

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Take Me to the Double Picnic

Erin Lee Jones

Mary Schwab

Julia Shirar

February 18 – March 12 2017

Opening Reception Saturday February 18th 7-9pm

Songs for Presidents is pleased to present *Take Me to the Double Picnic: Erin Lee Jones, Mary Schwab and Julia Shirar*. These three artists work in expansive modes exploring objects and temporality across painting, sculpture, drawing and sound. They engage a push-pull between painting space and sculptural space, archeological remains and future icons, visible events and invisible history.

The process-driven alchemy of **Erin Lee Jones** results in frozen tie-dyed landscapes, psychedelic icons and emergent totems. Drawing on Coptic art, Fayum portraiture, Sumi ink drawings and mosaics Jones incorporates improbable combinations of materials into hybrid pieces birthed from the ancient past. This reconstitution of images and primary objects lost to current devastation motivates her work. Fragments of tinfoil, fringe, glittering terrazzo and pools of watery acrylic are all cast into hydrocal in embedded reliefs. The confident, simple lines of her figures are reminiscent of comics or ancient friezes, gazing at each other and back at us, collapsing into the direct language of line and its potent capacity to communicate.

Mary Schwab's objects are not passive. Occurring in the collision of painting space and sculptural space and in the gaps between cultural and physical landscapes, they have agency, they dream. Working in sculpture, painting, photography and sound, Schwab is attracted to the thingy-ness of things. Her approach to material is fluid and adventurous, giving equal attention to natural and manufactured materials like hydrocal, foam, wood, plastic and tinfoil. Associations are free floating, not germane to the object itself, "Think of it like seeing the Virgin Mary's face in a Cheese doodle or Bugs Bunny in a cloud." Titles play a part, with the sounds of the words being just as salient as color and form.

Julia Shirar works from life, as distinct from a photograph, making richly detailed paintings as souvenirs plucked from the quivering mesh of the present. Moments unseen, left out, exert their weight in an awareness of the erasures of history, of timelines broader than the individual. Painting family members, neighbors and passers-by in her neighborhood of southeastern Queens, Shirar encounters her subjects on their own terms, in their living room or rooftop pigeon coop. Painting primarily in acrylic on a tactile range of surfaces from birch to found linen, she builds out her paintings with materials at hand like stained paper and found photos. Shirar approaches story and context at multiple levels, producing sound and video works and drawing constantly, on the subway, on the street and at protest marches, in an ongoing witness to the present.

Erin Lee Jones's work has been shown at Regina Rex, Outpost, Harbor, French Neon, the Last Brucennial and most recently at Safe Gallery in Brooklyn. Originally from Florida, she received her MFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She lives and works in NYC.

Mary Schwab has had exhibitions at the UBS Center; Dose Projects; Is It the Way Forward; Makeshift Gallery, Spike Gallery, Heskin Contemporary, NY; and Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond. She has had residencies at the Byrdcliffe Artist in Residence Program, Woodstock, NY; the Vermont Studio Center, Johnson; and at Virginia Commonwealth University. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Julia Shirar's artwork has been included in exhibitions at The Tate Modern in London, UK, The National Veteran's Art Museum in Chicago, IL, Gray Area Foundation for Art in San Francisco, CA, and Rowan Morrison Gallery in Oakland, CA. She currently lives and works in Queens, NY.

Songs For Presidents

1673 Gates Avenue (lower level)

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gallery hours Sat-Sun 12-6

Subways: L/M at Myrtle-Wyckoff