

## ***Under this mask, another mask***

Curated by Sam Adams

January 9 – February 17, 2024

Seuil Chung | Leah Guadagnoli | Jen P. Harris | Julia Kunin | Leeza Meksin | Tuesday Smillie | Scott Vander Veen

Abigail Ogilvy Gallery is pleased to present *Under this mask, another mask*, a group exhibition organized by Sam Adams, featuring works by Seuil Chung, Leah Guadagnoli, Jen P. Harris, Julia Kunin, Leeza Meksin, Tuesday Smillie, and Scott Vander Veen. Spanning painting, fiber sculpture, textile, and ceramics, the twenty-nine works in this exhibition convey intimacy and vulnerability through meticulous processes of layering, suturing, and abstracting.

The gender-fluid Surrealist Claude Cahun quipped, “Under this mask, another mask; I will never finish removing all these faces.” Following Cahun, the artists in this exhibition fuse interiority and exteriority, recombining architectural elements and body parts in liberatory ways. Thresholds become places to stop and rest. Load-bearing structures are reduced to ornaments. Exits double as entrances. Signs are depleted of fixed meanings. Bright and kaleidoscopic, the works evoke bodies but none render a body whole. The artists offer exquisite corpses of spinning legs, monumental breasts, throbbing eyes, and skin-like surfaces—stretched and punctured. These bodies-in-pieces subvert the gridded architectures surrounding them, refusing facile narratives and normative expectations of gender and sexuality.

Leeza Meksin, Seuil Chung, and Scott Vander Veen extend lineages of queer abstraction, with glammed-up surfaces, morphing bodies, and references to kink. Meksin anthropomorphizes Greco-Roman caryatids and the temple of Hatshepsut—the Egyptian queen who adopted a pharaonic, male presentation. Chung’s ceramics isolate and abstract body parts, highlighting their absurdity. In Vander Veen’s painting and sculpture, repurposed hardware, part-objects, and jigsawed supports stand in for bodies, as if resurrected following trauma or defeat.

Julia Kunin and Leah Guadagnoli connect seemingly disparate episodes of modernism through surface texture and color choices. Kunin’s iridescent ceramics emerge from her fascination with Soviet Bloc art and architecture and the “central core” imagery of second wave feminist art. Guadagnoli’s wall-based sculptures meld nostalgic motifs and

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geometric architecture with organic forms and upholstered furniture—elements frequently distinguished as masculine and feminine, respectively. Both artists mobilize kitsch and nostalgia as critical devices.

Jen Harris and Tuesday Smillie use collage strategies to undermine the stability of their source materials. The diamond tesserae in Harris’s paintings are based on the winged beasts and flames of a thirteenth-century apocalypse manuscript, which she painstakingly copies, then cuts up and reconfigures. Smillie inverts the gendered, functional expectations of pockets, jacket linings, curtains, and other familiar textiles in her banners, describing fabric as “the skin of the physical world we occupy.”

*Under this mask, another mask* revels in non-binary modes of representation and the possibility of revealing oneself through tender gestures of masking.

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**Seuil Chung** is an artist working with hand-built ceramic sculptures. Chung is a 2023-24 long-term artist-in-residence at Lillstreet Art Center in Chicago, Illinois. He received his BFA in Studio Arts at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2019 and his MFA in Ceramics at Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2021. He taught at the University of Akron in Ohio in the Ceramics Department from 2021 to 2023. His work was shown at the Akron Art Museum for the FRONT International Triennial held in Northeast Ohio in 2022.

**Leah Guadagnoli** was born in Chicago in 1989 and lives and works in New York’s Hudson Valley. She received her BFA from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and completed her MFA at Rutgers University. Guadagnoli was an artist in residence at Yaddo, the Macedonia Institute, Wassaic Project, and the Tilleard Projects Artist Residency in Lamu, Kenya. She was awarded the Lighthouse Works Fellowship and received a full fellowship to attend the Vermont Studio Center. Guadagnoli is dedicated to arts education and was a part-time lecturer at the Mason Gross School of Art in New Jersey, the founder of the Maple Terrace Artist Residency and Mentorship Program in Brooklyn, New York, and is currently an instructor of painting and drawing at SUNY Albany.

Guadagnoli has had solo presentations at Hollis Taggart, New York; Asya Gesiberg, New York; Victori + Mo, Brooklyn, New York; and 247365, New York, among others. Recent

group exhibitions include Jeff Marfa, Marfa, TX; Turley Gallery, Hudson, NY; Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Brooklyn, New York; Cooke Latham Gallery, London; White Columns, New York; and Allouche Benias Gallery, Athens, Greece. Her work has been reviewed by numerous publications such as the *New York Times*, *Hyperallergic*, *Art F City*, *Cultured Magazine*, and *Architectural Digest*.

**Jen P. Harris** (b. 1977, Virginia, United States) is a process-driven artist working with painting, drawing, textiles, and installation. Balancing an experimental orientation with meticulous attention to craft, they create singular and hybrid objects that complicate received forms and narratives.

Harris holds a B.A. from Yale University and an M.F.A. in painting from Queens College of the City University of New York. They have shown their work throughout the US, presenting solo exhibitions at edgar gallery (2020, Los Angeles, CA); CSPA Hall (2016, Cedar Rapids, IA); Rockland Center for the Arts (2015, West Nyack, NY); Leslie-Lohman Museum and Daniel Cooney Fine Art (2010, 2011, New York, NY); Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts (2010, Wilmington, DE); and John Davis Gallery (2010, Hudson, NY). Upcoming exhibitions include a solo show of drawings at St. Ambrose University (Davenport, IA) and group shows at Abigail Ogilvy (Los Angeles, CA), Kink Contemporary (Cleveland, OH), and Abattoir (Cleveland, OH).

Harris is the recipient of a 2023 Satellite Fund Grant from SPACES (Cleveland, OH), a 2012 Fellowship in Painting from the New York Foundation for the Arts (New York, NY), and grants from the Puffin Foundation, Astraea Lesbian Foundation for Justice, Ohio Arts Council, and Iowa Arts Council. They have been artist-in-residence at Praxis Digital Weaving Lab, Soaring Gardens Artist Retreat, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Women's Studio Workshop, and Vermont Studio Center. Their paintings and works on paper are collected privately and can also be found in public and corporate collections including New York Foundation for the Arts and Stead Family Children's Hospital (University of Iowa). Raised in Baltimore, Harris currently lives and works in Cleveland, Ohio.

**Julia Kunin** lives in Brooklyn, NY. She earned a B.A. from Wellesley College and an M.F.A. from The Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University. Solo exhibitions include: *Mechanical Ballet* at Kate Werble Gallery, NY, NY 2021, and *Rainbow Dream*

*Machine* at McClain Gallery, Houston, TX 2020 -2021. *Les Guerilleres* Sandra Gering Gallery, NY, NY, 2015, *Golden Grove*, Barry Whistler Gallery, Dallas, TX, 2013, *Nightwood*, Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, NY, NY, 2012, *Against Nature*, Greenberg Van Doren Gallery, 2007, *Crimson Blossom* Deutches Leder Museum, Offenbach, Germany 2002. Recent two person Exhibition: *Wild Chambers*, Mother Gallery, NY, NY 2022. Recent group Exhibitions include: *Composition and Layout*, at Mindy Solomon Gallery, Miami, FL. 2022, *Cosmic Geometries*, curated by Hilma's Ghost, EFA gallery, 2022, *Fur Cup Underdonk*, Brooklyn, NY 2019, *Raw Design*, Museum of Craft and Design, San Francisco, CA 2018, "Said by Her" Lesley Heller Gallery, NY, NY, 2018, *Kristen Lorello* Gallery, NY, NY 2017 and *Coming to Power* Macarrone Gallery NY, NY 2016. Kunin was a Fulbright Scholar to Hungary in 2013. In 2010 She received a Trust for Mutual Understanding Grant to Hungary. In 2008 she received a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant and a residency at Art Omi. In 2007 she received the John Michael Kohler Arts/Industry Artist Residency. Fellowships include: The MacDowell Colony, The Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation, CEC Artslink grant to The Republic of Georgia, Artist Residency in Wiesbaden, Germany, Yaddo, The Millay Colony, Vermont Studio Center, The Core Program in Houston, TX, and Skowhegan. Julia Kunin currently has a series of ceramic lamps at Ralph Pucci International. In 2022 she contributed artist interviews to *Two Coats of Paint*. She is also a member of the board of FIRE, The LGBTQ Fire Island artist residency. Her work was recently acquired by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, LACMA.

**Leeza Meksin** is a New York-based interdisciplinary artist working in painting, installation, public art and multiples. Born in the former Soviet Union, she immigrated to the United States with her family in 1989. Her work investigates parallels between conventions of painting, architecture and our bodies.

Meksin has created site-specific installations for CLEA (R)SKY (2021), The deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum (2019-20), The Brooklyn Academy of Music (2018-19), National Academy of Design (2018), The Uptown Triennial at The Lenfest Center for the Arts (2017), Utah Museum of Contemporary Art (2016), The Kitchen (2015), BRIC Media Arts (2015), Regina Rex (2014, 2010), Brandeis University (2014), the former Donnell branch of the New York Public Library (2011), and in a National Endowment for the Arts funded project in New Haven, CT for Artspace (2012). In 2021 Meksin was awarded the NYFA/NYSCA Artist Fellowship in Interdisciplinary Work and in 2015 Meksin received the emerging artist grant from the Rema Hort Mann Foundation. In 2019 was awarded

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an artist residency at The Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas. Her work has been featured in *Bomb*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The New York Times*, *Hyperallergic*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *The Village Voice*, among other publications. In 2013 Meksin co-founded Ortega y Gasset Projects, an artist-run gallery and curatorial collective in Brooklyn that she continues to co-direct. Meksin received a MFA from The Yale School of Art, a BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BA/MA in Comparative Literature from The University of Chicago. From 2015-2021 Meksin taught in the Visual Arts program at Columbia University's School of the Arts, where for three years she was the Director of the Graduate program as well as the head of the New Genres concentration. In 2021 she joined the faculty at Cornell University in the College of Architecture, Art, Planning (AAP).

**Tuesday Smillie** (born 1981 in Boston MA; lives and works in New York NY) is a visual artist working with textiles, collage, printmaking and watercolor. At the core of her work is the question of the individual and the group: the binary of inclusion and exclusion, and the porous membrane between the two. She has had solo exhibitions at the Rose Art Museum, Waltham MA and Participant Inc, New York NY. Her work has been shown at the New Museum, New York NY; Brooklyn Museum, New York NY; Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany; Museu de Arte de São Paulo, Brazil; The Jewish Museum, New York NY, and others.

**Scott Vander Veen** is a multidisciplinary artist. His approach to art-making is omnivorous in its methods and utilizes materials such as: paper, crayons, clay, latex, canvas, twist-ties, glue, grommets, plaster, rubber drain plugs, misappropriated text, paint, zippers, found photographs, and silver.

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### **About the Curator**

Sam Adams is the Ellen Johnson '33 Assistant Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College. Adams's exhibitions center issues in global modern and contemporary art, with a focus on gender and sexuality. Adams has staked out a position as a feminist curator devoted to anti-racism in all facets of their work. They have a track record of forming advisory groups on diversity and inclusion, restituting looted artworks, and convening training programs on antiracism and ableism in art museums. Adams has worked at deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, the Rhode Island School of Design, the Getty Research Institute, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Adams holds a BA from NYU, an MA and PhD from the University of Southern California, and a postdoc from the Central Institute of Art History in Munich.

### **About Abigail Ogilvy Gallery**

Abigail Ogilvy Gallery provides a platform for new perspectives and education through independent curation and artist partnerships. Their collaborative approach upends the traditional gallery model and aims to enhance the careers of artists, curators, collectors, and other art world professionals, both emerging and established. With spaces in Boston and LA, AOG provides a link between creative communities on the coasts and expands the reach of artists who have not yet been recognized or shown in these areas. The gallery program primarily features guest curators in order to share diverse perspectives and voices within the Los Angeles area and the greater art market. Owner Abigail Ogilvy Ryan founded the Boston gallery in 2015 and opened the LA location in 2023. AOG is committed to showing a wide range of artistic ideas and media.

### **Media & Sales Contact**

Kaylee Hennessey | Abigail Ogilvy Gallery

774.212.3499

[kaylee@abigailogilvy.com](mailto:kaylee@abigailogilvy.com)