

Elizabeth Englander

Mister Poganyibbana

September 5 - October 25, 2025





# Theta

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“It is the responsibility of free men to trust and celebrate what is constant—birth, struggle, and death are constant, and so is love, though we may not always think so—and to apprehend the nature of change, to be able and willing to change.”<sup>1</sup>

-James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

“Buddhas and ancestors of old were as we; we in the future shall be buddhas and ancestors.”

-Dogen, “Eihei Kosu Hotsuganmon”

On the first day of ninth grade printmaking class, my teacher, Mr. Pogany, told us to close our eyes and draw a cat. My cat ended up with a severed head. I cut the pieces out and inked them up in an ugly combination of red, green, and tan, placed them on a plexiglass plate, and we printed it. Pogany, delighted, praised my print. My sense of what art could be expanded instantly. Art could be improvised, accidental, absurd, clumsy, whimsical, disturbing. It could be funny. It could be liberatory.

In the summer of 2022, I learned that Pogany had died in an email from Victoria Munroe Fine Art, which was holding an exhibition of his work at the time. It was Victoria who informed me that he had been a Buddhist. In hindsight, there was definitely incense and a gong in the classroom, but I don’t think he ever talked about Buddhism. At the time of his death, I was reading and making work about Buddhism but I had not started practicing. When I joined a Zen sangha, I came to appreciate that Mr. Pogany had been not only my first real art teacher, but also my first Buddhist teacher, the critical archetype in a tradition founded by a great teacher, Siddhartha Gautama.

In 2024 I began researching Miklos Pogany, the artist, tracking down his publications and making appointments to view his prints in some of the institutions that house them. He is best known for a series of monotypes from the 1980s that feature a semi-abstract, semi-figural motif that looks to me like a woman in profile—either face and breasts, or perhaps head and pregnant belly. Several of these prints are named *Klarika* or *Ghost of Klarika*. The catalogue essay for Pogany’s 1984 show at the Phillips Collection relays the claim that this title had no particular significance, but a later essay reveals that Klara, or Klarika, was the name of a sister who died when she was sixteen<sup>2</sup>. Learning of this in the Watson Library at the Met, I cried. Apparently for Miklos as for me, art could also be a way to grieve.

I rented space at a printshop for a month and made a series of studies of his Klarika prints. While I largely failed to reproduce the subtlety of his method and its effects, I felt his presence in the studio in the many small gestures and rhythms of the process that he had taught me. Two of these prints, *Ghost of Miklos (monk)*, and *Ghost of Miklos (pink)*, are hanging at Theta.

At the library, I also learned that Miklos was the grandson of Margit Pogany, a Hungarian artist who studied in Paris. A friend and perhaps lover of Constantin Brancusi, in 1910 she commissioned a portrait bust from him, the iconic Mlle Pogany: a round egg head with big alien eyes, chin tucked, hands to cheek. I produced a number of papier-mâché studies of the different versions of Mlle Pogany; several of these are on view at From the Desk of Lucy Bull.

Like many of his peers, Brancusi was interested in Asian art, and he was a big fan of the Tibetan Buddhist monk Milarepa, whose songs may have inspired some of Brancusi’s mystical truisms. Rotated on its side, Mlle Pogany resembles the head and arms of a parinirvana, a depiction of the dead or dying Buddha. Two monumental buddhas at Theta expand upon this morphological resonance.

In the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta, a text from the Pali canon which recounts the end of the Buddha’s life, celestial flowers fall from the sky at the time of his death, covering the town “even to the dust heaps and rubbish heaps.” People must wade through flowers up to their knees.<sup>3</sup> Theta is likewise carpeted in flowers, although not knee deep. We cut them out of mylar balloons that I have gathered on camping trips in the wilderness area of Fire Island. I have also collaged scraps of cut up balloons onto the sculptures. The transparently painted surfaces of the monumental buddhas mute but do not conceal the Wall Street Journals they are made of, while metallic fragments shine in the shadowed areas. Newspaper and mylar balloons are emblematic of different registers of daily life: the former index historical, horizontal time, whereas the latter index cyclical, vertical, intimate time, punctuated as it is by Baldwin’s “birth, struggle, [...] death,” and “love.”

Once I had decided to work on the parinirvana, I visited Thailand for the first time, making a pilgrimage to eight colossal reclining buddhas. Traveling around, I was fascinated by the widespread Thai practice of maintaining spirit houses, miniature structures at which things like incense, food and drink, small figurines, and other items are offered to various spirits. Outside the door of Theta there is a tiny rack of doll-sized sweaters made out of old socks. I am not sure what the spirits of Tribeca want or need, but sweaters are always cozy. They are offerings to the spirits of the place; the place being a gallery, they are also for sale. Sometimes art must also be commercial.

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<sup>1</sup> I have to thank my Zen teacher, Sarah Dojin Emerson, for sharing this quote with us.

<sup>2</sup> Richard S. Field, *Miklos Pogany: Collage Monotypes 1980-1989* (New York: Associated American Artists, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Sister Vajira and Francis Story, trans. *Last Days of the Buddha: The Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (Kandy: BPS Pariyatti Editions, [1964] 2022), 84.







































*Parinirvana (rainbow body)*, 2025  
Cardboard, papier-mâché, paint, mylar  
balloon  
72 x 204 x 44 in  
182 x 518 x 111 cm















*Parinirvana (battered Pogany)*, 2024-5  
Papier-mâché, paint, mylar balloon, couch  
30 x 72 x 26 in



















*Ghost of Miklos (pink)*, 2024  
Monotype  
15 x 11 in  
20 x 16 in (framed)





*Ghost of Miklos (monk)*, 2024  
Monotype  
15 x 11 in  
20 x 16 in (framed)







*Parinirvana (monk)*, 2025  
Wood, hydrocal, burlap, paint, screw, aluminum tape  
8 x 16 x 3½ in









*Spirit Sweaters, 2025*  
Socks, wire  
dimensions variable





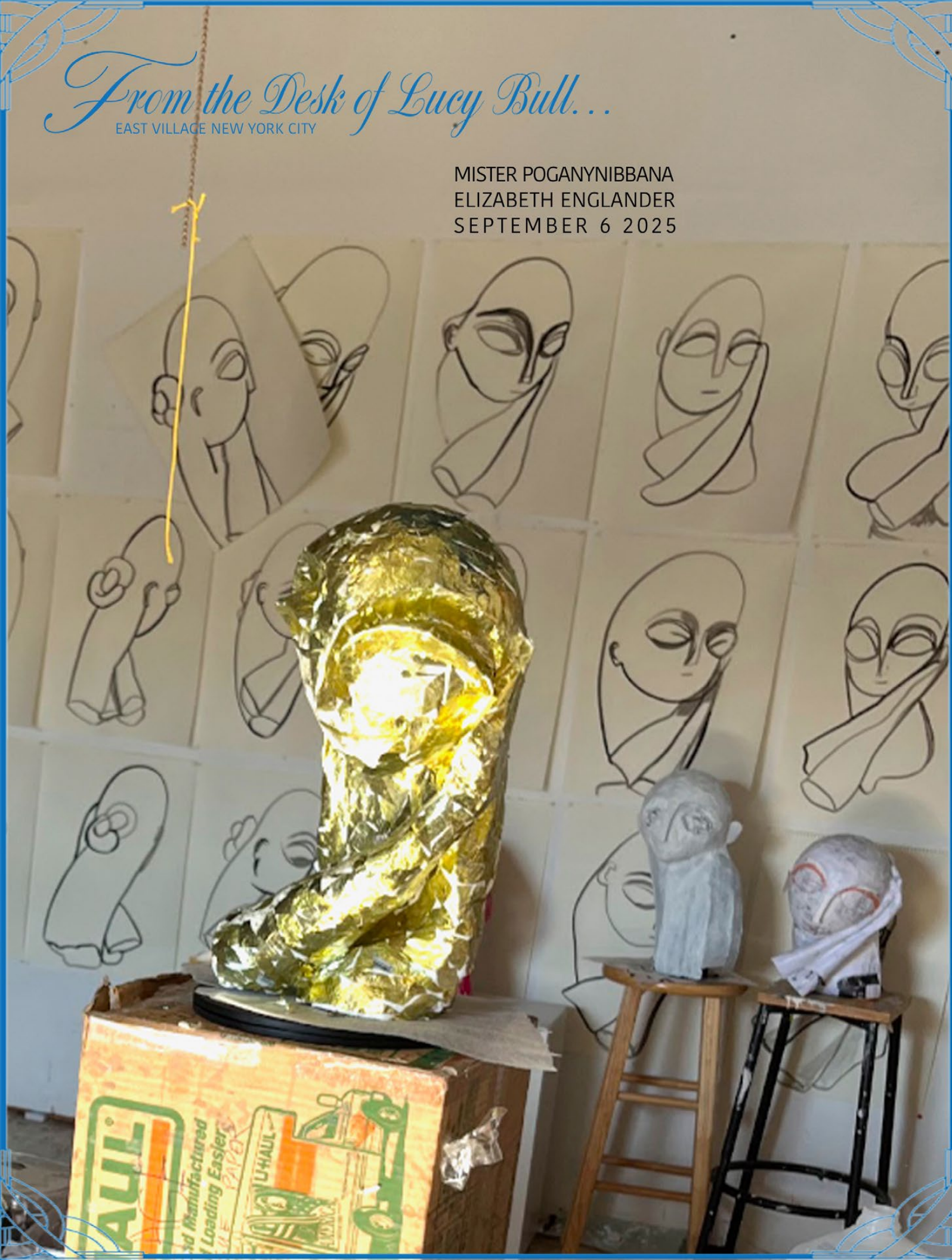
*Incense burner, 2025*  
Mother's ceramic pot, Fire Island sand, gifted incense





*From the Desk of Lucy Bull...*  
EAST VILLAGE NEW YORK CITY

MISTER POGANYNIBBANA  
ELIZABETH ENGLANDER  
SEPTEMBER 6 2025



The following works are concurrently on view at From the Desk of  
Lucy Bull, New York

Viewable by appointment  
Contact [fromthedeskoflucybull@gmail.com](mailto:fromthedeskoflucybull@gmail.com)











*Pogany (gold)*, 2025  
Papier-mâché, paint, mylar  
17 x 10 x 10 in









*Pogany (The Civil War)*, 2025  
Papier-mâché, paint, mylar  
23½ x 8 x 11 in









*Pogany (Margit)*, 2025  
Papier-mâché, paint, mylar  
16¾ x 11 x 10 in









*Pogany (T-Mobile), 2025*  
Papier-mâché, paint, mylar  
16½ x 10½ x 9¼ in













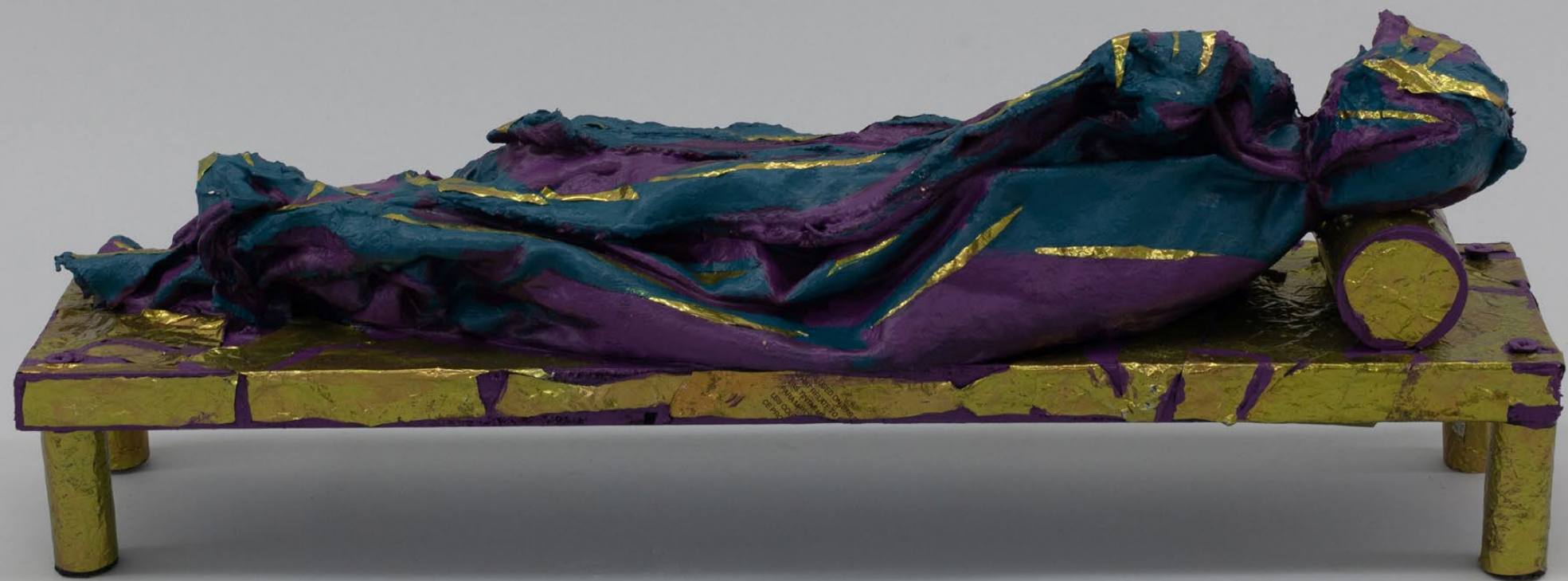




*Parinirvana* (L.L. Bean), 2025  
Wood, hydrocal, fabric, paint, mylar balloons  
5 x 18 x 6 in









*Parinirvana (happy)*, 2025  
Wood, hydrocal, cheesecloth, paint, mylar balloons  
5 x 15 x 4 in

















*Parinirvana (shroud)*, 2025  
Wood, canvas, staples  
6 x 16 x 5 in













*Parinirvana (Sugar Plum Fairy)*, 2025  
Wood, hyrdocal, burlap, wire, paint, mylar  
6 x 17½ x 3½ in













*Parinirvana (pink nude)*, 2025  
Wood, burlap, hydrocal, paint  
6 x 18 x 5 in









# Theta

**Elizabeth Englander**

b. 1988, Boston, MA  
Lives and works in New York, NY

**Education**

- 2019 MFA, Hunter College, New York, NY
- 2018 Exchange, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris, Paris, France
- 2011 BFA with Honors in Painting Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
- 2009 Exchange, Pont Aven School of Contemporary Art, Pont Aven, France

**Solo Exhibitions and Fairs**

- 2026 *Elizabeth Englander*, a.SQUIRE, London, UK (forthcoming)
- 2025 *Mister Pogany nibbana*, Theta, New York, NY & at From the Desk of Lucy Bull, New York, NY
- 2024 *Eminem Buddhism Vol. 3*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT
- 2023 *Eminem Buddhism Vol. 2*, House of Gaga, Guadalajara, MX  
*Liste Art Fair Basel*, Theta, Basel, CH
- 2022 *Eminem Buddhism*, Theta, New York, NY
- 2020 *HEADMASTER*, Smart Objects, Los Angeles, CA
- 2019 *Toteboat*, From the Desk of Lucy Bull, Los Angeles, CA
- 2017 *Headless*, Entrance Projects, New York, NY  
*Pieces of Jennifer Melfi, M.D.*, Kimberly-Klark, Queens, NY
- 2014 *Goodbye to All That*, Juicy’s Gallery, New York, NY

**Group Exhibitions and Fairs**

- 2025 *As beautiful as the chance encounter with a sewing machine*, curated by Cecilia Salama, Hesse Flatow, New York, NY
- 2024 *Moments are Monuments*, By Art Matters, Hangzhou, CN  
*Micasa*, curated by Nick Irvin and Amalia Ulman, New York, NY  
*Part Two*, Company Gallery, New York, NY  
*Art Basel*, House of Gaga, Basel, CH  
*Models*, Bel Ami, Los Angeles, CA  
*Secular Gothic*, eyes never sleep, New York, NY  
*Felix Art Fair*, Theta, Los Angeles, CA  
*Zona Maco*, House of Gaga, Mexico City, MX
- 2023 *Art Basel Miami Beach*, House of Gaga, Miami, FL  
*White Columns Looking Back / The 13th White Columns Annual – Selected by Olivia Shao*, White Columns, New York, NY
- 2022 *Under the Volcano II*, Lomex, New York, NY  
*Farah Al Qasimi, Elizabeth Englander, Bruno Zhu*, What Pipeline, Detroit, MI
- 2021 *Emblazoned World*, organized by Lucy Bull, Bel Ami, Los Angeles, CA  
*Delusionarium 5 (Adaptation)*, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
*Quickening*, Smart Objects, Los Angeles, CA  
*Deathbound and Sexed*, Theta, New York, NY  
*Domino*, Shoot the Lobster, New York, NY

- 2019 *Mayday: MFA Thesis Exhibition*, Hunter College, New York, NY  
*Bone Meal*, Motel, Brooklyn, NY  
*An eye that tried so hard to see one particular thing that it ended up forgetting everything else*, Safe Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
- 2018 *Fool’s Prophecy*, Muzeum Ikon, Warsaw, Poland  
*Flamboyance and Fragility*, From the Desk of Lucy Bull, Los Angeles, CA  
*Group exhibition*, And Now, Dallas, TX  
*NADA Miami Art Fair*, Presentation with Kimberly-Klark, Miami, FL
- 2017 *What Would the Community Think*, Hotel Art Pavilion, Brooklyn, NY  
*Torch*, 14 Chairs, Chicago, IL  
*Eric Schmid is an Idiot*, What Pipeline, Detroit, MI
- 2016 *Under the Volcano*, LOMEX, New York, NY  
*Century Waste*, The Duck, New York, NY  
*U:L:O: Part I 2016*, Interstate Projects, Brooklyn, NY  
*Gest’s Candle*, Kimberly-Klark, Queens, NY
- 2015 *People’s Biennial*, 10-01 44 th Rd., Long Island City, NY  
*Leaves of Sage and Foot of Mammal on a Smooth Yellow-ochre Background*, U.S. Blues, Brooklyn, NY
- 2012 *Employee Art Show*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
- 2010 :) :) *Realizing Solutions For The Immaterial*, RISD Museum of Art, Providence, RI

**Catalogues and Publications**

- 2024 *Eminem Buddhism, Volume 3 Exhibition Catalogue*, Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT
- 2023 *Wisdom Kings*, Theta New York

**Curatorial Projects**

- 2015 *Mental Christmas*, group exhibition, 10-01 44<sup>th</sup> Rd., Long Island City, NY  
*One Is Silver And The Other’s Gold*, collaborative project with Ficus Interfaith, 10-01 44<sup>th</sup> Rd, LIC, NY

**Performance**

- 2016 *Gratitude, Ocean of Images: New Photography 2015*, the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY  
*Return of Happiness*, performance in Seward Park, New York, NY
- 2015 CKTV, Red Bull Studios, New York, NY

**Awards**

- 2015 Fulbright Semi-Finalist, US Student Program in France

**Press**

- 2024 *Conversation between Lucy Bull and Elizabeth Englander*, Edited by Ha Duong, BOMB Magazine, Print, December  
Bregman, Alexandra. *African and Buddhist Art at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum*, Forbes, September 17  
Barker, Haley. *Meeting the Buddha in the Scrapyard*, Tricycle: The Buddhist Review, August 29  
Keenan, Annabel. *Material Transformations*, Avenue Magazine, May



Cane, Hesper. *Elizabeth Englander Brings Sculptures of Gods, Goddesses, and Saints to the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum*, Widewalls, April 6

2022 Lakin, Max. *Elizabeth Englander at Theta*, The New York Times, June 9

Schwartz, Alexa. *9 Artists to Watch*, L'Officiel, January 1

2021 Herriman, Kat. *Elizabeth Englander Transforms Everyday Objects Into the Divine*, Interview Magazine, December 9

Wu, Simon. *Elizabeth Englander's Sculpture Finds the Life in Waste (as part of 'Young Artists of 2022')*, Cultured Magazine, November 23

Herriman, Kat. *Deathbound and Sexed at Theta*, TheGuide.Art, April

Tatol, Sean. *Deathbound and Sexed: \*\*\*\**, The Manhattan Art Review, April 13