

# CANDICE MADEY

## SAMANTHA NYE AND TODD STONG

*Split Fountain*

January 18–March 1, 2025



New York—*Split Fountain* pairs paintings by Samantha Nye and monoprints and frescoes by Todd Stong in the first joint exhibition of their work. The Philadelphia-based artists share a friendship and rich dialogue that is strongly influenced by art history, citing narratives and visual sources from the Baroque period, nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, and pop and camp culture in their work. Both artists foreground the centrality of queer actors in familiar stories of art, pleasure, and history.

Nye presents three new oil paintings depicting women in lavish states of desire and repose. Adapted from lifestyle photographer Slim Aarons's work from the 1940s to 1990s—in which beauty and affluence appear available to only a select few—Nye coyly reimagines the privileged spaces of Aarons's photographs populated with older female and nonbinary figures. In her 2022 exhibition with the gallery, *Attractive People Doing Attractive Things in Attractive Places*, the compositions of Nye's paintings were action-packed and overflowing with revelers. Here, solitary or paired women enact languid and dreamy poses, set in intimate interior spaces replete with a baroque excess of patterns, fabrics, fruits, and fauna.

Stong presents work from a series of monotypes begun during his graduate studies in Rome that reinterpret the life of Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768), the German art historian and archaeologist who dedicated himself to the study of ancient Greek and Roman statues and spearheaded the Classical Revival. Over the past three years, Stong has imagined a fictional history that is encyclopedic, personal, and epic in scale, exploring details of Winckelmann's biography as a gay man in eighteenth-century Germany and, later in life, in Rome. He depicts male figures at work and at play, surrounded by classical sculptures, lush gardens, and in the most recent prints, as tangles of angels and men that ascend and descend amid cloudscares. In a new body of small-scale frescoes, he further develops imagery of celestial peril and rapture, while hearkening back to the grand allegorical

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murals of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque painters that both Winckelmann and Stong encountered while living and studying in the Eternal City, two and a half centuries apart.

The title of the exhibition, *Split Fountain*, refers to a printmaking process used to create a smooth gradient between multiple colors by running a brayer over the separate ink colors repetitively—a technique that is deftly employed by Stong throughout his work in this show. The title also playfully suggests colorful and erotic themes that appear in both artists' work—celebrating ecstatic moments of bodily agency, freedom, and joy.

## SAMANTHA NYE

Samantha Nye makes work in painting, video, and installation, creating compelling dialogues between queer identity, mid-century references, and camp sensibilities. Her work is currently included in the important survey *Queer Histories* at the Museu de Arte de São Paulo Assis Chateaubriand (MASP), curated by Adriano Pedrosa and Julia Bryan-Wilson. In 2023, Nye was awarded a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship for her ambitious video project *Femininity*, the fourth part in a series of videos in which the artist remakes Scopitone films from the 1960s as queer utopias, casting only women in their sixties or older. Filmed at the famed Belvedere Guest House, an exclusive resort for gay men on New York's Fire Island, the video in progress features legendary performance artist, playwright, and former Warhol superstar Penny Arcade in the lead role; a cover song written and performed by Peaches; and local casts from the Cherry Grove and larger Fire Island community. The project was recently written about in *The New Yorker*.

Recent solo exhibitions include CANDICE MADEY, New York (2022); and Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2021). Nye's work has been reviewed in *ARTnews*, *BOMB Magazine*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Boston Art Review*, *Dazed*, *Elephant*, *The New York Times*, and *Vogue*. Her work is in the collections of Museum Arnhem, Netherlands; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; and Tufts University Permanent Art Collection, Boston. Nye received a BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Tufts University, Boston, in 2010, and an MFA in painting from Columbia University, New York, in 2018. She was born in Hollywood, FL, in the 1980s.

## TODD STONG

Todd Stong is an artist, educator, curator, and writer working in figuration across extremes of scale, from intimate graphite drawings to monumental installations of monotypes. His images elaborate on processes of queer cultural production and power. Group and two-person exhibitions include the Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia; Commonweal Gallery, Philadelphia; Galerie im Körnerpark, Berlin; and SPRING/BREAK Art Fair, New York. He is an adjunct professor of printmaking, drawing, and design at West Chester University, PA, and Delaware County Community College, Media, PA, as well as a contributor to *Title* magazine and a codirector at Fjord Gallery in Philadelphia. He has been a fellow at Yaddo, Lighthouse Works, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, as well as an apprentice at the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia. He was the 2023 Cindi Royce Ettinger Fellow at Second State Press.

He received a BA in Visual and Literary Arts from Brown University, Providence in 2014, and an MFA in Printmaking from the Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Temple University, Philadelphia in 2022. Part of his MFA program, he studied at Temple Rome. He was born in Trenton, NJ, in 1991.

CANDICE MADEY is open to the public Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 6pm.

*Image: Todd Stong, Moon Guided, 2024, Etching ink and gouache on paper, 39 x 26 3/4 inches.*  
*Photo credit: Constance Mensch.*