

ESSEX FLOWERS

19 Monroe St
New York, NY 10002



Video still, Rubber Room/ I AM A FORCE OF THE PAST, 2024

Christopher Corey Allen ***Who Do You Think They're Fooling: You?*** June 28 - July 28, 2024

Essex Flowers presents *Who Do You Think They're Fooling: You?*, a solo exhibition from Christopher Corey Allen (CCA) featuring a new three-channel video installation and a series of scagliola tablets concerning the relationships between language, image and the ever present process of shaping a (the) self (selves).

In *Rubber Room/ I AM A FORCE OF THE PAST*, CCA uses a family heirloom: a steamer trunk painted by Norwegian painter Lars Hertervig. Hertervig is known for his semi-fantastical landscapes created after his discharge from Gaustad Hospital, where he was treated for psychosis at the age of 26. The trunk, adorned in a faux sealskin pattern during Hertervig's later years, becomes a symbol of inherited narratives and personal history, a detail often recounted during CCA's childhood and immortalized in Jon Fosse's novels "Melancholy I-II."

The video installation comprises three monitors. Two display CGI stage lights directed at a central screen, which features a CGI character whose head is formed from a 3D scan of the steamer trunk. In

the video, the figure lip-syncs to Porter Wagoner's "Rubber Room" and mimics sweeping, mopping, and carrying a cross, while reciting Pier Paolo Pasolini's poem "IO SONO UNA FORZA DEL PASSATO" ("I AM A FORCE OF THE PAST"). Through this interplay of actions and recitations, CCA is interested in the cultural fetishization of pathologies, examining their connection to the myth of the tormented artist within the context of familial narratives and embedded traumas in objects and language.

Alongside this work is a series of inlaid scagliola tablets, a traditional art form using plaster and pigment to mimic stone marble. CCA uses this labor-intensive process to create forms resembling Rorschach tests. Mining the matrix language of DIY punk t-shirts, each tablet intertwines images and language from a diverse set of sources, spanning pop culture, biological motifs, opera, Italian fumetti comics, and queer histories. These tablets act as speculative gateways, combining historical and contemporary references to explore the complex interplay of biopsychosocial and broader cultural forces.

-

Christopher Corey Allen (born 1985, Minneapolis, MN) is an artist and performer that works and lives between Alfred, New York and Brooklyn, New York. CCA has presented solo exhibitions at venues including Hair+Nails, The Soap Factory, Minneapolis, Minnesota and Alfred University, Alfred, New York. They have participated in numerous group exhibitions at venues including The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Montage Hall, Berlin, Germany, Roman Susan Art Foundation, Chicago, Illinois, DAM, Detroit Michigan. CCA received an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, and is currently Visiting Associate Professor in Expanded Media at Alfred University, Alfred, New York.