

HEADSTONE

Other Lands

Elizabeth McGrady and Michelle Summers

October 1 – 30, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Headstone Gallery is thrilled to announce *Other Lands*, a two-person exhibition with Elizabeth McGrady and Michelle Summers. Moving from the astronomical, utopic perspective of becoming the first Martian mother, McGrady presents an enchanting series of 30 haunting, yet intimate photographs about her Celtic-Paganistic history and relationship with Earth's Moon. Summers' intricately carved, robotic felines are ripe with sarcastic and cheeky text etched into the surface; she embraces a non-filtered commentary while serving a sophisticated link to our civilizations past. *Other Lands* suspends an altruistic candor that calms the soul.

This new body of photographs by Elizabeth McGrady are pulled directly from her experience living in her now deceased grandmother's haunted, coastal, Rhode Island home. Photography that uses place as its subject often feels like an intentful search for evidence. However, these works come as a gentle embrace, perhaps a guide for hope; they document life continued beyond the heartbeat. In one work, she focuses her lens on the clear membrane of a jellyfish, *The Maiden*; its celestial, NASA-esk aesthetic pulls one back out into the universe- not to see likeness, rather to affirm its endlessness. She says, "The work exists as a performance at its very core. Similar to my previous work, *Martian Mother*, my body and physical being plays a central role to the resulting narrative and imagery. To create this work, I slept in the light of the moon for 3 full moon cycles to obtain a state of lunacy." Pulling from the origin of the word lunacy, it is a belief that sleeping under the light of the full moon would provoke a madness from within. Further, it was believed the lunatic could not tell the difference between the waking world and their realm of dreams. "The lines between reality and slumber didn't blur or gray, they vanished and the subject could not reestablish that boundary." *Other Lands* maneuvers beyond the internal demarcated axis; it is reflexive and constant.

Embarking on a new direction in her practice, Michelle Summers holds onto her studio potter roots with large, vessel-like sculptures, ruminating on value systems and her obsession with antiquity. Language used to define an object's being creates a social commonality, a kind of connection to each other that serves both as value and devotion to time. One is reminded of Martin Puryear's praise of tools (objects of utility) saying, "I am interested in trades in the way people make things- they are not done with an artistic motive, they are done with a utilitarian motive". Summers yearns for this lasting relationship citing one of her favorite objects, a Roman ring (jewelry) depicting a warrior stabbing an insect. Thus no question to her use of ceramics- it is simply forever (intact or broken). Her practice is a testament to this potential lifespan, cutting, carving, and crafting each work using techniques and processes that are as ancient as history itself. This new body of work possesses a Trojan Horse mentality through her belief that animals- specifically cats- have much more power in our universe than one may ever comprehend. She is optimistic in text and sentiments, a world with a wealth of potential and through, humor, perhaps not.

McGrady and Summers are open about their commitment to tarot and letting the powers that be assist in one's outlook- in the moment and for the future- as well as inward at one's self. This exhibition records an unfolding of their willingness to believe- confidence, and equally, a surrender to control. It is interesting to think about makers- artists- that think or make as an action - are seemingly the commander of their ship. Stephen Sondheim says, "you decide what's right, you decide what's good." *Other Lands* is the action of falling, a catch and release of what feels true and the ability to know (feel) the difference.

Elizabeth McGrady (b. 1994, she/her) is an artist based in Austin, Texas. She graduated in May 2020 from Virginia Commonwealth University with an M.F.A. in photography and a B.A. from Smith College in 2016. Her artistic practice is centered around the reach for entities just outside of the human grasp. Blurring the spheres of religion and science, McGrady's work examines spaces that rest on the delicate line between fiction and nonfiction. She utilizes analogue and digital processes to make large scale photographic prints and handmade artist books. In addition to her artistic practice, McGrady is an adjunct professor of photography at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Michelle Summers (b.1981, she/her) is an Assistant Professor of Art at Kent State University. She earned a MFA from the University of Minnesota and a BFA from The New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University. Michelle was a resident artist at the Northern Clay Center, the Archie Bray Foundation, and the Holter Museum of Art. Articles about her work have been published in *Ceramics: Contemporary Artists Working In Clay*, *Ceramics Monthly Magazine*, and *DPI Magazine*. She currently lives in a 1919 Sears house in Akron Ohio with her cat "Piper" and her kiln "Lil Hot Tea".

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, October 1, 5pm-8pm

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

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