

Sean Nash

Cosmic Produce

June 6th – September 14th 2025

Tops Gallery at Madison Avenue Park
151 Madison Avenue
Memphis, TN 38103

Tops Gallery is pleased to present Sean Nash's exhibition *Cosmic Produce* at our Madison Avenue Park gallery.

Making their way metaphorically down the Mississippi, Sean Nash will exhibit two large sculptural paintings that conceptually traverse water, merging land and sea in tribute to change and transformation as a lasting truth.

Nash's sculptural paintings from this series are hybrids that take their shaped forms from marine organisms. Painted in vivid splashy and dappled colors, and produced magnitudes larger than reality, their referential forms are transformed into wild abstractions. The surfaces of the paintings are enlivened with three dimensional casts of cultivated plants and vegetables obtained from farmers near Nash's home in Kansas City. Other ornamental casts that appear in gradients and waves across the works' surfaces are taken from single use plastic containers, such as salad clamshells.

For Nash, who grew up in Memphis, *Cosmic Produce* is a homecoming- one mirrored by the great daily and evolutionary journeys of these marine organisms, of the produce, or even the plastics. The form of the larval lionfish in *The asterisk in trans* and a salty recipe for transmutation (larval lionfish)* is itself the representation of a tiny planktonic creature that makes a daily collective journey called diel vertical migration, the largest synchronous migration in the world. The second sculptural painting in the exhibition, *Poring over weird beings (ammonite)*, takes its form from the coiled shell of the long extinct cephalopod that also once inhabited what is now Western Tennessee.

At the heart of this flow of organisms- between the seemingly opposite pairing of agricultural plants and marine life forms- is the theme of interconnectedness and interdependence. Nash draws these relationships together through visual and material questions about human knowledge, or the limits and boundaries of what is known

and unknown to us in the cosmos. Learning from feminist science studies and his long-term expertise with food fermentation, these works demonstrate the dubiousness of categories and norms. Fermentation shows us direct and positive relationships with the microbial world- a world we have trouble seeing without the aid of a microscope (though evidence is all around us). The works in *Cosmic Produce* likewise share the scope of worlds within worlds that we might not otherwise be tuned into.

Sean Nash is a visual artist based in Kansas City, Kansas whose practice spans painting, sculpture, writing, and community engagement. A 2023 Charlotte Street Visual Award Fellow, his work was featured at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Overland Park, KS in 2023-24. He completed a permanent public commission titled *Kansas City Reciprocity* for the Kansas City International Airport in 2022. He has held solo shows at the Volland Foundation in Alma, KS, The Kniznick Gallery in Waltham, MA, Plug Projects in Kansas City, MO, and Black Ball Projects in Brooklyn, NY. *Cosmic Produce* at Tops Gallery will run concurrently with his 2025 solo exhibition *Acid Base* at Kate Werble gallery in New York City. Nash received an MFA in painting and printmaking from Yale University in 2005.