrad** present a wooden female figure originally carved by Conrad's father (and Fletcher's grandfather), a convicted serial rapist and murderer who ultimately died in prison. In preparation for the exhibition, Fletcher and Conrad partially burned the figure and fixed it to a tree round adorned with dried seedpods and other organic material native to the family's place of origin in West Texas. At the end of the exhibition, Fletcher and Conrad will retrieve this work, bring it home, and burn it completely to ash.

For more information, contact Adam Marnie at office@fmagazine.info

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Clockwise from door:

Stephanie Boone *Trap*, 2017

Steel crab trap, paper roses, costume jewelry, holographic plastic belt, 35 x 17 1/2 x 10 1/2 inches (88.9 x 44.45 x 26.67 cm)

Stephanie Boone *Widow's Thrill*, 2023

Dried roses, leather dye, UV-reactive acrylic, gold earring, thread, 41 1/2 x 4 3/4 x 2 1/2 inches (105.41 x 12.07 x 6.35 cm)

Will Boone *Et in Arcadia Ego*, 2023

Found objects, enamel, oil, resin on canvas, 48 x 36 x 10 inches (121.92 x 91.44 x 25.4 cm)

Jamie Fletcher and Pacca Conrad *Banishment of R.L.F.*, 2023

Wood figure made by R.L.F. burned by Fletcher and Conrad, tree round, Century Plant, Mesquite Beans, Devil's Claws
38 1/2 x 30 x 22 1/2 inches (97.79 x 76.2 x 57.15 cm)

Steve DiBenedetto *Interface I*, 2023

Colored pencil on vintage paper, 13 1/2 x 11 inches (34.29 x 27.94 cm); 15 5/8 x 13 1/8 inches (39.69 x 33.34 cm) framed

Steve DiBenedetto *Interface II*, 2023

Colored pencil on vintage paper, 12 3/4 x 10 1/4 inches (32.39 x 26.04 cm); 15 x 12 5/8 inches (38.1 x 32.07 cm) framed

Steve DiBenedetto *Interface III*, 2023

Colored pencil on vintage paper, 13 x 9 5/8 inches (33.02 x 24.45 cm); 15 1/4 x 11 7/8 inches (38.74 x 30.16 cm) framed

Tuomas Korpjaakko *Patient-in-waiting*, 2023

Oil on canvas, 9 x 12 inches (22.86 x 30.48 cm)

Lisa Lapinski *Untitled (Transformer Pig)*, 2011

Wallpaper, wood, paint, cane and glue, 18 x 24 1/2 x 13 inches (45.72 x 62.23 x 33.02 cm)

Jenna Thornhill *Chai Chai Capricorn*, 2021

Challah bread, food coloring, resin, brass, 8 1/2 x 10 3/4 x 2 1/4 inches (21.59 x 27.31 x 5.72 cm)

El Franco Lee II *Situations Where Life is a Living Hell*, 2005

Acrylic on canvas, 24 x 36 inches (60.96 x 91.44 cm)

El Franco Lee II *Situations Where Life is a Living Hell I*, 2003

Graphite on posterboard on canvas, 11 3/4 x 20 inches (29.85 x 50.8 cm); 17 x 25 1/2 (43.18 x 64.77 cm) framed