

Alexandra Metcalf

**UFOTOFU**

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*The Syzygy - curated by Alexandra Metcalf*

September 13 — November 16, 2025  
Champ Lacombe Biarritz

Taking its title from a nonsensical palindrome, **UFOTOFU** functions as an anomalous linguistic model, whose fluid framework is mirrored in the exhibition's approach to form and material. Drawing from both personal experience and extensive research, artist Alexandra Metcalf constructs material worlds where time collapses and forgotten histories resurface.

Born in London in 1992 and based in Berlin, Metcalf theatricizes space by using exaggerated dramatic se-  
gues to resurface forgotten histories: from the psychological consequences of institutional regimes, to the  
mass hysteria and spectacle of gender. She views her materials and subject matter as holding latent ener-  
gies which she harnesses to transform spaces into scenes of pathology, performance, and satire, creating  
a distinctive theatrical experience that unfolds like a narrative.

For this exhibition, Joan Rhodes becomes a totemic figure for Metcalf: the postwar strongwoman known  
for using her strength to bend steel bars and tear entire telephone directories before live audiences.  
Her feats were once rendered into a comic spectacle meant to amuse; however, in Metcalf's hands, Rhodes'  
legacy is refracted through the lens of display culture via vitrines made by the artist — structures typical-  
ly reserved for showcasing valuable objects in institutions. Torn directories from France and the UK are  
preserved like fragile manuscripts; bent steel bars are hung delicately. By placing Rhodes' props within  
these formal museological frames, Metcalf constructs a deliberate pastiche, upturning the authority of  
the vitrine itself. What was once a container of reverence becomes a site of parody and performance, des-  
tabilising the very mechanisms through which power is archived and aestheticised. A similar approach is  
followed in Metcalf's sculptures and paintings.

In the paintings, Metcalf layers figuration, abstraction, and washes of colour, incorporating ebru tech-  
niques, marbling - drawing on craft and ornamental traditions historically coded as feminine. Lush sur-  
faces contrast with spectral imagery and archival references, situating her work in dialogue with women's  
history, identity, and the fragility of memory.

Hatboxes are scaled up to uncanny proportions and supported by bent stair railings and walking-cane  
legs. Above them, bowler hats hover as disembodied halos: symbols of propriety and masculinity made  
spectral.

What **UFOTOFU** ultimately reveals is the institutional compulsion to frame women's capacities as anoma-  
lies: spectacted, pathologized, contained. By mimicking the languages of the institutions and traditional  
power structures, the exhibition shows them as systems of endless return: palindromic, reversible, comic  
in their persistence. **UFOTOFU** is therefore an archive, parody, séance, and farce in equal measure.  
It situates the space as theatre, where knowledge is performed, dismantled, and staged again.

## CHAMP LACOMBE

**UFOTOFU** is presented alongside **The Syzygy**.

**The Syzygy** is a group exhibition curated by Alexandra Metcalf, bringing together 24 artists – Metcalf’s close friends, collaborators, and mentors.

Within pataphysics – the sardonic “philosophy of science” conceived by absurdist playwright Alfred Jarry (1873–1907) – syzygy becomes a recurring motif: a poetic alignment of absurdities, rare alignments, a kind of cosmic joke.

Alex Margo Arden  
Billy Coulthurst  
Brad Kronz  
Brandon Ndife  
Bruno Zhu  
Cathy Wilkes  
Daan Van Golden  
Genesis P-Orridge  
Hana Earles  
Henry Belden  
John Sandroni  
Julie Becker  
Maeve Gilmore  
Madge Gill  
Mark Manders  
Marc Camille Chaimowicz  
Mervyn Peake  
Mitchell Kehe  
Penny Goring  
Rebecca Ackroyd  
Richard Sides  
Sam Anderson  
William Gaucher  
Zdenek Košek

**Alexandra Metcalf** graduated from the Chelsea College of Art and Design, London and Rhode Island School of Design, Providence. Her work has recently been exhibited at No. 9 Cork Street, London; FRAC Corsica, Corte; Forde, Geneva; Kunsthalle Zürich; Champ Lacombe, Biarritz; 15orient Gallery, New York and Ginny on Frederick, London. Metcalf’s work is held in The Museum of Modern Art Library Collection, New York; The Perry and Marty Granoff Center for the Creative Arts, Brown University, Providence and The Perimeter, London.