

**FUTURE KIN**

Liss LaFleur

August 24 - September 28, 2024

Open House: Saturday August 24th from 5:30 - 7:30pm

Galleri Urbane is pleased to announce FUTURE KIN, an exhibition of artworks by Texas-based artist Liss LaFleur. For her third solo exhibition with the gallery, LaFleur presents a new body of work as part of her ongoing series, The Queer Birth Project.

The Queer Birth Project reflects on the experiences of queer (LGBTQ+) childbirth and family formation in the United States. Based on original and archival research conducted collaboratively with sociologist Katherine Sobering, this work re-envisioning artist Judy Chicago's Birth Project (1980-85) and promotes a radically inclusive view of childbirth, reproductive justice, and family in a post-Roe era.

This exhibition centers an expansive exploration of family, queer kinship models, and future forms of belonging. It is the second in a series of six thematically focused collections of multimedia works that will lead to a published book and interactive digital archive.

Included in FUTURE KIN are four primary, interconnected artworks that are informed by interviews and surveys conducted with over 100 queer families. These include a suspended, digitally printed fringe, glass mobiles, three neon sculptures produced in collaboration with Lite Brite Neon, and an immersive audio piece that takes the form of a libretto. Handheld speakers allow visitors to experience the slow, deeply lyrical, transportative text, amplified and queered through digital distortion, as they move through the space.

Secondary to these works is a single channel video and a stack of two prints on paper, continually replenished throughout the duration of the exhibition. Referencing the suspended kinetic mobiles presented in the gallery, each print offers an alternative family model. Visitors are invited to help themselves to these prints, recontextualizing the work through their own personal environments.

"These works are inspired by and share the stories of LGBTQ+ families," says Katherine Sobering. "This project centers on their lived experiences in their own words. Each work honors and shares these stories in different ways." "We are interested in doing this work not as a way to assimilate but as a way to propose futures that are inclusive and expansive and [to] think about queerness as a space that can provide joy and representation that doesn't currently exist," shared LaFleur.

Described by LaFleur as a "love letter to future kin," the exhibition both lifts up and deconstructs through transformation. It constitutes an experiment in foregrounding new family constellations while holding space for future forms of kinship.

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**Liss LaFleur** is an transmedia artist whose practice spans moving image, queer and feminist politics, and installation art. Her projects are multimodal and develop out of extensive archival research, utilizing technology as a poetic tool to provide a radical space for reconfiguring and reimagining personal and collective struggles in the 21st century.

LaFleur has received awards and fellowships from the John F. Kennedy Center, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the Ford Foundation. Her work has been reviewed in *Slate*, *the Advocate*, *Hyperallergic*, and *the Brooklyn Rail*. From botanic gardens to large-scale projections on the Brooklyn Bridge, notable presentations and screenings of her work include the TATE Modern (London), SXSW (Austin, TX), the Reykjavik Art Museum (Iceland), the Contemporary Art Museum (Houston, TX), Telematic Media Arts (San Francisco, CA), and the Czong Institute for Contemporary Art (South Korea), among others.

LaFleur is an Associate Professor of New Media Art at the University of North Texas, where she is also the founder and director of the Future Feminist Lab. She was raised in Houston, TX and holds an MFA in Media Art from Emerson College where she was an Artist Fellow and affiliated researcher exploring transmedia activism at the MIT Media Lab.

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**Katherine Sobering** is a feminist sociologist who studies work, inequality, and social change in the Americas. She is an ethnographer and an expert in qualitative research methods. Her research and teaching examines critical questions at the intersection of gender, labor, and politics with an attention to how people contest and resist exclusionary and marginalizing processes.

Sobering is a Fulbright scholar and her research has been supported by the National Science Foundation. Her most recent book, *The People's Hotel: Working for Justice in Argentina* (Duke University Press), draws on over a decade of research to tell the story of a worker-run hotel in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Sobering is an Associate Professor of Sociology and a faculty affiliate in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of North Texas. She was raised in Dallas, TX and holds a Ph.D in Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin, where she was a graduate fellow in the Urban Ethnography Lab.