

## Mirror Face

The term “mirror face” describes the affected facial expression made when someone is about to have their picture taken or see their reflection. It is a contortion of features that rarely resembles a person’s natural expression, but instead is crafted to better meet the idealized image they have of their appearance.

This sucking-in of one’s cheeks or pouting of the lips has, in the past, been reserved for the few moments a day spent preparing in the bathroom, or posing for an occasional photograph. The use of a mirror face has, however, expanded beyond the edges of the mirror and camera lens into the digital world of social media. These platforms encourage the creation and constant maintenance of public profiles.

Our public countenance is now formed not only by our facial features, but also by the choice of who to share images and information with, what social and political factions we belong to, and what conversations we choose to have. The portrait we create of ourselves is defined by how we align our views with specific groups and more importantly, how the ideas of those groups reinforce the ideal image we have created of ourselves. We are faithfully occupied by the demands of maintaining our personas based on how we want the world to see us, but not on how we really appear.

For the three artists in the exhibition *Mirror Face*, the act of self-portraiture is not an act of affected creation. Instead they use the documentation of their everyday lives, both internal and external, to work at finding moments of true reflection. In contrast to the highly crafted representations of self we have grown accustomed to seeing, the paintings, drawings and comics in this exhibition are candid portraits of their lives. Sarah McEneaney, Christa Donner and Keiler Roberts are presenting themselves without their mirror faces.

Cleve Carney Art Gallery  
Thursday, March 9 to Thursday, April 13, 2017

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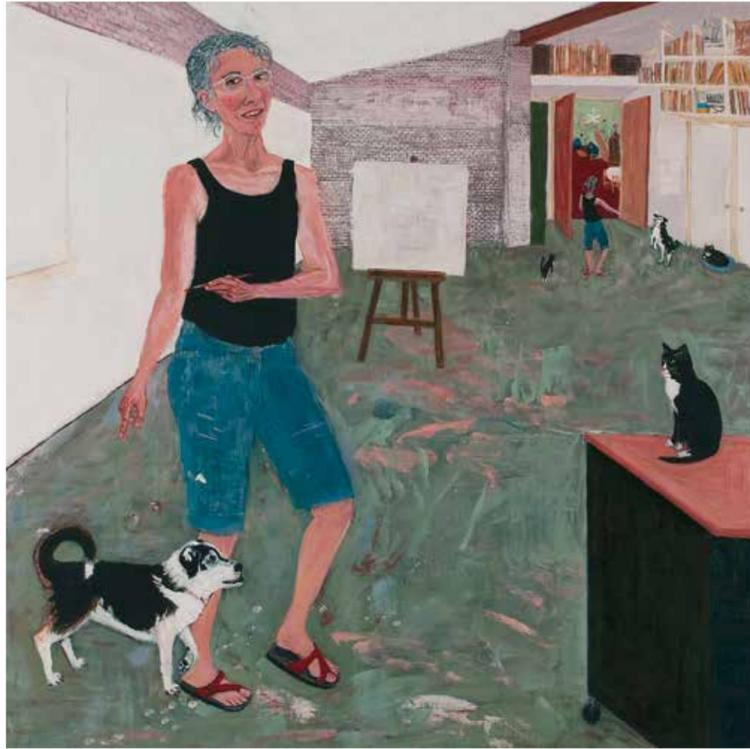
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The Cleve Carney Art Gallery would like to thank Christa Donner, Sarah McEneaney and Keiler Roberts for sharing their time and work with us. We would also like to thank Locks Gallery and Tibor de Nagy Gallery for loaning us artwork for the exhibition. Additionally, we want to express our gratitude to Melanie Demos, Andi Crist, Cecelia Soto, Abbas Hussein, Ariel Von Gorski and Alexandra Hohnsen for all their help in preparing for and installing the exhibition. Finally, the gallery would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the staff and faculty of College of DuPage, the McAninch Art Center and the COD Foundation.



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## Sarah McEneaney

Sarah McEneaney, *D & P Redux*, 2012, mixed water-based media, 24" x 24", courtesy of Tibor de Nagy Gallery

Sarah McEneaney's egg tempera and acrylic paintings bring the viewer into quotidian moments at her Philadelphia home, studio and the abandoned train viaduct that she is largely responsible for converting into a public park. Her images take us with her on artist residencies and trips around the world, but it is not because you get to see the places that McEneaney visits that makes them inviting; it is because you experience those spaces as she does. Scenes of resting in the studio with her pets or reading the paper in the morning contain an authenticity that goes beyond depiction. The intimacy of these paintings captures that space and those moments. This is due in part to McEneaney's obsession with detail. The precisely rendered bricks, flowers, paint-splattered floors and dog hairs in McEneaney's work are marks of her commitment to a sincere chronicling of her life.

It appears that her approach to accurately depicting her reality has one unifying rule: include everything. McEneaney's generous invitation into her world points to the strength and conviction of the artist who made them, an artist that insists on including all of the details.

McEneaney has exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Art (Philadelphia), Hood Museum of Art, Mills College Art Museum (California) and the List Gallery (Pennsylvania). McEneaney is the recipient of the Yaddo Fellowship (2006, 2005, 1997, 1995), the Pew Fellowship in the Arts (1993), the Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (2000), the MacDowell Colony Fellowship (1998) and the Chianti Foundation Residency (2009). She is represented by Tibor de Nagy Gallery in New York and Locks Gallery in Philadelphia.



## Christa Donner

Christa Donner, *installation view of Conversations About the Future*, 2015, Phytorio, Nicosia, Cyprus

Unlike the other two artists in the exhibition, Christa Donner rarely serves as a model for her own work, but draws upon experiences of chronic illness and parenthood to propose speculative futures and alternative anatomies. Donner is an activist intent on understanding and improving the systems, biological and political, which shape her life. This has led Donner to create multiple bodies of work focused on multiple bodies: bodies as reproductive organisms, as part of the natural world and as tools for social and political change. In her drawings the human-animal form is the lens through which she views the world, and the tool that can be used for its improvement. While the figures in her work are not explicitly self-portraits, Donner's work viewed as a whole is the reflection of an artist attempting to understand how she fits into the systems surrounding her.

Donner is a Chicago-based artist and organizer known for her innovative large-scale drawing installations. She has exhibited at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (Berlin), the Museum of Contemporary Art (Cleveland), Bank Art NYK (Yokohama), the Museum Bellerive (Zurich), Kravets Wehby Gallery (New York), as well as Gallery 400, ThreeWalls, International Museum of Surgical Science and the National Museum of Mexican Art (Chicago). Donner currently teaches at the School of the Art Institute Chicago.



## Keiler Roberts

Keiler Roberts, *drawing from Powdered Milk*, 2015

Keiler Roberts has a sharp and at times acetic sense of humor. She weaves that humor into her ongoing series of autobiographical comics that recount her daily interactions with family, friends and strangers (this includes in no particular order: raising a child, owning a dog, teaching, making art, having bipolar disorder and fabricating stories about Whoopi Goldberg). Roberts' wit provides access to the honest reflections of her life that could, considering the personal nature of her subject matter, otherwise be off-putting. Her willingness to discuss depression or dreams about skunks with the same accessible voice provides a model for confronting life that is empowering and hilarious.

Roberts is the recipient of the Ignatz Award-Outstanding Series for *Powdered Milk* (2016), was published in *The Best American Comics 2016*, and appeared as a special guest for

CAKE—Chicago Alternative Comics Expo (2014). Her work has been shown at the Naughton Gallery at Queen's University in Belfast, Block Museum of Art, and at Columbia College's A+D Gallery. Roberts' fourth book, *Sunburning*, from Koyama Press, will debut in May 2017. She currently teaches at the School of the Art Institute Chicago and DePaul University.