Anthony Lepore
Performance Anxiety

May 11 - June 29, 2019
Opening Reception: May 11, 6-9 pm

Moskowitz Bayse is pleased to present *Performance Anxiety*, an exhibition of new photographic works by Los Angeles-based artist Anthony Lepore. The occasion marks the artist’s first solo presentation with the gallery.

Anthony Lepore’s images weave theatrics, humor, and vulnerability with personal narrative. In *Performance Anxiety*, illusion—visual and cognitive—takes center stage.

In *The Stand-In*, a green shimmery satin cloth is gathered and hung from a rod at the top of the frame. As two hands emerge from behind the curtain, they prop up toward the viewer an open space—the depth of which implies a sort of stage—a place for performance—a portal to another reality. Anticipation builds then freezes; the curtain rises like a shutter as the audience waits for the moment of action. A photograph of this moment holds this anticipation; an object of this moment holds this photograph.
The artist is no stranger to the small stage.

Between sixth and eighth grade I was a kid magician, impersonating someone with skill and sleight of hand. My grandfather, a confident wood-worker, built shelves into a luggage case that held my show and doubled as a stage when flipped on its side. I carried my illusions to local senior centers and family gatherings, specializing in small levitations and disappearances. I was certain magic was my calling, until I auditioned for show choir, which proved a more exciting and collaborative place for a queer teen at an evangelical school to hide in plain sight.

Showmanship belies insecurity, no matter the performance. Several works in the exhibition function as stand-ins for isolated states along an analogous spectrum of emotional and psychological experiences. In *The Bunker*, for instance, bricks covered in a patterned fabric are precariously stacked on top of one another. Hands enter and exit the frame, stopped by the camera as bricks are repositioned. Are the hands stacking bricks up in an effort to conceal, or taking down in order to reveal? In another work, *He Kneaded Me For a While*, hands of a worker—a creator—stretch and fold in a series of moves toward transforming the dough into a loaf of bread. Will the dough make it to the oven, or will it be overworked to inedibility? In these works, action emerges from spaces undefined and regularly breaks the frame, as if to codify new boundaries in photographic space. Objects beckon the viewer to come close and peer inside but upon closer inspection, the flatness of each picture plane reveals itself.

Performance begets expectation, regardless of venue. In *More Than a Hunch*, the artist lays bare his domestic life—that with his partner, the artist Michael Henry Hayden, and their animals—in a familiar graphic arrangement, set in blue and black rectangles. While this piece evokes a desire to fit in, it simultaneously embraces a carefree abandon of societal expectations. Faces look admiringly at one another across impossibly flattened space as they uncomfortably protrude into distinct boxes, in echo with the familiar family portrait. Centered perspective of a fixed camera is evident but the center of the image curiously is left vacant, as if to leave room with an open invitation. Here, representational absence stands in as a form of presence; things are not always as simple as they appear.

Anthony Lepore (b. 1977, Burbank, CA) received his BFA from Fordham University in 2000 and his MFA from Yale University in 2005. His works have been the subject of exhibitions internationally, and are held in the permanent collections of the Guggenheim Museum (New York), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Los Angeles), the Hammer Museum (Los Angeles), the J. Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles), the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art (Kansas City, Missouri) and Yale University Art Gallery (New Haven, Connecticut), among others.
Tuesday - Saturday, 11am - 6pm or by appointment


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