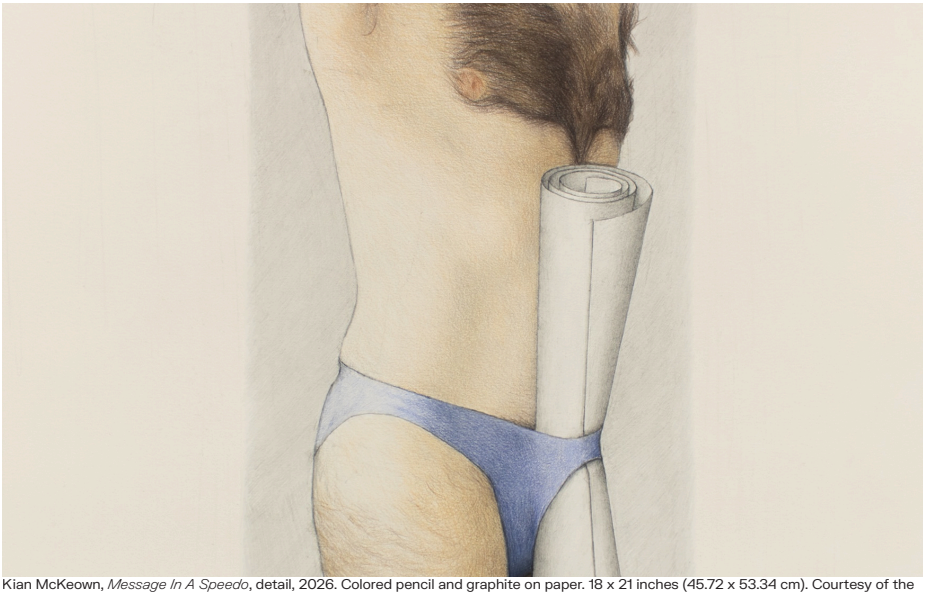


Kian McKeown, *Message In A Speedo*, detail, 2026. Colored pencil and graphite on paper. 18 x 21 inches (45.72 x 53.34 cm). Courtesy of the artist and HESSE FLATOW, New York.

Kian McKeown: *Letters in My Waistband*
December 11, 2026 - January 23, 2027

HESSE FLATOW is pleased to present ***Letters in My Waistband,*** a solo exhibition of new works by Kian McKeown, marking the artist's first solo presentation with the gallery.

Letters in My Waistband is accompanied by a text written by the artist:

I shove a scroll of paper down my underwear every day before leaving for work.

After brushing my teeth, I buckle my britches, zip up my harness and strap velcro around my torso.

I screw skateboard wheels into my loafers and put tassels on my pasties as I kiss my kitty good-bye.

I cannot forget to round up all the red cylinders from the dining room table and throw them into my rucksack. My morning cup of coffee isn't complete without at least 12 red cylinders.

I'm packing a lunch of green and brown logs served over a bed of white rice. It sits inside my arm-basket next to my Owala bottle and a pair of solid brass spheres. A very heavy load.

I screw my legs together next. I follow a written manual to guide the plastic pieces into each other. I stuff some extra nuts and bolts into my pocket in case I need them later for repairs.

Since I'm now running late, I almost forgot to put on the stainless-steel elbow and knee pads sitting in my entryway. I snap the metal pieces around my limbs and stumble out the door.

Once outside, I finally start my commute. I may be carrying over 50 pounds of materials on my arms, back, and side, but I created this routine for a reason. These devices help me get through the day as a busy office-individual.

With my devices I know my day will be great.

Through meticulously rendered drawings, McKeown examines the body as both a site of construction and a vehicle for transformation. His work distills the gestures, objects, and routines of daily life. What begins as the familiar language of getting dressed, preparing for work, or moving through the world gradually unravels into an elaborate system of bodily modifications, improvised devices, and personal rituals.

McKeown's works emerge from the fantasies and desires that accompany everyday waking life. Presenting scenarios that initially appear confounding, cumbersome, or even painful, the artist proposes deviance as a route to freedom and satisfaction. This suggests an imagined liberation from the body itself, or from the weight of an otherwise unremarkable reality. Through the invention of tools, hybrid forms, and bodily extensions, McKeown constructs alternative possibilities for inhabiting the world. Flesh, muscle, and skin become contorted, malleable, and mutable. Like the individual at the precipice of each new day, McKeown's figures exist in a constant state of becoming, shaped and reshaped through the repetition of daily rituals.

Kian McKeown (b. 1999, New York, NY) is a sculptor and draftsman whose work exists in a space of subtle wrongness - stretching or inventing objects that stray from their expected use. Interested in scale, awkwardness, and bodily relation, McKeown transforms utility into absurdity. Kian is a 2026 MFA recipient of Hunter College, a 2021 BFA recipient of The Cooper Union, and a 2024 Participant of Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. His work has been exhibited at The NARS Foundation, MAMA Projects, Marge Gallery, Fragment Gallery, The Empty Circle, The National Arts Club, Laura The Gallery, Thomas Van Dyke Gallery and Harkawik.

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HESSE FLATOW is a gallery and curatorial platform founded by artist Karen Hesse Flatow in 2019. It had its start as "Crush Curatorial", where many artists we work with today had their debut solo show. Hesse Flatow has an MBA and an MFA from Columbia University and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. The program focuses on emerging and mid-career artists with diverse voices, presenting debut solo shows and focused presentations. We are located in an accessible ground floor space in Tribeca, New York City.