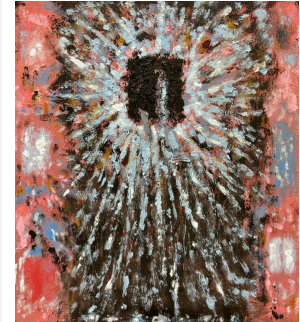
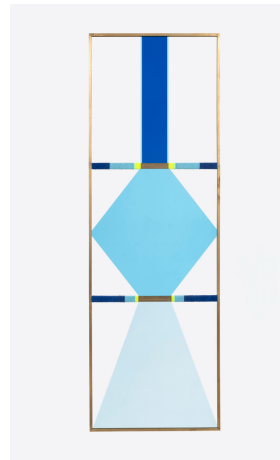


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Presenting

New Voices: Julia Callis, Jen P. Harris, Claudia Peña Salinas, Thiang Uk

January 24th – March 7th, 2025

Opening reception Friday, January 24th, 2025

With our first show of the new year, Abattoir brings together artists working in Cleveland, Detroit, Baltimore, and Mexico across mediums and generations. This group show features four artists who use materiality to conjure spiritual forces, primeval imagination, and history in ways that reach beyond fact and science into other realms. This emphasis on materials leads the viewer to approach the work experientially, from Claudia Peña Salinas' crystalline brass, plexiglass and wool *Ali*, suspended from the ceiling to Julia Callis' matte paintings on panel, unfolding joyfully across the gallery's long wall. Jen P. Harris exhibits a new series of multi-layered woven paintings, while Thiang Uk's heavily impasto oil paintings of nature and the sublime also explore touch and emotion through a layered approach.

Julia Callis is a Detroit native conjuring mythical landscapes that meld figures from medieval manuscripts, fairytales, and merry-go-rounds with an impromptu impression of the vastness of contemporary Detroit. The world of her paintings is filled with charming *non sequiturs* and mystery. While her work is narrative, their subjects remain just out of reach, poetic and suggestive. Floating against muted rose and greens, we find escaped pheasants, singing radishes, and truncated merry-go-round horses bobbing in and out of the frame. Callis creates a painted world poised between abstraction—her objects float unmoored in pleasant, unarticulated spaces—and surreal figuration. Callis convinces us to embrace her fictional worlds completely.

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Callis holds a BFA from the Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan. She has exhibited at the Green Gallery, Milwaukee, Reyes Finn, Detroit, MOCAD Detroit (auction) and several other Detroit area venues. She has exhibited previously at Abattoir.

Claudia Peña Salinas' work is grounded in conceptual research, moving between sculpture, printmaking, and installation in projects based in geological and economic histories of her native Mexico. Placemaking, geological time, and minimalist forms converge in deeply researched series about pre-Hispanic sites. The two works here—one sculpture, one wall piece—each address the artist's search for the original site of the ancient Tlaloc monolith, the male Aztec god of rain and water. The monolith is currently displayed at the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. As she transfers work from the landscape, where many projects begin, into the gallery space, Peña Salinas draws on strategies of 1960s and '70s land artists such as Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt, or the Center for Land Use Interpretation to ask viewers to be empowered to question, "who writes history?" Peña Salinas uses wax, transfer print images, brass, wool, colored plexiglass, scavenged images, mapping strategies, and atmospheric light conditions to reframe these questions in elegant works that refocus the viewer on the spiritual and nurturing aspects of Mexican culture.

Peña Salinas holds a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from Hunter College, New York. She has held residencies in Europe and Mexico, and has exhibited extensively in galleries and museums throughout the US, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. Her work is held in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, FL. Recent solo shows include the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, FL (2024), Galerie Pelaires, Mallorca, Spain, (2023), the ASU Museum, Tempe AZ (2019). She is represented by Embajada Gallery, Puerto Rico/NY. This is her first show with Abattoir.

Over the past two years, **Jen P. Harris** has developed a wide range of paintings based on weaving initially created at Praxis Fiber Workshop in Cleveland. As with many contemporary artists attentive to fiber and weaving, Anni Albers (1899-1994) comes to mind. In *On Weaving* (1965), Albers discusses craft as an antidote to modern anxiety, a way to be "close to the stuff the world is made of." Harris refers to their newest works as *loom-paintings*, since the painting itself functions as a loom. In these, yarn is vertically stretched over painted panels, creating a warp. Visual intricacies develop as the warp shifts from open to woven across the surface of a painted canvas underlayer, creating a play between clarity and obfuscation that is the artist's intention. A crucial aspect of these works relates to earlier two-dimensional paintings and drawings which plumb ideas of visual confusion, masking, and layering, obscuring the human forms—jesters and commedia dell'arte figures—stand ins for the artist? As they state, "It is this perceptual confusion that interests me: the way it takes the work beyond my preconceptions. My primary concern is to go beyond what I know."

Harris holds a BFA from Yale University and MFA from Queens College (CUNY). They have received several grants, artist residency opportunities, and exhibited extensively throughout the United States. Most recently, they have exhibited in "Queer Histories" at Zygoté Press (with the

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LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland, “Painting Deconstructed” curated by Leeza Meskin at Ortega y Gasset Projects, Brooklyn, NY, and “Under this Mask, another mask” curated by Sam Adams at Abigail Ogilvy Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. Harris recently opened a solo project at the Kent State University Museum, currently on view. They exhibited with Abattoir in “On Intimacy” (2024).

Thiang Uk immigrated with his family to the United States from Myanmar as a child and resides in Baltimore. Personal history remains central to his painting, “to have a balance of beauty, spirituality, but also, to make sure that struggle is a part of my work.” Thiang Uk’s oil paintings, ranging in size from intimate to vast, place the viewer in magical spaces, from closely viewed landscapes to atmospheric celestial horizons. There is a non-specific extra-temporality in the work that encourages meditation and reflection. The surfaces of the paintings are heavily worked impasto, merging dry oil stick with oil paint and other materials, speaking of direct process, layers and duration, and bringing the viewer along on the journey.

Thiang Uk’s latest work reflects the artist’s ambition and commitment to the personal power of oil painting. He holds a BFA from Hunter College in New York and an MFA from MICA in Baltimore. He will be featured in a solo show at BUREAU gallery in New York in the spring, with other announcements coming soon. This is his first show with Abattoir.

Images (from left):

Julia Callis, *See it! Squish it! Report it! Make it! Lick it! Taste it!*, 2024, acrylic on panel, 19 x 25.25 inches

Jen P. Harris, *Blue Ridge*, 2024, acrylic paint, cotton yarn, panel, hardware, painted wood frame, 19.5 x 15.5 x 1.5 inches

Claudia Peña Salinas, *Ali*, 2021, brass, dyed cotton thread, and acrylic, 70 5/8 x 23 1/2 inches

Thiang Uk, *Ray*, 2024, oil on panel, 10 x 8 inches