

# Octopia curated by Austin Thomas

“Ocketopia” presents a selection of artists from Bushwick’s legendary Pocket Utopia with a group of artists from Lesley Heller. “Ocketopia” mixes and matches sculpture, painting and prints with a salon and a gallery tour.

Pocket Utopia, Austin Thomas’s limited-run exhibition and salon space in Bushwick, Brooklyn closed in July of 2009 but not before creating a solid artist community that has led to a continuing dialogue. At Lesley Heller the conversation continues in the vein of community by opening it up to various new artists.

Jane Kent has editioned a three-screened print for the occasion, Kay Thomas presents a one-of-a-kind photogram, and Deborah Brown, who exhibited at Pocket Utopia and regularly at Lesley Heller, imagines a dangling and empathetic family tree in her painting titled “Shoe Tree.” Hanging from the ceiling, Judith Page’s auto-glass encrusted fan reflects its own psychic universe, and Libby Hartle’s dark crystals emerge and emit energy from inside the wall.

Rico Gatson’s “Mask” boldly sparkles a black and white proclamation and David Storey draws a personal surface tension between figuration and abstraction. Adam Simon’s painting titled “Meeting” skillfully depicts an orchestrated encounter, while Brece Honeycutt, using yarn and Kevin Regan, drawing, group undulating rows to a central meeting place. Jim Osman’s painted boxes of elongated rectangles stack up amicably while Molly Larkey’s inspired “Blurry Squiggles” with its pinkish tones might mimic social dancing. Elisabeth Condon’s frames a full conversation, with a welcoming distraction and Grace Knowlton’s mixed-media photography has a sculptural manner of speaking that visually connect to other pieces in the exhibition.

Whether bold or inspired, dangling or dancing all the work makes for an open-ended diverse dialogue. Please join us for a salon discussion titled “All the Art that’s Fit to Print,” a discussion of artist-run, fine art publishing and experimental methods to printmaking, including alternative methods of art distribution on **Wednesday, April 7th from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** There will be a closing Art Stumble tour of the show and neighborhood galleries on **Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup> beginning at 2:00** p.m. lead by Austin Thomas.

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