

LAUREL GITLEN

465 GRAND STREET
SUITE 4C
NEW YORK, NY 10002

T 212 837 2854

SPACE

MARCH 5 - APRIL 16, 2022

DAVID BYRD, OWEN FU, RYAN MCLAUGHLIN, DIANNA MOLZAN, YU NISHIMURA, ADRIANNE RUBENSTEIN, TARA WALTERS

Shatner almost immediately began to explain the feeling of escaping the Earth's atmosphere, but waited patiently while Bezos stopped him to grab a bottle of champagne, which he sprayed on the other crew members as well as the assembled guests. "Everybody in the world needs to see it," Shatner continued. "This comforter of blue that we have around us. We think, Oh, that's blue sky. And then suddenly you shoot through it, all of a sudden, like you whip off a sheet when you've been asleep, and you're looking into blackness. Into black ugliness." He began to gesture down and then up, speaking in the trademark cadences that are so fondly familiar to fans of his appearances as Captain James T. Kirk, the commander of the Starship Enterprise, on "Star Trek." "There is mother and Earth and comfort, and, there . . ." He gestured into the air, squinting toward the sun. "Is—is there death? Is that death? Is that the way death is?" Bezos, a longtime Trekkie who had a cameo role as an extraterrestrial in the 2016 film "Star Trek Beyond," nodded. "I mean, whatever those other guys are doing," Shatner added, likely referring to Bezos's billionaire competitors at SpaceX (Elon Musk) and Virgin Galactic (Richard Branson). "What you have given me is the most profound experience I can imagine." His voice cracked, and Bezos hugged him again. "I hope I never recover from this," Shatner said.

-Neima Jahromi, The New Yorker Magazine, October 14, 2021

This exhibition brings together seven painters whose work explores real, fictional and imagined spaces: painterly space, psychological space, meditative space, geographic and cosmic space. In turns odd, melancholic, humorous, twee, breezy, sublime, and absurd, the works in the show share an attitude more than any unifying style or subject matter. Painting and its ability to resist legibility, to contain multitudes of conflicting emotions, to craft truths and lies, and to oscillate between medium and image, is one central concern. But more significantly each artist in this exhibition manipulates space in their own idiosyncratic and mysterious ways confounding illusions of depth with marks that rest right on the surface like jam, dismantling depth of field with clunky angles and knowing omissions, and theatrical op-art tactics that read like a formal joke. The paintings in this exhibition open up possibilities to hide things, to describe feelings, to locate desire, to dream, and to consider spaces beyond terrestrial limits.

David Byrd (1926–2013) David Byrd joined the Merchant Marines as a teenager and was later drafted into the Army. A drawing enthusiast, he used his G.I. Bill to study at the Dauphin School of Art in Philadelphia, and then later continued his studies at the Ozenfant School of Fine Arts. In 1958, Byrd took a position as an orderly in the psychiatric ward of a VA Hospital where he cared for patients damaged by their experiences in WWII, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. For the next 30 years, Byrd's paintings and drawings focused

on his extraordinary and empathetic observations of those in his care, and their interactions with each other and staff. After Byrd retired in 1988, he settled in the Catskills and worked full-time painting from memory the people and places from his past.

Stylistically, Byrd's work bears influence from different art historical styles, including Cubism and Magic Realism. A luminous, dream-like haze suffuses detailed renderings of his subjects which combine realistic portrayals with fantasy and insert unsettling psychology into tranquil scenes. Subtle colors and a dry brush and thinned oil technique furthers a forlorn, melancholic tone in his paintings. His first solo exhibition was with Greg Kucera Gallery, Seattle in 2012, and he passed away only a few months later in 2013. Posthumous exhibitions include a two-person exhibition at Zieher-Smith & Horton (2015), and solo exhibitions at Fleisher Ollman Gallery, Philadelphia (2018) and White Columns and Anton Kern Gallery (2019).

Owen Fu (b. 1988 Guilin, China; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA) Owen Fu's paintings are both effortlessly informal and startlingly serious. Often depicting spaces that are dark, or just barely illuminated, they exist somewhere between confessional autobiography and spectacular fantasy, using avatar-like actors to depict desire, absurdist humor, common joy and aching loneliness. Ghosts, lamps, candles and barely-there faces further a sense of searching or worry as they dissolve into awkward homoerotic scenes, agrarian landscapes and diffuse backgrounds. Fu has Bachelor's degrees in both Philosophy and Art, and an MFA from ArtCenter College of Design, Pasadena. Recent solo exhibitions include O-Town House, Los Angeles; Balice Hertling, Paris; and Mine Project, Hong Kong

Ryan McLaughlin (b. 1980, Worcester, MA; lives and works in Worcester, MA) Ryan McLaughlin's paintings are simultaneously poetic and graphic, incorporating fragmented text, bits of signage and singular pictograms. His pictures reveal built-up surfaces in a muted and Morandi-like palette, and errant flecks of color meet between planes, using chance to suggest off-register printing, pixelation and subtle 3D vibrations. Sharing visual strategies with currencies, manuscripts, and logos, McLaughlin's work points obliquely to systems of visual information and value-making, with his own wry pictorial language. "Space" is also a recurring theme in a sub-series of his pictures. Recent solo exhibitions include the Atlanta Contemporary, Atlanta; Adams and Ollman, Portland, OR; and Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne. McLaughlin will have a solo exhibition at the gallery in Fall 2022.

Dianna Molzan (b. 1972, Tacoma, WA; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA) Dianna Molzan is most well-known for her paintings that explore the supports and limits of painting as sculptural objects, however, some recent works evince an equally astute interrogation of flat pictorial logic. In recent paintings of doors and mirrors, brightly painted prop-like compositions are also symbolic images of public life and passages. With dramatic, pop color and optical effects, these works also evoke everyday pastimes like grooming and self-contemplation. As Molzan herself notes, "the mirror remains an essential element for transforming our animal selves into something more transcendent." Recent solo exhibitions include Kaufmann Repetto, New York; the ICA Boston and The Whitney Museum of American Art. Her work is included in numerous public collections including the Hammer Museum, and LACMA, Los Angeles; SFMoMA; the ICA Boston; The Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis; and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Yu Nishimura (b. 1982, Kanagawa, Japan; lives and works in Kanagawa) Yu Nishimura makes paintings which echo the haziness of a fleeting memory. Using traditional painting techniques, the Kanagawa born artist blurs and records landscapes and scenes that are at once recognizable and dreamlike. Layers of faces, roadside views, forests, oceans, cars and animals rise from the muted ether of his landscapes, as if viewed from inside a swiftly passing train. Recent solo exhibitions include Dawid Radziszewski Gallery, Warsaw; New York, KAYOKOYUKI, Tokyo; and Galerie Crevecoeur, Paris. Nishimura's work is included in many public collections including: X Museum, Beijing, The Rachofsky Collection, Dallas, M Woods Museum, Beijing, and the Kanazawa 21st Century Museum, Kanazawa.

Adrienne Rubenstein (b. 1983, Montreal, Canada; lives and works in New York, NY) Adrienne Rubenstein's vibrantly hued and impressionistic paintings draw equally from memory, cookbook illustrations and art historical referents. Armed with a personal sense of humor bordering on the absurd, her paintings have a frenetic and piled-on quality that resists formulaic and easy approaches to image-making. Free-spirited and confident mark-making, and a personal lexicon of eclectic symbols like hearts, broccoli, mugs, and fruit elicits strangely honest and transcendent moments suspended in paint. Recent solo exhibitions include Broadway Gallery, New York; The Pit, Los Angeles; Deli Gallery, Brooklyn; and Tif Sigfrids, Athens, GA.

Tara Walters (b. 1990, Washington D.C., lives and works in Los Angeles, CA) Tara Walters makes large scale paintings using oil-based paints, pure pigment, and saltwater from the Pacific Ocean. Stained, rubbed, and subtly iridescent, Walters' paintings combine swelling movement and transparency, optical effects that mirror her interest in celestial bodies, prismatic auras, and other sublime and romantic visions. Recent works depict gardens, secret gates (with skeleton keys), hot air balloons, butterflies, and hidden woodland creatures, imagery that is fantastic, magic and symbolic. Walters received a BFA from the Savannah College of Art and Design, Savannah, GA; and an MFA from the Art Center College of Art. Her recent solo show, *Dropping In* (Kristina Kite Gallery, Los Angeles) was included in Jack Bankowsky's "Top Ten of 2021" for Artforum.