

HEADSTONE

Some Small Threats

Michael McGrath

September 2 – October 1, 2023

For Immediate Release:

Headstone is excited to announce a solo exhibition, *Some Small Threats*, by Michael McGrath. The show comprises drawings and paintings ranging in scale from intimate to engulfing. McGrath carefully unravels a cataloged group of characters and encounters, perpetually unsure of who exactly is the antagonist. A set of severed hands, an 8-armed bat, and/or a few anthropomorphized clouds are riddled with smirks and awkward salutations. Like a court reporter, one feels as though McGrath's fictitious musings are moving faster than real-time. Endless dialogue and imperative details of this other world initiates curiosity in the unfamiliar.

McGrath's practice continues to be informed by his consciously naive experience with mysticism, religion, and cults. In this new body of work, the forced perspective seems closer, sharper, and calculated. Still maintaining a crude sensibility, a kind of blurring of foreground/background, he begins this story focused on the contours of figurative form. In *Magic practice, prelude to transfer, 2023*, a figure appears on the left, reaching for a ball or perhaps the sun, or pile of mustard, with turquoise cat-nails; it's peculiar, formally balanced, saturated, and ambiguously funny. Additionally, his mark making is relieving to look at, as it feels like he too is enjoying the pursuit.

With a career spanning over twenty years, it is most interesting to see his progression, a constant test of what is truthful and simultaneously uncomfortable. Afterall, questions are the driving force behind newness and informative thought. Moving from texture and pattern to color block paintings, and now deeply invested in open narrative is remarkable. McGrath keeps his work fresh for himself and that organic process ensures a generous, imaginative experience for the rest of us. His work converses with contemporaries such as Richard Nickel, Esther Pearl Watson, with an urgency that feels a bit like Richard Boseman.

Humans categorize threats into one of the following: direct, indirect, veiled, or conditional. *Some Small Threats* is messy, nestling itself within the undercurrent of all of them. However, McGrath gently passes the baton to viewership; you are responsible for your fears, desires, dreams, and sometimes the fate of your experience. *Some Small Threats* hold space for one to follow intuition and enjoy it. A McGrath narrative is yours to devour.

Michael McGrath (b. 1977) is an American artist and painter, with a parallel career in graphic design. He lives and works in Rhinebeck, New York's Hudson Valley. His most recent works draw inspiration from his contemporary surroundings in upstate New York and its history, as well as from his naive curiosity about the mysticism, mythology, and religious cults. His skulls and ghosts represent the afterlife and death with a dash of joy and hope. His faces are frequently those of gods, deities, or the deceased, and he believes that "...if there were gods, ghosts or magic, they would exist in nature and in the landscape; not just beings in the sky, but also in the ground, in the trees, in the flowers and in the animals."

McGrath has given his audience the freedom to connect with their actual selves, find refuge in their own strength, and create space to become their own gods with the similar audacity of a kid. He has most recently shown work in Rhinebeck, New York, Germany, Belgium, and Beijing, China.

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, September 2nd, 5pm-8pm

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

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