

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THAIS MATHER: WESTERN BLUE

August 11–October 15, 2021

CURATOR & PRESS PREVIEW WITH ARTIST

Wednesday, August 11, 1–2pm

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, August 13, 5–7pm

ARTIST OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, August 14, 12–1pm

LANTERN & CANDLE LIGHTING WITH ARTIST

Friday, August 27, 7–9pm



© Thais Mather

(August 2021) “Whenever I’ve lost hope in the past few years, I go on a walk and watch for flashes of blue,” says **Thais Mather**. The New Mexico artist is referring to the western bluebirds that live in her garden and the surrounding high desert terrain. They’re often preyed upon by fiercely territorial swallows, but they manage to thrive. Mather mirrors and magnifies the experience of spotting one in her new exhibition **Western Blue**, suspending a **20-by-20-foot, cloth-and-metal bluebird lantern in form & concept’s atrium space**. The monumental sculpture crowns a **5,000-square-foot solo show—Mather’s second major display at the gallery—featuring paintings, sculptures, drawings and installation art**. It also forms the heart of Mather’s exploration of the collective consciousness during a time in which we are not sure how much longer humanity will endure. **An Opening Reception for *Western Blue* will be held on Friday, August 13, 5-7pm followed by an Artist Open House on Saturday, August 14, 12-1pm. A special event to light the lantern and candles will be held on Friday August 27, 7-9 pm.**

“For me, the pandemic was a time of deeply listening to the non-human animate world and surrounding myself with family,” says Mather. “In *Western Blue*, I sought to create work that spirits the everyday with magic.” The show includes an immersive installation of 100 “evil eye” paintings; 20 interactive wax sculptures cast from the artist’s own arms and hands; four pointillist drawing studies of “spirit masks” unearthed from the Judean Hills; and the aforementioned bluebird lantern, which was collaboratively fabricated with local artist Amy Westphal. “As always, Thais has chosen a dazzling array of materials with which to express herself,” says Gallery Director Jordan Eddy. “One unifying theme is vision as a bridge to the unknown. We see faster than we can rationally process, and that opens up emotional conduits to unexpected things. Another theme, of course, is the ecstasy and despair of the color blue.”

Mather and Eddy have maintained a curatorial conversation about *Western Blue* since 2019, soon after the closing of Mather’s first form & concept solo exhibition *Reckless Abandon*. Early in that three-year span, Mather and her partner Todd Ryan White had their daughter Ember. “Since Ember, I’ve felt an almost painful connection to the living world,” says Mather. “The color blue embodies that—it’s beyond the bounds of beauty because it references grief, mourning, sadness—but also our world and that which we really don’t know or understand. It’s beyond our vision.”

The artist at times references ancient iconography in the new body of work, but the overall effect is eerily futuristic and alien-like. “Whether she’s depicting animals or elements of the human form, Thais is drawing our attention to embodiment in strange and compelling ways,” Eddy says. This conversation is informed and enriched by Mather’s interest in the generative and objectified experiences of womanhood. Thus, Mather’s overarching intention for *Western Blue* was to reconnect viewers with their own bodies. “I desire a sanctuary for you, a place where you can unravel and be yourself,” she says. “Our preconceived notions of the mundane and ordinary often obscure the fantastical. Seeing is extraordinary, birds are extraordinary. That we came from one microorganism and out of the blue is phenomenal.”

form & concept

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Thais Mather is an installation artist born and based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Spanning sculpture, printmaking, painting, new media, and installation, Thais' work explores themes of feminism, authorship, mythology, the objectification of culture and women's labor. Mather has been a student and teacher of feminism for a decade. She holds an MFA in installation art and feminist theory from the Vermont College of Fine Arts where she is now a Graduate Professor of Art. She is a recipient of the Shipley Swan Fellowship for Printmaking, the Levin Lutz Fellowship for Installation and Research, and the LewAllen Grant for Educators. She has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in galleries and fairs across the country, including Gallery Sonja Roesch (Houston) and Select Art Fair (New York) among others.

Mather also owns and operates Good Folk Gallery in Santa Fe, NM with her husband, artist Todd Ryan White. The focus of Good Folk Gallery is to support and create careers for folk artists from Northern New Mexico and Oaxaca, Mexico.

ABOUT FORM & CONCEPT

form & concept challenges the perceived distinctions between art, craft, and design. We dispute the historic use of these terms to divide artists and rank material culture. Our programming acts as a conversation between many converging disciplines, harnessing the power of contemporary creative practice to shatter entrenched narratives. form & concept mounts exhibitions of regional and international art. We engage the community through educational initiatives including workshops, lectures, and artist residencies.

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