

SOMEONE SAID THE WORLD'S A STAGE

Curated by Margot Samel

July 1 – August 6, 2021
54 White Street, New York

GRIMM is pleased to announce *Someone said the world's a stage*, a group exhibition with works by Dirk Braeckman, Ger van Elk, Christina Forrer, Louise Giovanelli, Sanya Kantarovsky, Sarah Margnetti, William Monk, Rosalind Nashashibi, B. Ingrid Olson, Michael Raedecker, Torbjørn Rødland, Daisy May Sheff, Cindy Sherman, Cauleen Smith, Emily Mae Smith and Matthias Weischer.

In the world of the theater, stage sets, masks, costumes, and curtains bring performances to life. They help make the illusion seem real. Although depictions of theater and cinema are not considered a genre in historical painting, elements of the theater have been referenced in art and literature for millennia, particularly curtains, which hold unique symbolic power. Someone said that the world's a stage brings together sixteen artists working in a variety of media to explore performance and theatrical imagery.

One of the earliest accounts of visual art and performance intersecting is the myth of Zeuxis and Parrhasius, said to have taken place as early as the 4th century B.C. It tells the story of two painters with such skill that Zeuxis's depiction of grapes deceived a flock of birds which attempted to eat them. However, it was Parrhasius' painting of a curtain which was so convincing that Zeuxis confused it with drapery concealing an artwork and reached to remove it. Zeuxis conceded defeat to Parrhasius for his cunning, proclaiming him the superior artist. Such demonstrations of illusion and deceit are essential to suspending audiences' belief. In contemporary painting this symbolic language holds currency.

In the same vein as these early masters, **Louise Giovanelli** (b. 1993, London, UK) and **Sarah Margnetti** (b. 1983, Monthey, CH) employ a trompe l'oeil technique to paint highly staged compositions that are constrained and at the same time loaded with a suggestive impulse. Giovanelli's shimmering curtains seem to anticipate a dramatic entrance or elicit applause from an invisible audience. She harnesses the effects of lighting to create a mood of intensity, where finely applied accents and sumptuous colors blaze like torchlight in her closely cropped compositions. While Margnetti's paintings explore the use of optical illusions, integrating facial features and body parts into her compositions as theatrical props. A large mural by Margnetti created specifically for the exhibition



B. Ingrid Olson | *Selve, 2014-2020*

connects the theme of the show with the space around it, embracing the viewer as both participant and observer.

Matthias Weischer's (b. 1973, Elte, DE) creates paintings that twist the rules of perspective in stage-like interiors. Weischer presents his audience with a new dimensional plane where he opens and closes space on his own terms. Objects and figures are rearranged across his paintings in many configurations, suggesting the multiple acts in a play. Mastery over the perception of space is a consistent theme in **Dirk Braeckman's** (b. 1958, Eeklo, BE) photographs of dark and sultry scenes. Braeckman's images are digitally manipulated to highlight the most subtle tonal range. Their shadowy corners and cropped perspectives are suffused with a sense of friction resulting from what is unknown, veiled, or just out of reach of the viewer. The illusion of both intimacy and distance are sustained throughout the artists oeuvre, suspending his audience in a state of expectancy.

B. Ingrid Olson (b. 1987, Denver, CO, US) uses photography and sculpture in tandem. She constructs intricate sculptural environments with found objects – tucked into

not for publication

For more information, interview and royalty free image requests, please contact the gallery:
press@grimmgallery.com +1 212 280 3877

Van Baerlestraat 80
1071BB Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Keizersgracht 241
1016EA Amsterdam
GRIMM Fine Art BV

54 White Street
New York 10013
United States

Tel +1 212 280 3877
info@grimmgallery.com
www.grimmgallery.com

GRIMM



Christina Forrer | *Conversation*, 2018

unusual spatial cavities with varying depths of perception – so that photographs often approach abstraction. Masks and camouflage are tools the artist draws on as a source of power to dislocate the works from one direct perspective.

Among the exhibiting artists in this group presentation, many of their practices point to the proverbial fourth wall by bringing attention to their materiality, or by highlighting the deception inherent in staged compositions. The latter is a recurring theme in **Ger van Elk's** (1941- 2014) work. His series of photographs titled *The Symmetry of Diplomacy* imitate diplomatic exchanges with comic alterations. Figures appear missing, duplicated, or out of sync within the composition contributing to the sense of a stage illusion. Here, Van Elk's work calls in to question how politics are performed and he comments on the hypocrisy and theater of diplomatic exchanges as photo opportunities.

The performed photographs of **Cindy Sherman** (b. 1954, Glen Ridge, NJ, US) embrace falsehood in service of social critique, inviting the viewer to imagine its possibilities. Her works depict the artist in myriad guises that reimagine

cultural stereotypes indicating how illusion is created and how it can be substituted for reality. She manipulates her own image across series, framing this documentation itself as performance. The artist is renowned for her practice of employing semiotics to stimulate ideas about originality, gender, media, and the nature of documentation.

Performance as a tool for opposition and social restructuring are complementary through lines in this exhibition. These notions were proposed by Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin who asserted that theatrical effects both amplify experience and liberate their audience from reality. His concept of the carnivalesque (with its laughter and chaos) imagines performance as a tactic for subversion and liberation, creating a world that is upside-down in terms of social hierarchy.

Lively representations of emotion, verbal, and physical interaction animate the carnivalesque in **Christina Forrer's** (b. 1978, Zurich, CH) tapestries. Forrer narrates inherited conflicts using a traditional medium that draws inspiration from folk art. Overlapping colors and forms intermingle

not for publication

For more information, interview and royalty free image requests, please contact the gallery:
press@grimmgallery.com +1 212 280 3877

Van Baerlestraat 80
1071BB Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Keizersgracht 241
1016EA Amsterdam
GRIMM Fine Art BV

54 White Street
New York 10013
United States

Tel +1 212 280 3877
info@grimmgallery.com
www.grimmgallery.com

GRIMM

as her subjects feud and shout. She is interested in capturing how conflict looks, and therefore how it feels. The liberatory effects of costume are present in **Emily Mae Smith's** (b. 1979, Austin, TX, US) paintings, which allude to historical movements like Surrealism and Pop art through recurring characters in her work. These characters embody multiple personalities and they often explore dimensions of femininity. The painting included in this exhibition combines comic forms as symbols with seductive and authoritative power.

Torbjørn Rødland's (b. 1970, Stavanger, NO) photographs are unsettling prompts – they marry aesthetic categories that seem at odds with each other. His finely crafted compositions infuse odd or degenerate propositions with an attentive delicacy that shares formal attributes with renaissance oil painting. Through these orchestrated compositions, Rødland proposes a release from reality in which conflicting states coalesce, challenging his viewers' moral presuppositions.

An installation by **Cauleen Smith** (b. 1967, Riverside, CA, US) titled *Procuress* – after a 17th century painting by Johannes Vermeer – brings together a collection of objects, seemingly assembled by a taxidermized crow, also included in the tableaux. This arrangement is recorded and projected on the opposite wall. The inclusion of the camera as a feedback system, signals the mundanity of observation and how performativity and documentation are normal aspects of our daily routine, while also drawing attention to the conflict that this produces.

William Monk's (b. 1977, Kingston upon Thames, UK) scenographic paintings burst with invention and visual wonder. They offer passage into an enthralling frontier of rolling mountains and radioactive sunsets, with a nod to the mythos of the American West and its dramatic landscapes made famous through Western film sets. Monk's saturated palette and his use of pattern coalesce in settings that position the viewer as if they were in the midst of a transcendental experience on some unnamed frontier.

The familiar is likewise turned upside down in **Michael Raedecker's** (b. 1963, Amsterdam, NL) paintings. Raedecker has spent decades developing a hybrid process of image making that emulates the appearance of gestural painting through layers of inkjet image transfers, embroidery, with acrylic paint and varnish. His works are characteristically devoid of human figures, while containing traces of human life. He images how the remnants of civilization, such as a swimming pool might be reimagined as stage for other forms of life, later civilizations, or post-human eras.

Sanya Kantarovsky's (b. 1982, Moscow, RU) figurative

paintings present the viewer with a cast of madcap characters engaged in tense or humorous situations, with no certain outcome. The upturned noses and lithe bodies of his figures invoke a lineage of children's illustrations and political cartoons, but as a whole the compositions indicate a variable painterly language in service of storytelling. Similarly, **Daisy May Sheff** (b. 1996, San Francisco, CA, US) builds, erases, and rebuilds her paintings in an improvisational process that meanders through personal narratives, fairytales, and passing moments. There are no logical progressions to her work, rather the viewer is redirected from representation to abstraction, whilst absorbing the richness in each transitional moment.

Rosalind Nashashibi's (b. 1973, Croydon, UK) is interested in the visual framing devices that create a sense of narrative and perspective, an area which is explored in both her paintings and film. In her paintings, this manifests as cropping, or focusing in on certain biographical details of both fictional and nonfictional characters. She revels in these moments of drama, retelling them through a distilled, poetic language. Her paintings are psychologically charged with events from her own life and reflect a practice of close-looking fueled by intellectual curiosity. Nashashibi is concerned with revealing alternate perspectives and she calls upon her viewer to inhabit a reflective and associative state of looking.

About the gallery

GRIMM was founded in Amsterdam in 2005. Since its establishment, the gallery has been committed to promoting and supporting emerging and mid-career artists who work in a diverse range of media. Representing thirty international artists, the gallery has two spaces in Amsterdam, and one in New York. This year GRIMM expanded to new 6,000 square foot gallery space in Tribeca, New York.

not for publication

For more information, interview and royalty free image requests, please contact the gallery:
press@grimmgallery.com +1 212 280 3877

Van Baerlestraat 80
1071 BB Amsterdam
The Netherlands

Keizersgracht 241
1016 EA Amsterdam
GRIMM Fine Art BV

54 White Street
New York 10013
United States

Tel +1 212 280 3877
info@grimmgallery.com
www.grimmgallery.com

GRIMM