



For Immediate Release
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To Knead a Knot

Curated by Jesse Bandler Firestone, Curator and Exhibition Coordinator at Montclair State University Galleries

Exhibition Dates: **July 20 – September 25, 2022**

On view at the Printshop, and on the website (<http://printshop.org/on-view>)

Monday – Friday, 10am – 6pm

Lower East Side Printshop is pleased to present *To Knead a Knot* with guest curator **Jesse Bandler Firestone**. The exhibition will be on view at the Printshop from **July 20 – September 25, 2022**.

To Knead a Knot takes its name from a massage therapy technique. Hands are used to apply pressure and squeeze a specific spot in the body where there is a knot - a site of tightness and discomfort in a muscle. Applying the same approach to emotional and psychological spaces of tension, distress, or confusion, the artists in the exhibition see their practice as a way to massage, work out, and rework their own knots. In turn, the works on display are also a collection of responses to a variety of the tumultuous and mercurial encounters that the artists have had related to their identity, larger collective experiences, and the spaces we inhabit.

Aspects of collective experiences seem to be at the core of **Sasha Brodsky's** small but dense prints, which are focused on the city itself as an environment full of intersecting energies. These three works are a snapshot of what we might encounter in the city we call home: people hurriedly passing by each other, a view into an abandoned room in a dark building, and a chaotic scene of booze, drugs, and trash that is further complicated by the vision of a spirit rising up from a dead body. As the city continues to change in response to the worsening social and political climates, these works map the various intense encounters that make up the city.

Rachel Burgess' *Bud Vase I* attempts to reconcile her husband's softer side with the larger context of his employment in the New York Police Department, including the complicated relationship with the public. This Warhol-esque print depicts a flower her husband gave to her. The work itself, according to the artist, is a meditation on his emotional landscape with a specific focus on his tenderness and sentimentality.

Amaryllis DeJesus Moleski's work is a narrative grappling with notions of truth, perception, and awareness. In this work, "Gatekeepers" keep us trapped in "a portal of illusion" and "Guardians" exist to remind us that there is always an exit from the portal where we can find fortitude and strength. According to Moleski, the strength to break through and remain true comes from within our own internal terrain which becomes stronger and more fortified with each escape and subsequent return.

I Promise to BE, **Kevin Claiborne** reflects on notions of authenticity and the self in relation to the larger issues, particularly surrounding identity politics and Blackness. He also pushes against corresponding expectations. Claiborne promises to be "who I am / day to day" -

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a mantra for authenticity. He then asks “Who else could i be / who else could i become” before ending the work with “I will always be me / do you know who that is / do you know who that is / do you know who that is” repeating in infinite refrain.

In **Matthew Cole's** *Mel's House*, aspects of interiority are explored through spatial portraits showing what we know is a space within Mel's house. Cole calls into question how and why we decorate our homes, but also posits a type of analysis or interpretation that can be used to glean insights into the people that inhabit the spaces he depicts. In interrogating the relationship between self, interior spaces, and the slip between perception and privacy, Cole touches on a dynamic where the porousness of the interior spills into the world around it, rendering it almost visible.

Similarly, aspects of the subconscious and other interior landscapes are directly activated in the process of making art. As **Debora Francis** describes, “My work allows me to see myself and is a printed record of confession and shifts in perception.” Through imagery of flora, abstraction, and alternative printmaking techniques, Francis' practice reflects her own psychic imaging.

In **Douglas Collins'** work, shapes and colors appear at various scales, evoking a range of visual possibilities. In attempting to give visual form to an amorphous unknown, Collins reveals the strange void we find ourselves existing within, the meaning we make in the void, the meaning we don't make, the connections we build, and the knots we get stuck in. And the need to knead them once more.

About the curator:

Jesse Bandler Firestone is the Curator and Exhibition Coordinator at Montclair State University Galleries. He has also organized exhibitions and public programs at cultural centers, galleries, and museums across the country including *The Shed*, New York, NY; *Wave Hill*, New York, NY; *Trestle Gallery*, New York, NY; *The Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts*, St. Louis, MO; and the *Satellite Art Show*, Miami, FL. Firestone views the creative power of artists as a connective thread within the breadth of human experience and curates exhibitions that connect disciplines to nurture a broad range of perspectives. He earned a B.F.A in Photography from Washington University in St. Louis and an M.A. in Curatorial Practice from the School of Visual Arts.

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