

T O T A H

THE SHADOW

March 5th – July 31st, 2020

TOTAH presents *THE SHADOW*, a group exhibition of 18 artists, on view March 5th through July 31st, 2020. *THE SHADOW* delves into the latent correspondence and divagation that run through an artist's work. The exhibition includes two works from each, and individually places them with completely disparate work by another artist. Situated within the gallery in a way that emphasizes formal and thematic continuity, viewers will be hard pressed to determine which artwork belongs to which artist. Even if viewers are somewhat familiar with the works of the artists on view, they'll be surprised to discover how readily their works flow into what might seem to be an irreconcilable aesthetic.

Harmonizing dissonance composes the underlying substance of the exhibition. Carl Jung postulated the theory of a shadow self: a part of our psyche that we distance ourselves from and project onto others. The shadow self is neither negative nor positive, but a fact implied by our conscious personality: like a worm coiled inside an apple. Paralleling the psychological mechanism of shadow, many of the artists on view have cut themselves off from certain aesthetic maneuvers over the course of their careers. Taken as an ensemble, these works collectively demonstrate the road not taken.

Kenny Scharf's *BLOBZ #1* (2014) utilizes a darker palette than his works are generally known for. Nevertheless, it radiates an unmistakable joy, indicative of Scharf's ongoing quest to represent the boundlessness of consciousness through astral imagery. *BLOBZ #1* is counterbalanced by an abstract, almost minimalist painting that sets off flecks of light against a black, egg-shaped surface. A favorite theme among Surrealists, Scharf's egg symbolizes the source of life before anything like consciousness or personality has crystallized. In a similarly cosmic vein, the socially remote figure in David Austen's miniature *Walking Woman* (2019) appears to be on a mission. Possessed of a higher purpose despite her nakedness and vulnerability, her air of resolution seems plucked from the mysteriously isolated tree that figures in his *Tree at Midnight* (2014).

THE SHADOW resembles a detective story. Like the mysterious narrator from the serialized radio dramas of the 1930s, THE SHADOW gets inside the viewer's head and communicates the possibility that there may be a hidden world looming just below the threshold of awareness. What emerges into light is the sheer multiplicity of ways that artists can express their identity, investigating the limits of consciousness and personality.

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

T.S. Elliot, *The Hollow Men*

Featured Artists:

David Austen, Mel Bochner, Alighiero Boetti, Aleksandar Duravcevic, Mara De Luca, TR Ericsson, Greg Haberny, James Hyde, Melissa McGill, Zad Moultaqa, Philip Mueller, Luca Pancrazzi, Kenny Scharf, Victor Schrager, Alex Sewell, Saul Steinberg, Nick Terry, and Jason Bard Yarmosky.

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