

HEADSTONE

Gently Down the Stream

Daniella Ben-Bassat and Chris Rodgers

November 4 - November 26, 2023

For Immediate Release:

Headstone is pleased to announce *Gently Down the Stream*, a two-person exhibition with Daniella Ben-Bassat and Chris Rodgers. Ben-Bassat's new series of paintings are surreal, tranquil, sensitive, and riddled with familiar objects colliding with pop culture markers. Rodger's new ceramic, Donald Judd'esk works are experientially meditative regarding impermanence and the architecture necessary for life. Ben-Bassat and Rodgers are aesthetically disparate, yet each work possesses inquiry and fluidity in thought processes where one is curious without being led.

Beginning with her heart, Ben-Bassat's work moves across tangential spaces allowing for a clear feeling or connection to take hold. Ben-Bassat says she's "been thinking about the nigun - a nigun is a form of sung Jewish prayer that is wordless. There are vocalizations, but they show up in the form of "ay yi yi", etc. What's important in the nigun is the feeling and intention behind the vocalization - not the words being sung." Specifically, in her work titled *Painting from Life 2, 2023*, it's immediately abstract; however, Ben-Bassat grounds us with time, almost glibly doodling a faint outline of a clock while witnessing the flutter of a moth just beyond the foreground; it is cinematic and audibly resonant. Ben-Bassat's paintings create a pulse that looks and feels alive.

Rodgers is known for his large-scale sculpture and exquisite ability to craft movement. His new ceramic pieces are three separate bodies of work- paintings, chairs, and small sculptures. His paintings are saturated with pigment and hand-made aggregate, a purity that is all ceramic, all color, through and through. Each small sculpture feels like theoretical models or evidence of calculated conclusions on how the universe was created- jagged, geometric, treasure-like. Moving out of a more cerebral space sits two chairs, each made from four, large slabs of clay after Donald Judd's furniture, *Open Side Chair, 1982*. Rodgers's work passes the infamous Schjeldahl test, as they cannot answer either, "What is it? And Why is it here?"

Abstraction, while carrying with it a viable definition, also feels rather silly to define it. Without words, Ben-Bassat and Rodgers generate ideas (mostly) void of definitive imagery, a kind of working with the knowledge of abstraction's existence, not within it. *Gently Down the Stream* keeps a comfortable breath, an indirect engagement that is rich in self-reflection and evident determination. One is reminded of this potential and care art provides, a necessary act for healing in Jeanette Winterson's famous quote, "wounds need to be taught to heal themselves."

Daniella Ben-Bassat (b. 1985) graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2007. Drawing inspiration from spirituality, psychedelic culture and trash, Ben-Bassat creates paintings that incorporate the surreal into the everyday. References to art history, pop culture and rock and roll mingle with the mystical and her work reminds us that the sublime is present in our ordinary lives and vice versa. In addition to painting, she creates sound sculptures out of found materials, lights, motors and electronic components. These moving dioramas generate droning overtones, which she then performs alongside on guitar. Similar to Ben-Bassat's paintings, these kinetic sculptures utilize everyday objects and repetitions to denaturalize conventional states of consciousness.

Recent exhibitions include *Painting From Life*, a solo presentation of paintings at Smoke The Moon in Santa Fe, NM, and *What Would Artist Do?*, a three person exhibition in Providence, RI. Ben-Bassat has completed residencies at Mount Lebanon Residency in New Lebanon, NY, Kesey Farm in Pleasant Hill, OR, the Dirt Palace in Providence, RI, and Ada X in Montreal, QC.

Chris M. Rodgers (Philadelphia, PA) is currently a Resident Artist at The Clay Studio and fulltime Ceramics Studio Manager at The University of the Arts. He was born in Charleston, WV where he earned his BA from West Virginia State University. He spent several years teaching English in Beijing, China before continuing his education at Kansas State University through their post-baccalaureate program and then on to study ceramics at Tainan National University of the Arts in Tainan, Taiwan. He received his MFA at the University of Arkansas in the spring of 2019. Rodgers has also attended residencies at c.r.e.t.a. Rome, Rome, Italy; Watershed Center for the Ceramics Arts, Maine; Ox-Bow School of Art, Michigan; and Casa Lù Tlalpan, Mexico City, Mexico He has exhibited both nationally and internationally and most recently had a solo exhibition at The Clay Studio, *Stillness is the Move*.

Headstone is an artist-run, for-profit contemporary art gallery located in Kingston, New York, dedicated to showing two-person and solo exhibitions. The 1,100sq ft gallery space was created by artists Lauren Aitken and Chase Folsom. The gallery is deeply committed to our artists and their ideas, providing them with a beautiful contemporary space and the necessary support to help them foster and fulfill their artistic vision. It is with considerate curation and our vast love of the art world that we bring together and introduce emerging and established artists, some of whom have yet to benefit from wider critical and commercial attention. We believe the arts should be equitable and accessible to anyone who would like to engage. Through artist exhibitions, we hope that Headstone can collectively bring people together, create community, expand connections and become an engaging, diverse melting pot of artists, creatives, collectors, and community members.

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 4th, 5pm-8pm

Gallery Hours:
Friday - Sunday, Noon to 5pm
Or by appointment

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