

HESSE FLATOW

Ditto

Emma Schwartz & Amy Stober

February 29 – March 30, 2024

Opening reception: February 29, 6-8PM

Emma, 7:37 PM

Hey

Amy, 7:39 PM

Should I fire away?

Emma, 7:39 PM

Yes!

Amy, 7:40 PM

Ok, I prepped a few questions so it might feel formal in some instances, but I think filling in gaps will happen in a natural way.

Emma, 7:41 PM

Totally, that is good. I have one question but otherwise I thought I would wing it, so it is good you have prepped.

Amy, 7:42 PM

One reason I'm drawn to bags is because of how efficiently they communicate through the language of "style". All objects, especially fashion objects, have their own underlying narratives that we dip into to serve ourselves. They have the capacity to become characters. Who would wear this, and where are they going? Do you think the ranch homes you paint operate in a similar way? They are so ubiquitous and immediately signal class, taste, time and place in the same way clothing can.

Emma, 7:46 PM

Style, yes! Style is fascinating... these little signifiers to nod to other people and say we agree or disagree. I think ranch homes have everything to do with American style, how pragmatism and class has impacted it. They can have little variations like Greek Revival or Classical Revival or Log Cabin features, so within the frame of ranch homes there are micro niche styles too.

Emma, 7:49 PM

Do you remember the movie Life-Size?

Amy, 7:54 PM

Of course! The movie where Tyra Banks plays a doll who becomes life size.

Emma, 7:58 PM

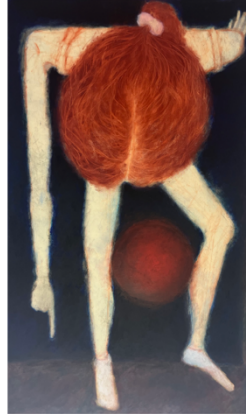
Yes! I was thinking about that movie and how it relates to your work. Do you think about the bags as "fake" versions of the "real" thing? Or fossils or exoskeletons or something?

Amy, 8:05 PM

I like the use of the language "fake" in relation to the bags. The fake handbag industry creates so many interesting reinterpretations and mistakes. It's like a game of telephone. There is a bit of a similar spirit for my bags. The drive is less about recreating a hot commodity but more about tapping into these uncanny duplicates - changed by a new material circumstance or logic.

Amy, 8:07 PM

At times I think about creating a strange material presence as a way to combat total familiarity or sweetness .. adding a little grit or tension. Sometimes I achieve this in the casting process, superimposing marks and patterns with the casting material onto a surface that it does not exactly belong to. I feel like the hazy spaces



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in your work do something similar. Sometimes they feel as if the pigments came from a broken eyeshadow palette that's decomposed at the bottom of a bag.

Emma, 8:12 PM

Ah I love that. Broken eyeshadow palette. Words like "worn" and "handled" come to mind. For me looking at your work, the uncanniness is so engaging, the masterful replica is evocative. I am often trying to break illusion in my paintings, but mostly because illusion is hard to do, technically, and I found another route. I think a lot about makeup. And dirty socks and stuff, and this feels related to what you said.

Amy, 8:16 PM

Totally! I feel like dirty socks have a place in both of our hearts. Yeah, I love thinking about things that we use and consume, accumulate and fuck up... through love and everyday use.

Emma, 8:18 PM

Right, like our favorite things get worn out, and maybe that is the best part. Material does a lot of heavy lifting for both of us. Your casting process giving the bags all this history on top of the life span of the original, and I layer a ton of paint and remove a lot, which makes the surfaces pretty fucked up.

Amy, 8:28 PM

Yeah, I love the marks that show evidence of use. It's interesting to try and replicate that and see where you end up. In this cast, I am working on right now, I am trying to replicate that pattern that happens in denim jeans when they bunch on your thighs. Those horizontal tonal lines. It's funny because it's a mark that is both created in factories and through authentic wear. Do you think of your paintings as reinterpretations of something real, or fabricated in imagination or memory?

Emma, 59 min

Right the faux distressing. Fake old. I love fake old. I think they range from unconscious to pre-conscious to conscious. Maybe not memory so much as déjà vu or familiarity. I think of them as parallel to a memory if that makes sense. Kin but not clone.

Amy, 56 min

Ah I like that. Kin makes it kind of familial.

Emma, 55 min

Yes totally. I think about DNA and one person splitting off from another. I think that's one big reason why I am drawn to your work because of the doubling - the "mother" origin story and then the spawn. Of course, we both nod toward being young and being gals.

Amy, 54 min

Yes! Same with yours, they all feel like fractals of Emma.

Emma, 52 min

Do you feel curious about a particular era of your life, or is it all equally important?

Amy, 48 min

You and I have both talked about adolescence and teenhood, and how it has a lasting influence or power. It's the age something clicks. You are perceived, and in turn you perceive yourself... There is a strange feeling of scarcity that comes with that. Like you're not done picking through the moment you transitioned to a world where you have new autonomy or are sexualized for the first time? You begin to meld with material objects in a different way, too.

Emma, 44 min

Absolutely. It's the age where decisions began to be made about how we want to be seen, and in trying to make those decisions leads to observations about ourselves and others. Origin can say a lot, not everything,

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but it can explain a lot when we go back and look at how something started. I'm not necessarily yearning for that time, but trying to study it, to understand it.

Amy, 40 min

Totally, not exactly nostalgia but a feeling that often feels conflated with it.

Emma, 40 min

Yes, big time.

Amy, 38 min

A construction of the self in relation to place and material object feels like a common thread for both of us. Do you feel this relationship to regionalism or materialism is quintessentially American?

Amy, 36 min

To mirror culture, in our simple desire to see reflections of yourself in the world, or have the language to say, "this is who I am", "this is where I come from"?

Emma, 34 min

The idea of self as it relates to nationalism and Americanism is definitely something I think about a lot. There is a book by Barbara Novak where she dives into how America's ideological beginnings forged the synthetic self, because you have to identify as a certain way to be a part of something. Regionalism totally mimics that! You're a Jersey Girl and I'm a Southerner in a certain way.

Amy, 23 min

Yeah, totally. It's so interesting how those aesthetics and identities become synthetic and marketed, while at the same time felt in sincerity. Like the "fake old". You can buy cowboy boots at a Buc-ees gas station or a graphic tee with cheetah print on the Seaside Heights boardwalk.

Emma, 21 min

Haha yeah, gas stations have lots of merch that relates to this. Of course, there are realities about who we are - our appearances, our sexuality, but the "self" as a concept is sort of an invention... because it denies how we are all part of a bigger organism.

Amy, 15 min

I loved the title of the painting with the red ball you showed me in your studio a couple weeks ago. You said you had been reading a book that talked about the symbol of a sphere representing the "self" and also simultaneously relating to the etymology of the word "globe" or "world."

Emma, 11 min

Oh yeah, the circle! It is a kickball in that painting, but maybe in the context of our show it will read differently. It is red and in between her legs. I was thinking about Life-Size (the movie) and wow that phrase blows me away... like for something to be the size of life, as opposed to miniature. It is almost like life doesn't begin until you are full grown. Life is not for the miniature. I do not like that concept, but of course the movie is not dealing with that. Or is it? It must be...

Amy, 7 min

Yeah, how could life not start when you are teeny?

Emma, 6 min

Exactly. The teens are living.

Emma, 1 min

Well... I need to go eat some food.

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Emma Schwartz (b. 1992, Toronto, Canada) lives and works in Cragsmoor, NY. She received her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2014 and her MFA from Columbia University in 2019. She has had solo exhibitions at In Lieu (Los Angeles), Annarumma Gallery (Naples), and Chapter NY (New York City) and has been included in recent group exhibitions at Shoot the Lobster (New York City) Brunette Coleman (London), UNCLEBROTHER (Hancock, NY), Thierry Goldberg Gallery (New York City), Christian Anderson (Copenhagen), In Lieu (Los Angeles), Circle Contemporary (Chicago), FALSE FLAG (New York City), Y2K (New York City), among others. In 2019 she received the Helen Frankenthaler Foundation Venice Award.

Amy Stober (b. 1994, New Jersey) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Stober's recent solo exhibitions include "Self Storage" at A.D. Gallery, New York, NY, and "Holding Patterns" at Springsteen Gallery, Baltimore, MD. Recent group exhibitions include "Mickey" at Mickey, Chicago, IL, "The Artificial Silk Girl" at Brunette Coleman, London, UK, "Elective Affinities" at Chapter NY, New York, NY, "Sinkhole Project is Presenting" at Mickey Gallery, Chicago, IL, "May My Fiction Rule" at Chris Andrews (formerly Tilling), Montreal QC, and "Electric Affinities" at T293 Gallery, Rome, IT.

For press inquiries, please contact press@hesseflatow.com. For information about the artists, please contact sales@hesseflatow.com.

Image (left): Emma Schwartz, *head of the year*, 2024, oil, charcoal, and pastel on linen, 60 x 36 inches (152.4 x 91.44 cm); Image (right): Amy Stober, *Teddy*, 2024, cast polyurethane, polyurethane pigments, dry pigments, 9 x 14 x 4 inches (22.86 x 35.56 x 10.16 cm)