

# HESSE FLATOW

Johanna Robinson: *Wish Fulfillment*

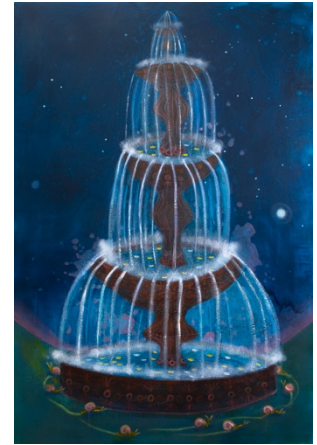
May 12 - June 24, 2022

Opening reception: May 12, 6PM-8PM

CRUSH Projects: 526 West 26<sup>th</sup> Street, #709

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HESSE FLATOW is pleased to announce the opening of *Wish Fulfillment*, an exhibition of paintings by the Brooklyn-based artist Johanna Robinson, marking her first solo presentation in New York and a return to the programming of the gallery's CRUSH Projects space, formerly known as Crush Curatorial.



Robinson's depictions of whimsical dreamscapes explore the depths of the human psyche. Her paintings and works on paper present curious menageries of creatures and objects entangled in nebulous webs, where animate and inanimate entities collide, interchange, and comele. Figure-stacking is a motif recurring throughout the artist's practice, notably through subjects contorting and balancing in comical acrobatic displays. A nod to the German fairy tale *Town Musicians of Bremen*, in which animals band together in defiance of their masters, this towering into quasi-architectural forms allegorizes knowledge structures within Robinson's work, which, through devices of humor and irony, she quite literally turns on their heads.

*Wish Fulfillment* brings together a series of paintings whose portrayals of wishing wells and cascading fountains combine recognizable forms with more absurd constructions of the imagination. Robinson's surrealistic renderings hearken to ancient folklore once speculating on their enchanted qualities, as individuals believed in the promise of better health in exchange for coin offerings. Yet, as scientific data would later reveal, their perceived medicinal powers may have been the result of the coins themselves, whose purifying chemical properties made water safer to drink. Of interest to Robinson is this teleological question arising between wishing and the fulfillment of wishes, the causes and goals for which, like the closed circuits of wells and fountains, redouble on each other in continuous feedback loops.

On the occasion of her exhibition, Robinson will release a limited edition of NFTs, each corresponding with the coins that are painted across her paintings, which will be available to visitors at no cost on a first come, first served basis. Both a thought experiment and a humorous attempt to reimagine a modernized wishing well, Robinson's NFTs allow for her to bridge the imaginary with real life, where visitors can "reach into" her paintings and take a coin that has the potential, if one wishes for it, to gain actual wealth.

**Johanna Robinson** is a Brooklyn-based artist whose paintings employ humor, absurdity, and irony to undermine anthropocentrism — or the belief that human beings are the center of the universe, an idea proliferated by the Western art canon. The artist's work, connected to a long lineage of women surrealist and symbolist painters, relies on imagination as a source for truth-seeking and world-building. Recent exhibitions include *AmphorasamorphA*, Flux Factory, Governor's Island, curated by Sally Beauty; *Welcome, Tomato Mouse*, Brooklyn; *The Symbolists*, HESSE FLATOW, New York, curated by Nicole Kaack; *New American Paintings Pacific Coast Review*, Zevitas Marcus, Los Angeles; *Against Forgetting*, Gaa Gallery, Provincetown; *Phone Home*, Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, New York, curated by Wendy Vogel; *Surreality*, Crush

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Curatorial, New York; Identity Weavers, Albatross Gallery, Portland; among others. Robinson received her BFA in 2007 from the School of Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University in Boston, MA, and her MFA in Painting in 2018 from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA. She was nominated for the Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist Grant in 2022. Robinson has been awarded artist residencies at Leland Iron Works, Pacific Northwest College of Art, The Vermont Studio Center, and MASS MoCA (forthcoming.) Her work has been featured in *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Sammy's World*, and *New American Paintings*.

Image: Johanna Robinson, *Fountain (Wish Fulfillment)*, 2022, oil and cheesecloth on canvas, 72 x 48 in (182.9 x 121.9 cm)