

Molly McDonald
Vacation Pics
October 24–November 30, 2025



Five Churches in a Strip Mall on Pasadena Avenue is proud to present *Vacation Pics*, a show of new ceramic sculptures and works on paper by Molly McDonald.

The titular drawings depict vacation photos of strangers McDonald sourced on the internet and then manipulated, inserting their own image to make it look like they participated in the trip. There is a crudeness to the digital edits that is maintained even as McDonald meticulously transposes the images into pencil drawings - notice how the awkwardly smiling mini-McDonald photobombing a couple's romantic moment on the Great Wall of China is missing a shadow, or how they appear just a little too far away from the family posing in front of the Louvre pyramid. As is representative of McDonald's practice, these works play with the tension between a quick idea, a throwaway joke, and its labored execution: riffing on the banal, McDonald addresses existential questions of human interaction. In the case of these drawings, one might wonder if they are the result of someone desperately trying to relate to another's experience.

McDonald's concern with how people connect with each other extends to their own relationship with the audience. In describing their work, they have stated a desire to provide something to the viewer; an item of conversation, or an affect. Often enough, their offerings are complicated by misdirection. The two wall sculptures *WFBI 4* and *5* (2025) are emblematic of this: they each show an armed human figure in what is possibly a tactical swimsuit. Hovering between 2D and 3D, they are rendered just loosely enough to evade identification, proposing answers that only generate more questions - What does the W in WFBI stand for? Are those water guns? *Does the FBI have an underwater unit?*

Expectation, performance and failure are the themes that occupy the three sculptures *Hulk Falling*, *Superman Falling* and *Spiderman Falling* (2025). Each a ceramic diorama of a different superhero falling down a set of stairs, they present fail-states of the supposedly infallible – not a loss of an epic battle, but something akin to stubbing one's toe at the side of the bed. As the domestic becomes stage-craft through their dioramic scale, the scenes oscillate between intimacy and grandeur.

Molly McDonald (b.1997, Langhorne, PA) lives and works in Los Angeles. They received their MFA at the University of California Los Angeles in 2024. McDonald's sculptures and drawings base their inquiries in performance, transience and the personal archive. Their work has been shown at Pio Pico, Los Angeles; Chez Coronado, Los Angeles; Michael Felix Gallery, Los Angeles; Paris Internationale through Lefebvre & Fils; and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville.