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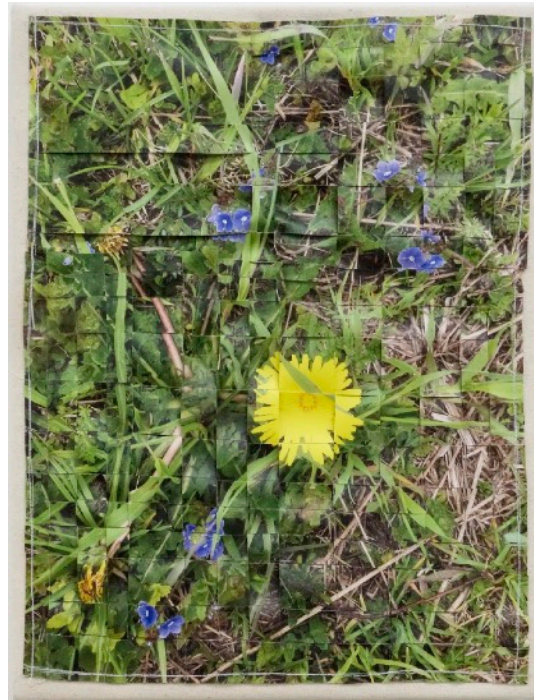
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Upstairs Gallery: ***Extra Terrestrial***

Amy Bravo, Lauren Clark, Sofía del Mar Collins, Sacha Ingber, Tyler Lafreniere, Andrea McGinty, Mira Putnam, Shani Strand, and Zenobia

June 25 - August 12, 2022

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 25, 6-8 pm



Rachel Uffner Gallery is pleased to present *Extra Terrestrial*, a group exhibition featuring a selection of work by nine artists. Though diverse in their respective processes and points of view, the exhibition highlights mutual interests in our inhabited earth and the conditions of our material existence. The included artists focus on representations of architecture, proximal nature, and domestic spaces, and utilize earthly materials like clay, textiles, or found personal and household objects.

Amy Bravo's dynamic paintings and sculptures extend beyond the traditional boundaries of either genre and incorporate found objects and family memorabilia. Throughout her practice Bravo explores her connection to her Cuban ancestry and builds mythology from a family history she knows little about. Bravo's imagery is packed with personal symbolism and recurring motifs of female protagonists, loyal equine companions, hens and roosters, and stylized, arterial, palm-trees. Bravo constructs safe, utopic places, reconciling the unknowns of her heritage and celebrating her queer identity.

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Lauren Clark's paintings, which often resemble totems, flags, or tapestries, are created out of a combination of natural and synthetic materials, often repurposed and reconstructed from commercial products. Borrowing strategies of warning, protection, attraction, and camouflage from the natural world and her urban surroundings, Clark combines materials used to protect or adorn the human body with natural dyes and pigments, the "stuff" of the earth, to renegotiate the boundaries between interior and exterior worlds.

Sofía del Mar Collins searches for fertility amidst cultural and material detritus in her work. Using mass-produced plastic shower curtains instead of canvas, Collins paints still lifes of household accessories like ice bags, decorative vessels, and other items from the margins of her domestic surroundings. Organic and architectural forms emerge on the picture plane and Collins embraces the dynamic fluidity and blurred boundaries dictated by the translucency and instability of the plastic. Considering the current political and ecological climate, Collins uses plastic to evoke our disturbingly fragile condition. Collins also pulls from her domestic interiors through translucent drawings that imagine a third space where a wild environment infiltrates the built one.

Sacha Ingber innovatively combines industrial materials like urethane and steel with ceramic, textile, and found objects to create dynamic assemblages which strike an equilibrium between the pictorial and the physical. Inspired by architecture and craft, as well as alchemy and mythology, each piece balances personal iconography with universally recognizable and familiar elements. Poetic in nature, Ingber's work challenges notions of perception, often related to the body, and domesticity.

Throughout his graphically distinct paintings, **Tyler LaFreniere** translates culturally recognizable images and objects to construct complicated narratives around gender identity. Each work contains precise reproductions of disparate items, like book covers, beer cans, hair combs, or jewelry, placed against stark backgrounds. The resulting works operate as cryptic haikus and demonstrate a discomfort and cynicism towards societally prescribed masculinity and materialism.

Andrea McGinty's work, which is often constructed from everyday objects found throughout the artist's home, reveals personal narratives that address ideas of self and our relationship to society, domestic life, and consumerism. McGinty does little to alter the objects before incorporating them into her sculptures, yet she is able to convey personal memories, anxieties, and fascinations, solely by the associations and relationships created through assemblage. McGinty also creates photographic works which focus on the nature surrounding her home and speak to the absurdity of self-documentation and exploration. McGinty abstracts each image by printing on vinyl, then cutting and weaving the pieces back together.

Mira Putnam explores concepts of domesticity, shelter, religion and memory throughout her work. Putnam's sculptures often incorporate findings from scientific research into

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galactic matter or the complex ecosystems of creatures like insects, with personal references to her family and childhood home. The sculptures presented here combine architectural references to cathedrals as well as termite mounds. Putnam incorporates materials like fabrics from her grandmother, stained glass, and grout made of simulated Mars soil, and uses watercolor, glaze, and innovative techniques of cyanotype exposures.

Shani Strand uses vernacular and globalized language to express aesthetics that appear across cultures, particularly out of post/neo-colonial conditions of Jamaica and its diaspora; the mythologies and mediums of Babylon and Armageddon. Strand's sculptures are made of evocative materials like concrete, shea butter and cloves, and often reflect on material histories and cultural iconography, as interpreted by the artist. Here Strand depicts duppies - spirits, ghosts, dead people. Strand grounds these metaphysical beings, recalling the world as a graveyard where we reproduce life.

Zenobia explores social and colonial history through representations of architecture. Primarily inspired by structures from Africa and of the diaspora, she considers Caribbean relationships to aesthetics. Zenobia uses materials like ceramic, textile, wood and hair (real and synthetic) to construct sculptures of inhabitable structures. Slightly anthropomorphic in appearance, Zenobia questions the relationship between ornamentation and function outside of the western canon. This theme is also explored by the collective Sucking Salt, an ongoing project by Zenobia and Shani Strand which is dedicated to archiving Caribbean architecture and aesthetics.

Images: (Left) Shani Strand, *Duppy (ran through as a parallel for exploitation)*, 2022, lightweight concrete and fabric, 20 x 13 1/2 x 19 1/4 in. (50.8 x 34.3 x 48.9 cm). Image courtesy of the artist.; (Right) Andrea McGinty, *In The Weeds 1*, 2021, original digital photo printed on vinyl woven and sewn to canvas, 17 x 13 x 1 in. (43.2 x 33 x 2.5 cm). Image courtesy of the artist.

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