

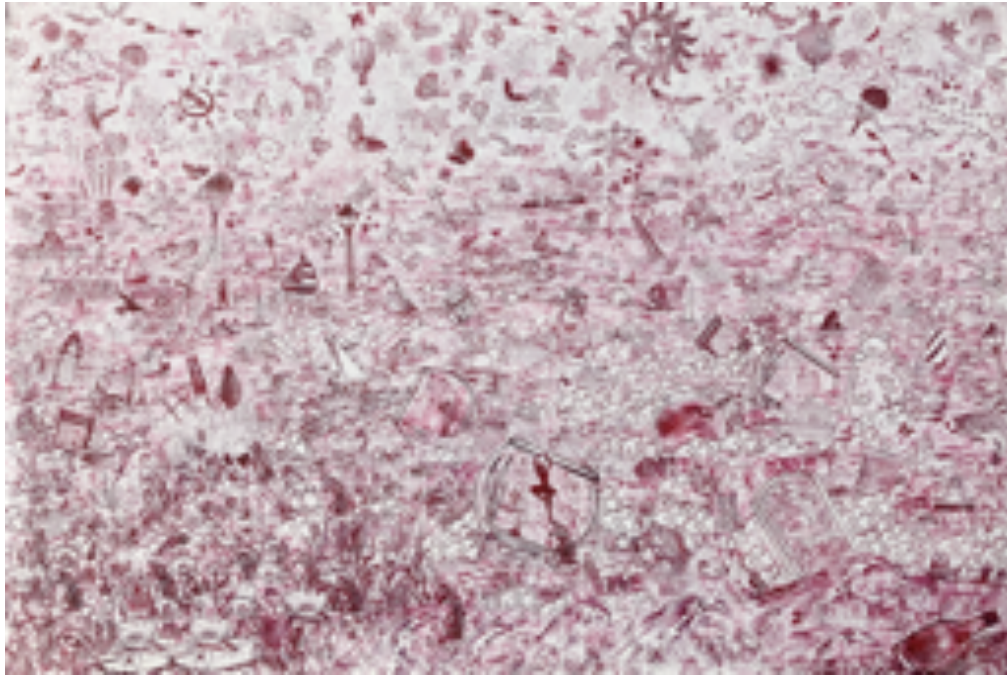
MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

NEW YORK | ASPEN

PURPLE PROSE: QUEER //LITERALISM & A FLOWERING CACOPHONY

FELIX BEAUDRY, JOHN BURTLE, DAVID GILBERT, BORNA SAMMAK, MARISA TAKAL,
AND MICHAELA YEARWOOD-DAN

On View: June 7 – July 28, 2023
Opening Reception: June 22, 6–8 PM
507 W 24th Street, New York, NY



John Burtle, *High Tide or/and There is Sooooooo Much*, 2023. Ink on canvas, 20 x 38 inches, 50.8 x 96.5 cm

*Stone the crows by all means, but let the birds of paradise get on
with the business of being gorgeous.*

– Paul West, "In Defense of Purple Prose"

New York, NY – Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Purple Prose: Queer //literalism & a Flowering Cacophony*, a summer group featuring works by Felix Beaudry, John Burtle, David Gilbert, Borna Sammak, Marisa Takal, and Michaela Yearwood-Dan. Taking its title from the literary term for an overly embellished writing style, *Purple Prose* is a queer celebration of the fanciful, the excessive, the transgressive. Organized by Kory Trolie, the exhibition embraces the artist's rambling plight and the tortuous journey of queer being, foregrounding playful narratives of evolving selves.

Beaudry, Burtle, Gilbert, Sammak, Takal, and Yearwood-Dan rely on their idiosyncrasies, sensibilities, and extravagances, all "over-responding" and "intolerably vivid" – to borrow a pair of phrases from "In Defense of Purple Prose," Paul West's influential 1985 essay advocating for flowery language in literature. These

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purplists—as West refers to architects of excess—are fantasists scrawling in the margins, an inherently queer place to inhabit. Their works are a mouthful, an eyeful, a campy cacophony; they overwhelm the senses, calling attention to themselves, to their flagrant refusal to conform, to minimize, to present a clear narrative. These meandering daydreams tussle with an art world whose oppressive demands of branded authorship and “simplistic formulas” (again, West) sideline the messiness and multiplicity inherent to contemporary life. Rejecting these demands, this demiurgic group booms with voices flowing between dissonance and harmony rather than superficial style.

Felix Beaudry (b. 1996; Berkeley, CA) places two oversized, loosely stuffed humanoid bodies on a tacky floral sofa straight out of a 1970s midwestern living room. These gargantuan bodies completely overwhelm the couch, their flaccid limbs spilling unashamedly onto the surrounding floor. Unsettling in both scale and visage, Beaudry’s figures are excess embodied, sinew and viscera adorned in machine-woven skin bags, liberated from the constraints of the normative by embracing, by indulging, by celebrating their own monstrous mutability.

John Burtle (b. 1985; Long Beach, CA) draws with rubber stamps collected from second-hand stores and eBay, composing, piece by piece, a cartoon simulacra inked in *PAID*-stamp red. Burtle’s gesture is relentless in its repetition—the stamps are necessarily limited in number, yet, the combinations they produce are endless, inexhaustible, serendipitous. Burtle’s purplist prowess lives in the depths of this accumulation, of the artist’s imagination, of their affinity for excess.

David Gilbert (b. 1982; New York, NY) compiles the unassuming debris and detritus of quotidian life—ribbons, rope, string, scraps of paper, a lone glove, a strand of silk ivy—into insouciant, yet decadent, compositions. After memorializing these theatrical sculptural forms in photography, Gilbert strikes the set, only to begin again with the same gusto and wonder—and often the same material. The resulting works are both intimate and monumental, contained by the frame of the camera yet reveling in their own dishevelment, their own illiterality, their own material indecision. Captured with exuberance and pride, Gilbert’s photographs record the perpetual process of creation, a process that, to again quote West, “ponders things in detail, takes its time and habitually masticates its object until a wonder leaps forth.”

Borna Sammak (b. 1986; Philadelphia, PA) embroiders cut patches of brightly colored beach towels onto canvas, transforming this garish pop fodder into a collage of verdant foliage that spills out of an embroidered trompe l’oeil martini glass. Splashed against a velvety black background, the image Sammak produces is pure kitsch, reminiscent of hazy memories of liquid feasts, of basements and back rooms, of curiosities consumed and satisfied.

Marisa Takal’s (b. 1991, Montclair; New Jersey) practice is an intrepid foray into the multitudinous nature of being. Her canvas *Unborn Star* attempts to contain these multitudes; her decorated tea boxes release them. Takal’s collaged boxes are unfolding, introspective narratives that viewers can touch, experiencing the ripeness of their potential. With these autobiographies of the everyday, Takal relates and reassures—offering a smiling mirror, a generous, familiar connection shared between author and reader.

Michaela Yearwood-Dan’s (b. 1994; London, UK) lush paintings are unapologetic in their coquettishness and abstract sensuality. Her colors and gestures are unruly, free, instinctual. Within her fertile compositions, Yearwood-Dan embeds pieces of language—song lyrics, poetry, personal meditations—at varying levels of legibility, allowing her paintings to bluster with a voice unlocked straight from the diary. But there is no storm in these works, just the losing of oneself in the luxuriousness and joy of paint, indulging in love and self-fulfillment.

Purple Prose is a delectable, chaotic, anarchist, baroque, subversive, queer world; it’s an exultant and gilded tangle edging, refusing to finish, to be definitive. These works—these artists—are in the process of endlessly

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proliferating, creating, becoming; they reveal multi-faceted tensions of dreamer artists navigating the internal self and the external world through reverie, through unexpected materiality, through new combinations of color and sense and language.

... indulge yourself. What's a self for, anyway?

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For more information about the exhibition, please contact Kory Trolio, kory@boeskygallery.com or 212-680-9889. For press inquiries, please contact Jillian Scott, THIRD EYE, at jillian@hellothirdeye.com or 212-355-9009.

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