

MANIFOLD

January 9 - February 16, 2019

Nate Flagg
Alex Jackson
Nadia Haji Omar
Alexandria Smith

Curated by Melanie Kress

Opening Reception
Saturday, January 12, 5-8pm

BronxArtSpace
305 E 140 St
Bronx, NY 10454



Alexandria Smith *(s)kin folk* 2018 Acrylic, graphite and oil on panel 20" x 30"

MANIFOLD showcases four artists who take up colorful abstraction in painting and drawing to stretch the space that these two-dimensional mediums inhabit and depict. Amidst fragmented resonances of abstract forms, Nate Flagg, Alex Jackson, Nadia Haji Omar, and Alexandria Smith depict somersaulting bodies and shimmering ciphers to explore a kind of vibrating space that exists just below the surface, a ripe space where bodies fold and twist as two-dimensional beings occupying and expanding three-dimensional space.

Each artist uses patterning to abstract, adorn, and camouflage the body and language within its backdrop, blending a disorienting space between the two dimensions that calls into question the solidity of the physical world. In these works, lush landscapes of color fold atop one other, shifting spatially between exterior landscapes and interior portraiture, causing the bodies to undulate between figure and ground, subject and context. **Alexandria Smith** thinks through spatial and psychological dualisms, as her characters' flatly layered limbs and halved bodies confront one-another against domestic and dreamlike stage sets. In a similarly chimerical fashion, **Alex Jackson** cultivates a mythology of characters that grow into and out of patterned landscapes with somersaulting gravitational pulls. Looking towards the interlocking of linguistic and bodily forms, **Nate Flagg** sketches scribbling webs of gestures from which a lexicon of limbs jutt and spiral, while **Nadia Haji Omar** creates organically gridded fields of tiny paint marks from which vibrating glyphs appear.

To challenge both the attempted comprehension or categorization of a human being through their necessarily simplified visual representation, to process unnamable trauma, to evoke a sense of a person beyond what any language—visual or otherwise—could possibly conjure—these are all reasons these artists transform bodies in the spaces they construct. While, in a sense, the two-dimensional being

should be the easiest to codify and comprehend, it is the reduction of the body to two dimensions, followed by an invitation to work outside of the expectations in that realm that offers new possibilities for evoking a personhood beyond visual language.

Here, the flattened body twists in assemblages of intertwining cartoonish shadows, undulating in uncanny insistence against the attempted categorization of a human being through its body. The figures in these paintings pirouette through shortened theatrical spaces, performing themselves, enacting the contorted dance that is the disorienting experience of being both a thinking consciousness and a body in space available for viewing—the tumultuous experience of being, and becoming, human.

Free Workshops + Events

RSVP at www.withfriends.co/bronxartspace

Mi Casa Writers Workshops

Wednesdays, January 16, January 30 and February 13, 6:30pm

The Gathering + Open Mic

Saturday, January 26, 6-9pm

Teen Dialogue

Tuesday, January 29, 6-9pm

Artist Talk

Wednesday, February 6, 6:30-8:30pm

Check website for updates

BronxArtSpace is a non-profit gallery that promotes the innovative ideas of underrepresented and emerging artists and curators. Started in 2008 by Linda Cunningham and Mitsu Hadeishi, BronxArtSpace is dedicated to exhibiting the highest quality artwork from the Bronx and around the world. Our mission is to foster dialogue around the contemporary local, national and global issues while advancing local arts education and opportunities.

BronxArtSpace is a sponsored project of Fractured Atlas, a non-profit arts service organization, and is generously supported by private donors and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in Partnership with City Council and The New York State Council on the Arts.



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