

Benedict Scheuer

Doubt and Love

November 9, 2023 — January 13, 2024
Floor 2

Press Release

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Marlborough New York is delighted to present *Doubt and Love*, an exhibition of the Columbus, Ohio-based, interdisciplinary artist, Benedict Scheuer. The exhibition, the artist's first solo project in New York City, will open on Thursday, November 9, 2023, with a reception from 6pm until 8pm.

Benedict Scheuer practices a quiet spirituality—felt while sitting on his porch, tending his dahlias, and working in the studio. Within this practice, drawing and painting are instruments of devotion, connecting the body to that which exists outside of it. The artist's introspective, intuitive, and improvisational drawings—rendered on free-flowing Hobotai silk and paper—employ a simultaneously unique and familiar visual language that invites us to witness the artist's explorations in belonging. Here, drawings on silk come together in swooping, lyrical lines as swaths of (predominantly) pastel and jewel-hued dyes touch, blend, and bleed into one another like stained glass windows or the roots of plants. The airy silks are both complimented and contrasted by mixed-media drawings on paper in which Scheuer, by comparison, employs a more physical, textural, and “earthier” style of mark making.

Scheuer's drawings always begin with a box, a plane within the plane of his chosen material, signaling the beginning of a physical stream of consciousness. “From this initial outline,” Scheuer says, “other lines branch, peel, and grow into a network of shapes that hug and fit together as if guided by the rules of puzzles or ecosystems.” Inhabiting Scheuer's ecosystems is vibrant and Edenic imagery, drawn from the gardens that he tends and his meditative practice. Such images include flora, fauna, insects, and birds, the numbers one through ten (signaling Scheuer's counting of his own breaths), and symbols evocative of the interior, or spirit, such as hearts and stars. These forms appear throughout the exhibition and Scheuer's practice at-large, though variations on this lexicon, however subtle, excitingly showcase how objects made from a standard set of rules can vary simply because they were made at different times and/or in different places.

Until recently, Scheuer's silks have hung flush to the wall. As viewers, sometimes we witness the work at rest, static like a more conventional canvas; in other instances, they assume more lifelike, sculptural qualities, fluttering and bowing, whether from human activity or changes in the atmosphere of the space in which they are hung. In addition to the square and rectangular silks, the exhibition features a new series made during the artist's 2023 residency at the Skowhegan



Bird Pretending to be a Moth Pretending to be a Sunrise (3), August 2023
dyed Hobotai silk
39 × 72 in. / 99.1 × 182.9 cm

School of Painting and Sculpture. In these works, square pieces of silk have been torn by hand and reconfigured. Not only intending to further explore the materiality of silk, Scheuer also relates this gesture to the act of drawing a horizon line. Each result subsequently reveals a sculptural form that, at once, resembles the spread wings of a bird, moth, or even a type of angelic figure. Scheuer expands: “Within this gesture...the miraculous occurs; from one motion two bodies are born—one is sky and one is earth.”

Another motif emerges in two key works in the form of the written word. In the first instance—*June 16, 2023*—a short text has been inscribed onto the silk in lieu of the artist's more familiar imagery. Journaling and written reflection are crucial to the artist's practice; however, the words transposed onto this work are not derived from a particular entry. Indeed, Scheuer produced *June 16, 2023* under the same rules of improvisation, the recorded sentences stemming from a focused stream of conscious. The work therefore offers an interesting juxtaposition between the public-facing nature of exhibited artwork and one's modest, all be them private and personal, written musings.

The latter piece that incorporates writing is a sculptural object. While the exhibition's title, *Doubt and Love*, is borrowed from that of said sculptural object, it unlike anything else on view. In fact, it is

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unlike anything Scheuer has ever made—a butterfly net. Here, the artist continues his use of a material familiar to him—silk—but he has transformed it, arranging and sewing it into something that is both poetic and utilitarian. Inscribed with the phrase “Doubt and Love,” it becomes a quiet centerpiece of the exhibition; “performing gesturally as a wish, hope, swish, it operates from a held position upon the earth while connecting its imagined operator to the sky and those with wings.” Not unlike the torn silks, *Doubt and Love* (both the individual artwork and exhibition as a whole), strives to presents a parallel bridge between sky and earth.

Benedict Scheuer (b. 1992, Minnesota, he/him) has exhibited in solo presentations at FORELAND (via Abattoir Gallery), Catskill, New York; No Place Gallery, Columbus, Ohio; Belle Isle Viewing Room, Detroit, Michigan; United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, Saint Paul, Minnesota; and Lincoln Memorial University’s Center for the Arts Gallery, Cumberland Gap, Tennessee. Group presentations include the Pizutti Collection, Columbus, Ohio; Massillon Museum, Massillon, Ohio; and the FRONT International: Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art hosted by the Akron Art Museum, Akron, Ohio. Scheuer received his B.A. in Environmental Studies from Yale (2014), MFA in Visual Art from the Ohio State University (2020), and recently completed residency at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (2023). Other residences and speaking engagements include GCAC Dresden Artist Exchange (2023–present); Artist in Residence: Columbus Printed Arts Center (2022); Guest Speaker, Wexner Center for the Arts; and ACRE Residency (2018). Scheuer lives and works in Columbus, Ohio.

Benedict Scheuer: Doubt and Love will remain on view through January 13, 2024, in the second-floor gallery of 545 West 25th Street. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10am until 6pm.

The Directors of Marlborough New York are very grateful to No Place Gallery for their collaboration on this project.

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