

## Humanity and Global Change, through Dystopian Climates to New Realities

Van Der Plas Gallery presents *Color, Shapes & Shadows*

On view June 8<sup>th</sup> to June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020

(New York, NY–June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020) Van Der Plas Gallery presents a group exhibition, *Color, Shapes & Shadows*, featuring one hundred works by emerging and established artists from New York City and internationally, on view from June 8<sup>th</sup> to June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The artworks in the show represent turmoil and discomfort, as well as conquering of these emotions, deeply felt and experienced while the coronavirus pandemic took over worldwide. From the moment governments closed their borders and put citizens on ‘stay at home’ orders to combat the spread of covid-19, we were all faced with the reality that we would be confined and defined by our ‘new normal’ lives. We would have to make use of our time indoors while distanced from one another, knowing and observing the catastrophic effects of the virus on our global economy and health systems. And, just as countries and commerce began to open again, the world encountered another fight, the one of racial injustice. In the United States, the death of George Floyd by a police officer fueled an underlying fire that raised awareness about systems of oppression and police brutality against people of color, causing protests and riots in solidarity with those affected, again globally.

These artworks comprise an exhibition that marks a short time period that has already agitated our microcosm and transformed our social systems. We continue to make sense of our world. Within these works we see satire and sarcasm, jumbled fragments of life suspended and sometimes, aggression. We also see moments of promise and optimism. We realize our recent past, what we have experienced in the present and we move towards the future with awareness.

Sickened eyes, muted mouths and figures toppling over while upholding towers of toilet paper demonstrate images of our cities contending with the destabilizing impact of the coronavirus. These are Linda Heim’s class of acrylic paintings. They provide a construction of life in a subdued and darkened color portrayal, mirroring our existence when sickness infiltrated and infected our reality. In contrast to these triptychs, the works of Judy Collins exemplify atmosphere and a nonrepresentational, ethereal climate. While also characterized with darkness and heaviness, the swirling fluidity of colors provide a sensation closer to movement within water or mixing of spheres instead of broken systems. The ominous forms are a grand view into the world as it endured the hurricane of covid-19; it is also a microscopic perspective of the chaotic happenings within the human body while fighting the virus.

A network of lines and paths shape a heart, and as you open this you read the word ‘nothing’ in Richard Ponzi’s mixed media work. Eclipsing claw-like shapes are haunting abstract expressionisms presenting illusive hallucinations by Kasper Mikael Jacek. A series of oil paintings render refugee camps in a modern abstract spirit from Thomas Cox. Dystopia abounds in the mechanical, industrial workings of Yamazaki Yoshitarou’s pen and ink pieces. A caged ‘you and

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me' are locked in tar within the sculpture by Reggie Brown. These artworks all symbolize a time demanding greater certainty and a mindstate which craves a break from the deteriorated past.

The sizable demons from Nessi Nezilla, which exorcise madness, present a transformational element within the show. The large figures from the underworld are spirited, and they speak to our shadow selves. 'Menschnkind,' or mankind, humankind, reminds us of our existence together. Overlooking elevated peaks, ascending mountainsides and framing expansive spaces, we have intimate, photographic views of nature which move us to higher grounds from Michelle Johnson. The oil works from Susan Lizotte are painterly and provide maplike images, emphasizing the green Earth, which has undergone a positive renewal from decreased activity and pollution while production has been stopped. Finally, the image of a child with his backpack floating in space from artist and muralist Belove proves something more formidable.