

Charles Heppner, *inner sanctum meditations*

September 2 – 30, 2017

Opening Reception: Saturday September 9, 7-9pm
The Cluster Gallery, 200 6th Street, 3E, Brooklyn, NY 11215

Curated by Heather Zises



The Cluster Gallery is pleased to announce *inner sanctum meditations*, a solo show by Charles Heppner. The exhibition will be on view from September 2 through September 30, 2017, with a public opening reception on September 9, 7-9pm.

inner sanctum meditations offers a personal glimpse into an ongoing series of three-dimensional works, known as Sanctum Boxes, by Heppner. Each of the Sanctum Boxes, which are built out of cigar boxes and inlaid with symbolic contents, examine iconography that center around issues of peace and social justice. Inspired by the meditation practice during the Catholic Lenten season of the Stations of the Cross, the Sanctum Boxes focus on themes such as self-reflection, compassion and gratitude. Viewed as self-actualization pieces, each work is a meditation on personal growth.

Not unlike a shrine or an altar, Heppner creates his individual sanctuaries with intention. Using delicate layers of encaustic, paint, gesso, paper (which is sometimes burned), inkjet prints and wood strips, Heppner constructs sacred spaces that are gateways of self-reflection. Inside these spaces are dimensional vignettes containing fragments of photographs, hand-folded paper cranes, swaths of cheese cloth and strips of Latin text. Comprised of line, shape and form, Heppner's boxed assemblages are discreet compositions that become compact environments of contemplation for both the artist and the viewer.

Inscribed on the back of each box, the title of each work is intentionally rendered in all lower case letters with minimal punctuation to place more emphasis on the meanings of the words with respect to the size of the works. Prescripts like *push through for peace*, *be aware of your own prejudices* and *you have at times failed to bear the pain of others*, serve as pointed reminders to the viewer, while echoing haunting meditations from the Catholic faith. Ultimately, each piece seeks a truth that will herald beauty and deep introspection.

Charles Heppner is a multidisciplinary artist living in Austin, TX. Born in Chicago, he grew up in a large Catholic family where individualism was allowed unfettered. Through painting, photography, drawing and sculpture, Heppner's works examine ritual, spirituality, social gesture, and the human relationship to nature. Heppner has shown at numerous galleries and exhibition venues in North America, including 33 Contemporary Gallery, Chicago, IL; Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL; Muriel Guépin Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; Chicago Art Department, Chicago, IL; SPRING/BREAK Art Show 2014, New York, NY; Gowanus Loft, Brooklyn, NY; OffLINE at Central Booking, New York, NY; and Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Staten Island, NY. Additionally, his work is in many private and corporate collections throughout the United States. Heppner has a BS in Mathematics from the University of Wisconsin—Madison.