

# LUHRING AUGUSTINE CHELSEA

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## **Ragnar Kjartansson**

*There is a song in my heart and a hammer in my brain*

Luhring Augustine Chelsea

October 29 – December 17, 2022

Opening reception: Friday, October 28, 6-8pm

Press preview: Friday, October 28, 5-6pm

Luhring Augustine is pleased to announce an exhibition of new works by Ragnar Kjartansson featuring two installations, *No Tomorrow* (2022) and *Guilt and Fear* (2022), as well as a watercolor painting, *I Love You Baby* (2022). Opening in our Chelsea location on October 29 and running through December 17, the show marks Kjartansson's sixth solo exhibition with the gallery.

*No Tomorrow* is a new video installation by Kjartansson, choreographer Margrét Bjarnadóttir, and composer Bryce Dessner. Spanning six screens that encircle the room, the installation surrounds viewers with a performance of spatial music written for eight dancers with eight guitars. Recorded from the center of the performers' space, the installation is kaleidoscopic, capturing the dancers as they weave within each screen and across the channels; their movements and melodies ranging from pastorate to rock and roll. Combining a variety of classic Western references – blue jeans and white t-shirts, the draped silk curtains of mid-20th century song and dance films, as well as lyrics drawn from the Archaic Greek poet Sappho and adventurer Vivant Denon, two sensualists millennia apart – the work spins notions of idealization and iconography. It is also a reflection on our ideals of beauty, our search for it, and the absurdity of its representations, inspired by the frivolity and reality of Rococo paintings, classical ballet, and modern pop music videos. The performance was initially commissioned for the Iceland Dance Company in 2017, and the new video work features the original cast of performers, all of whom were integral to the development of the work.

In the rear gallery, Kjartansson presents a sculptural installation, *Guilt and Fear*. Rows of shelves will line the wall, stacked with one thousand porcelain salt and pepper shakers: labeled "Guilt" and "Fear" respectively. Central to individual human psyches, guilt and fear have increased collectively in recent years as we have been confronted with social reckonings, the pandemic, growing disparities, wars, and global warming. Typically associated with negativity, these difficult feelings can also have positive effects when they force us to have greater empathy and sensitivity to situations outside of ourselves. This work is a tribute to these emotions; it is inspired by the Romantic ethos of valuing both our despairs and our desires related to the great matters of life and death, submission and control, and beauty and danger. The porcelain sculptures were produced by Fabrique Céramique in Eindhoven, the Netherlands. Both *Guilt and Fear* and *No Tomorrow* debuted in Kjartansson's retrospective show *Time Changes Everything* at the De Pont Museum in Tilburg, the Netherlands, on view through January 29, 2023; the presentation at Luhring Augustine will be the US premiere of both installations.

Kjartansson (b. 1976) lives and works in Reykjavík. Major solo exhibitions of his work include presentations at the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Germany; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; the Reykjavík Art Museum, Iceland; the Barbican Centre, London, UK; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Park, Washington D.C.; the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Canada; the Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France; the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY; the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich, Switzerland; the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; and the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; among others. Kjartansson participated in *The Encyclopedic Palace* at the 2013 Venice Biennale, Manifesta 10 in St. Petersburg, Russia in 2014, and he represented Iceland at the 2009 Venice Biennale. The artist received the 2019 Ars Fennica Award, was the recipient of the 2015 Artes Mundi's Derek Williams Trust Purchase Award, and Performa's 2011 Malcolm McLaren Award.

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