



Underland Gallery
Community Art Space

457 77th Street, Unit 1
Brooklyn, NY 11209

Maxim Elrod
Ester Kwon
Hannah Salyer

Co-founders, co-directors
info@underlandgallery.com
underlandgallery.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 3, 2022

DEATH MASK 2022

Melika Abikenari, John Avelluto, Day Brière, Clare Burson, Katrina Demarcus Santiago, Sabina Hahn, Ellen Coleman Izzo, Ji Yong Kim, Megan Mehta, Isolina Minjeong, Sophie Page, Paul Wirhun/EGGMAN

Curated by Maxim Elrod, Ester Kwon, Hannah Salyer

On View: October 29 – December 16, 2022

Opening Reception: Saturday, October 29, 2022 5 – 9PM

Underland Gallery is thrilled to present DEATH MASK 2022, a group show featuring twelve artists and their interpretations of the death mask.

The concept of the death mask is most commonly associated with the practice of creating a plaster cast of a person's face. Usually, this mould was taken to serve as a reference for portraiture upon the death of the individual. Famous faces such as Napoleon, Stalin, and Lincoln were preserved forever in morbid repose. However, if we look beyond this narrow definition, we can see countless examples of death portrayed in mask form across a myriad of cultures and belief systems. From the Mexican tradition of skull masks dancing down the street on Dia de los Muertos to the fearsome Oni demon masks of Japan, death masks vary wildly in their shapes and manifestations. In such instances, Death is given its own visage. Through the mask a portal is formed from the noumena to our living realm. Considering the breadth of the concept of a "death mask", Underland has given the participating artists free reign to interpret the concept in whatever way they see fit.

At the footsteps of Hallows Eve, Underland Gallery invites you to immerse yourself in an experience thick with mythos, imagination, and darkness; to celebrate the shadows, to celebrate what lies in the Underland.

Melika Abikenari is an artist and educator based in Brooklyn. She holds a B.A. from the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture and an M.F.A. in sculpture from Cranbrook Academy of Art. An inaugural



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recipient of the Creatives Rebuild New York grant, Abikenari recently joined Art Cake as an artist-in-residence. In 2020, she received a scholarship from the Anderson Ranch Arts Center and a grant from the Meredith Beau CAA '97 and Scott Beau Materials Fund. Her work has been exhibited at Textile Arts Center (Brooklyn, NY), Cranbrook Art Museum (Bloomfield Hills, MI), The Sculpture Center (Cleveland, OH), PØST (Los Angeles, CA), The Main Museum (Los Angeles, CA), Noysky Projects (Los Angeles, CA), New Wight Gallery (Los Angeles, CA), and ARENA 1 Gallery (Santa Monica, CA), among others. She has worked on curatorial projects at Frogtown Photo Lab (Los Angeles, CA), Sculpture Gallery at Broad Art Center (Los Angeles, CA), and Trunk Gallery (Los Angeles, CA). In 2018, she co-led the Intersectional Artivism workshop at the Immigrant Youth Empowerment Conference at UCLA. In the same year, she was interviewed for "Film: Art & Identity," which was featured in the Anthropological Short Film Festival 2018 at UCLA's Cotsen Institute of Archaeology.

John Avelluto currently lives and works in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. He received his MFA at CUNY Brooklyn College where he studied with Elizabeth Murray, Vito Acconci, William T Williams and Jennifer McCoy.

Day Brière is a Haitian born, Brooklyn based digital artist and ceramicist. Her creative process draws inspiration from self-taught Haitian folk artists, surrealism and pop art. In her practice, the artist seeks to explore themes of play, memory, homeland and dreamscape.

Clare Burson, originally from Tennessee, received her BA degree in history from Brown University. She then spent over a decade recording albums and touring internationally as a critically acclaimed singer-songwriter. Her release, *Silver And Ash*, explored her grandmother's escape from Nazi Germany. It was released by Rounder Records in 2010 and was featured in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, and on NPR. Burson began her work as a visual artist in 2015, a few months after the birth of her second child. She studied at Greenwich House Pottery in New York City and Anderson Ranch Arts Center in Snowmass, Colorado before establishing her ceramics practice out of Gasworks, a community studio based in Brooklyn. Today, Burson works primarily in ceramics, incorporating textiles and found objects into her sculptures.

Katrina DeMarcus Santiago is a Latiné artist based in Atlanta, Georgia. Her work explores hidden identities and memories through textural sculptures and paintings. She received her BFA from Pratt Institute and is the current resident artist of Mudfire Ceramic Studio and Gallery.

Sabina Hahn is a Brooklyn based illustrator, animator, and sculptor who loves stories and tall tales. Sabina has been drawing from before she was born; she is a master of capturing subtle fleeting expressions and the most elusive of gestures. She is also a co-founder of Interval Studios.

Ellen Coleman Izzo is a visual artist working primarily with printmaking mediums. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, maintaining a studio



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practice while also a committed arts teacher with the NYCDOE. Her desire to build a community around an etching press has resulted in a studio expansion and PrintSpace, offering printmaking workshops and press rentals. PrintSpace is devoted to the exploration and experimentation of printmaking techniques for the novice and experienced artist. Ellen has exhibited extensively through the New York Society of Etchers, NARS Foundation, and the Lower East Side Printshop, and has been included in numerous group shows in the US and abroad.

Ji Yong Kim is an artist living and working in Brooklyn, NY, U.S.A. Born in South Korea, He received his B.F.A. from Rhode Island School of Design, and M.F.A. from Montclair State University in New Jersey. He has been an artist in residence in AIRY Yamanashi in Japan, Soaring Gardens in Pennsylvania, and Marpha Foundation in Nepal. He was a recipient of Civil Society Fellowship in Vermont Studio Center, and currently is an artist in residence in ChaShaMa Studio Space program in Brooklyn, New York. He is an instructor of Foundation and Painting programs in Raritan Valley Community College in New Jersey.

Megan Mehta is a multidisciplinary artist from New York who explores ritual expressed through myth and fairytale. Creating magical devices and figures that process play, precaution and safety. I've crossed a certain threshold. I'm banging on whatever I can. I'm seeing death's dick. I'm screaming. An unfamiliar face smiles. I show them each of my teeth.

Isolina Minjeong was born in this nation under God and they were the strongest sperm. A sculptor based in Brooklyn, NY, they earned their Bachelors of Fine Arts in Ceramics from the Maryland Institute College of Art (Class of 2020). Their work has been exhibited by Spring/Break Art Show (2022), the Maine Line Art Center (2022), Strada (2022), Tchotchke (2022), and Clay Art Center (2021) amongst others. They are currently the co director of Doclay Studios in Korea Town, NY.

Sophie Page is a mixed media artist, working in 3D, 2D, and the dimensions in between. Her work has appeared in Reycraft Books, The New Yorker, Narratively, Taproot Magazine, Dunham Brewery American Illustration 36, 3x3 Magazine, Creative Quarterly 35, and The Society of Illustrators.

Paul Wirhun/EGGMAN has been working on eggshells since he was 8 years old, learning the traditional Ukrainian art of pysanky from his mother. This artistic and cultic use of eggs informs his work to this day - as he believes that eggs are events - not simply objects. The shells (while the protective casing for the new life inside) are memories of the primal events that produced the eggs, intended as new life. He has previously exhibited through William-Scott Gallery, Ivy Brown Gallery, Brooklyn Working Artists Coalition, 440 Gallery and others.



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Underland Gallery arose in 2021 to house stories of all kinds and to help foster the creative threads of the South Brooklyn arts community. Founded by Hannah Salyer, Ester Kwon, and Maxim Elrod, Underland strives to be a space for local engagement, fearless expression, and ecstatic amplification of the vibrant creative culture that runs beneath the surface of Bay Ridge and its surrounding neighborhoods.

The gallery's visiting hours are on Saturdays, 12-3PM or by appointment. For more information, please visit underlandgallery.com or contact us directly at info@underlandgallery.com.



Poster illustrated by Ricardo Diseno