

Grunts Rare Books is pleased to announce our second gallery exhibition, *NARC*.

NARC is a two person exhibition of new works by Chicago-based artists Justin Beachler and Sam Dybeck considering trust, wellness, media literacy, sensationalism, and the pseudo-intellectual.

The narc-etype is appealing—an attitude of relating to the world through a prism of rarefied insight: a truth teller. To narc is a basic human instinct; survival before indifference depends on the narc's ability to collect information and manipulate it into understanding.

Without certainty in a grand narrative, the counterculture of the American 60s and 70s sought transcendence in alternative systems. The hippie dream caught on, and the sheer quantity of new spiritualities—infused with Eastern philosophy, mysticism, and personal enlightenment—created a vacuum for intellectual authority. For a generation bereft of coherent leadership, a figure of pseudo-spiritual enlightenment who offered the illusion of insight and direction became increasingly necessary.

Gurus of the time—Timothy Leary and Charles Manson among them—offered visions affirming the immediate need for cultural transformation, each achieved through varying degrees of mystical discipline and psychedelic mediation. Paranoia, always an undercurrent, emerged as the dominant principle, fed by insights into the mind-control experiments federal intelligence agencies performed on civilians seeking free love and psychedelics. These revelations, alongside murmurs of COINTELPRO infiltrations into radical movements, exposed counterculture's defenselessness to manipulation even as it protested it.

The desire to simulate escape from the mundane and tragic decade, by imagining oneself at the center of a different grand and hidden truth—proved timeless, as seductive then as it is now. Paranoia delivered today's Great Dissociation, and among so many facts to choose, the narc, a figure who stands apart from the masses—insulated by their proprietary interest in information—has never been more prominent.

Today, the narc is an anonymous figure with any number of followers operating in gaps of collective uncertainty. By signaling to depth without requiring it, the work of a contemporary narc acknowledges distance and conspiracy to no resolution, engaging at face with the contradictions of the moment and moving forward with them. The narc waves a flag. In doing so, the narc is a flexible observer and active participant in the construction of meaning, a filter through which chaos can be read clearly.

Far from a solipsistic pursuit, the narc's engagement with truth stresses the constructedness of knowledge by suggesting a different narc could have built it otherwise. The narc's popularity is in their brazen ability to snitch. Meaning here is a manipulable and participatory structure, and the narc makes islands with it.

Justin Beachler (b. 1981, Springfield, MO) is an artist currently living and working in Chicago, Illinois. Beachler attended the Kansas City Art Institute from 2001 to 2003 and graduated with a BA in art history from UMKC in 2012. Recent exhibitions include Weatherproof and LVL3 in Chicago, The Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Overland Park Kansas, Granite City Art and Design District in Granite City Illinois, Haw Contemporary in Kansas City Missouri and numerous other spaces in Missouri. Beachler's work is in the collection of the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Overland Park

Sam Dybeck (b. 1998 in Seattle, WA) is an artist, curator, and print production worker living in Chicago. In 2020 he obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in Photography and Experimental Media from California State University Fullerton. Additionally, Dybeck co-directs Weatherproof in Chicago with Milo Christie. Dybeck's works have been exhibited in Chicago, Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Kansas City.

Clockwise left to right

Justin Beachler

Magick Moods, 2023

motivational light up wall art with soothing ocean sounds, orgonite pyramid, Himalayan pink salt lamp

19.25 x 11.5 x 8.5 in

Justin Beachler and Sam Dybeck

Participation Trophy, 2024

laser engraved aluminum

12 x 8 x 1 in

Justin Beachler

Acapulco Gold, 2023

framed sunset picture, Himalayan pink salt lamps, pyramid clock

20.25 x 16 x 9.5 in

Sam Dybeck

White Album, 2024

toner, paper, PVA glue, found object, cast resin, acrylic, faux crystals, generic sleep aid capsules

36 x 8.5 x 5.25 in

Sam Dybeck

Love Takes Care, 2024

ashtrays, casted resin, salted almonds and faux puka shells, prescription bottle, acrylic

Dimensions variable

Justin Beachler

The Properties of Water, 2023

display case, laser prints, mason jars, healing water, dolphin crystal keychain, self-improvement series on cassette tape

12 x 23.5 x 10 in

Justin Beachler

Peace Frog, 2023

fragmented motivational sunset picture, psychic self-help cassette series, painted rock, amethyst, candle holder, 'The

Doors of Perception' by Aldous Huxley on cassette

25 x 16 x 15.5 in

Sam Dybeck

It is a hard pill to swallow, so I will probably sniff it, 2023

inkjet print, friendship bracelet, resin, MDF

20 x 16 x 1.5 in

Sam Dybeck

What Keeps Me Sharp, 2024

portable toilet, casters, lion's mane capsules

21 x 14 x 14 in

Sam Dybeck

LA Noir, 2024

acrylic, gelatin, artificial lemon flavor, pigment, inkjet prints

Dimensions variable

Justin Beachler

Relax into Infinite Space

framed space image, new age cassette tapes

28.25 x 18.5 x 1.5 in

Sam Dybeck

Where were you when I needed you? (LC_capsule03_BobbyBeausoleil), 2023

monoprint in cast resin, thermoplastic, inkjet prints, in artist frame

8 x 10 x 2 in

Sam Dybeck

Dennis Wilson's Levitation Device, 2024

MDF, paper, acrylic, eyelets, found object

6 x 4 x 2 in