MYSTIC TOOLKIT, CURATED BY ANAÏS CASTRO, ON VIEW AT ARTPACE SAN ANTONIO

Mystic Toolkit is a quiet invitation to celebrate daily rituals of coping, healing, and grieving that have become indispensable in recent times.

Exhibition on View: January 6, 2022–April 24, 2022

[SAN ANTONIO, TX, 1/19/22] – Artpace San Antonio is pleased to announce our first exhibition of 2022: Mystic Toolkit, curated by writer and Artpace Curatorial Residence alumna Anaïs Castro. On view in the Hudson Showroom, Mystic Toolkit brings together the work of seven artists working across a variety of mediums ranging from sculpture, painting, photography, and performance to celebrate daily rituals of coping, healing, and grieving that have become indispensable in recent times. Artpace is currently closed to the public due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, but the exhibition is available through our online gallery at artpace.org.

The first iteration of Mystic Toolkit was presented in January 2020 at Stewart Hall Art Gallery in Pointe-Claire (Quebec), a few weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic put a halt to life as we knew it. The exhibition was informed by the spiritual renaissance of the late 2010s and meant to shed light on the potential that lies therein to influence...
the practice of working artists. Two years later, Mystic Toolkit picks up that conversation again. Castro told Artpace:

“The exhibition conceptualizes the home as a sanctuary, a place of recollection and refuge. Our home is at once a haven of comfort and self-care, but during lockdown, it has also held us captive... Despite the variety approaches, all of the artists participating in Mystic Toolkit attempt to navigate through what is unquestionably one of the most disruptive crises in modern history via a genuine recognition of the mysterious forces that orchestrate the world.”

Exhibiting artist Shanie Tomassini’s sculptural pieces, for example, show traces of the artist's hands and fingerprints. While the work offers an introspection into the incessant changes that occur around us, Tomassini celebrates the mundane rituals of daily life, no matter how seemingly inconsequential. Meanwhile, Alicia Adamerovich’s series of graphite drawings act as a vehicle for desire, anxiety, and the inevitable to take shape, grasping these areas of tension as opportunities to dive into a space of transition, where feelings of the unconscious meet those of the familiar.

Participating artists include Alicia Adamerovich, Vanessa Brown, Jennifer Ling Datchuk, Erika DeFreitas, Julian Yi-Zhong Hou, Rachael Starbuck, and Shanie Tomassini. Despite their own idiosyncratic visual vocabulary and practice, the artists included in this exhibition all share the recognition of the mystical forces that affect our daily lives and pay tribute to the daily rituals and repeated gestures that keep us wholesome.

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Our Sponsors
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About Artpace
Artpace San Antonio is a nonprofit residency program which supports regional, national, and international artists in the creation of new art. As a catalyst for artistic expression, we engage local communities with global art practices and experiences. To date, Artpace has welcomed over 260 artists through its renowned International Artist-in-Residence program. Annually, Artpace hosts three residencies. Each feature one Texas-based artist, one national artist, and one international artist who are selected by a notable guest curator. Each eight-week residency culminates in a two-month exhibition on site. The mission of this program is to provide artists with unparalleled resources that allow them to experiment with new ideas and take provocative risks. www.artpace.org
About the Curator
Anaïs Castro is a curator and writer based in Toronto and New York. She currently works as Managing Director & Curator at Arsenal Contemporary Art.
Over the past years, she has curated exhibitions and projects in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, and China, including Overturned (Geneva, 2020), Ground Control (Berlin, 2019), Over My Black Body (Montreal, 2019) and Self Abstractions (London, 2017). She is one of the founding members of the curatorial collective The Department of Love, which presented its first project in Shanghai in December 2018 and commissioned four performances by Debora Delmar, Jade Montserrat, Alvin Tran, and Steven Warwick as part of the Open Programme of Art Night London 2019.

She was part of the inaugural Shanghai Curators Lab (2018), was a Curator in Residence at the International Studios & Curatorial Practice (Brooklyn, 2021), Artpace (San Antonio, 2019), Art in General (Brooklyn, 2019), Titanik (Turku, 2017) and a Visiting Critic at BCA (Burlington, 2016). She is an editorial member of Daily Lazy and publishes regularly in esse arts + opinions, Espace, and this is tomorrow.

About the Artists

Alicia Adamerovich
Alicia Adamerovich is a Brooklyn-based artist interested in the psychological effects that built or imagined environments have on the human psyche. She draws from visions, memory, and dreams to compose surrealist scenes that act as vehicles for desire, fantasy, anxiety, or fears.

Vanessa Brown
Vanessa Brown is a Canadian artist living and working in Berlin (Germany). Working across a variety of materials, from steel to glass or even textile, her multidimensional sculptural works seem suspended between consciousness and a chimera. Resolutely feminine, her work further recontextualized the domestic space as an empowering refuge, but also a fertile space for creativity and inspiration.

Jennifer Ling Datchuk
Based in San Antonio (Texas), Jennifer Ling Datchuk is an artist of mixed American and Chinese heritage focused on deconstructing racial and gender stereotypes by revealing their manufacture. In her work, the artist is interested in how appropriation of Eastern symbols in popular culture are often used to convey ideas of comfort, spirituality and/or healing.

Erika DeFreitas
Erika De Feitas is a Toronto-based artist working across different mediums, from photography to performance, video, and sculpture. Arising from a deeply personal perspective, the artist is interested in researching questions pertaining to identity, generational grief, memory, and communal experiences of healing.

Julian Yi-Zhong Hou
Julian Yi-Zhong Hou is a Canadian artist whose methodology stems from the fields of divination, hypnagogia, and tarot reading. His work is deeply informed by personal experiences, grief, and healing.

Rachael Starbuck
Rachael Starbuck is an artist, educator, and organizer based in Austin (Texas). Deeply interested in the notion of distance, she produces work that nonetheless subtly evokes intimacy and even eroticism between bodies. In her work, Starbuck reflects on how bodies move through space, as a distinct or indistinct form, as a presence or an absence.

Shanie Tomassini
Shanie Tomassini is an artist based between Montreal (Quebec) and Austin (Texas). In her practice, the artist researches the transitory nature of things. Dabbling with various materials, including ceramics and incense—both of which require firing to reach their definitive state—Tomassini is committed to a craftsmanship that requires practice, commitment, and rigor.