

HEADSTONE

Hamster Wheel

Patrick Gantert and Michael Royce

August 6 – August 28 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Headstone is thrilled to present *Hamster Wheel*, a two-person exhibition with Patrick Gantert and Michael Royce. Gantert exhibits a range of drawings dating from childhood to adult life at a scale which mirrors that growth period. Royce offers his quintessential and engulfing large acrylic paintings on canvas. Together, these two artists initiate summersaults for the brain. Their disorienting yet logical depth feels like you've fallen into a story that never ends, a kind of binge-watching that is surprisingly still. Gantert arranges object puzzles that look like ephemeral wall sculptures consisting of blue painter's tape, baker's twine, and a few shoelaces- only to realize its colored pencil. Royce's concepts oscillate from sarcastic, charged perspective on patriarchy to self-deprecating humor on the state of one's mental health.

Patrick Gantert's new work begins with a pen on paper doodle of Bill Clinton playing the saxophone and continues with large, sophisticated drawings of arched windows that frame objects in his universe: an old leather boot, The Count from Sesame Street, a dog harness, and Jesus. The imagery conjures an arresting feeling, as if someone finally decided where to place cartoon character Stimpy in our over-intellectualized versions of self; from where does that meaningless love affair with pop culture come, and where does it go? Is there fidelity to an image? Using temporary materials like wire, tape and string, the maybes of craft materials, he collages a bridge to our contemporary, short-fused patience, that demands instantaneous newness. Gantert embraces the potentiality of untethered thinking to consider a new story, but only for a moment. His work strives for this state of being; each emotion, uncomfortable or not, is equal to the next.

Michael Royce offers us a seemingly peaceful, casual stroll through his personal life, rich in color, composition, and candor; he has no secrets. As one reads the paintings – often like script- his narrative becomes heavy and arduous. In one painting, he depicts two sperm dancing, fully dressed in top hat, bow tie, and cane. His Gene Kelly/Fred Astaire reference poses a psychological link to our own validation: performance as an action for higher self-worth. Royce is questioning his own drive as a human, unpacking his identity: internal perception, perceived self and, of course, the truth. His conviction and sincerity drive one's curiosity, transforming each painting into a salacious, comedic cabaret.

These two visionaries deliver an exhibition committed to instinct. Rather than trying to tease out specificity and concept before the hand grabs the brush or pencil hits the page, they simply begin and will psychologize the results indefinitely. Mary Jane Jacob says, "our capacity for being with unfamiliar art depends on our capacity to be comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity." Through *Hamster Wheel*, Gantert and Royce propel that conversation by referencing and memorializing their understanding of the intangible, internalized self from a specific generation and origin. This act of dissecting and re-organizing such research allows the viewer to insert their own experiential significance with contemporary eyes. Getting lost in the perpetual scramble for truth is where the adventure exists.

Patrick Gantert lives and works in Minneapolis, MN. His work consists of drawing, performance, sculpture, and installation. Along with Jennie Ekstrand, he is one half of the curatorial group Sadie Halie Projects and along with Talon Gustafson and Lap Le, he is one third of the now archived cultural quarterly WOW HUH. Patrick's work has been shown nationally and internationally at Culture Room (NY), Fogstand Gallery & Studio (Taiwan), Apothecary Gallery (TN), The Soap Factory (MN), The Fosdick Nelson Gallery at Alfred University (NY), and the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MI) among others. Patrick is a Life Scout.

Michael Royce was born in Arlington, Virginia in 1988. He received his BFA from Carnegie Mellon University in 2007, and his MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2018. He has recently exhibited work at Ada Gallery, Shin Haus, Steven Zevitas Gallery, Sam and Adele Golden Gallery, Future Fair, and the Elizabeth Foundation. Royce has attended residences at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, the Golden Foundation Residency Program, and the Elizabeth Murray Artist Residency, among others. He has received grants from the Rauschenberg Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation and the Heinz Endowments, as well as the David Wurtzel Memorial Fellowship from Virginia Commonwealth University. He was recently featured in two issues of New American Painting and on the cover of the Poetry Project's August 2020 issue of The Recluse. Royce currently teaches in the Art Foundation Program and the Communication Arts Department at Virginia Commonwealth University.

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 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 who 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, August 6th 5pm-8pm

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

Headstone Gallery
28 Hurley Ave.
Kingston, NY 12401