



ENGAGE Projects

Announcement for Immediate Release:

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Double, Double Toil and Trouble

Phyllis Bramson & David Leggett

March, 22 - April 27, 2024



David Leggett, *High Vibration Plates Only*, 2024, acrylic, collage, and felt on canvas 28 x 22 in 71.1 x 55.9 cm

Phyllis Bramson, *Basic Truths about Romantic Conditions*, 2023, mixed media, collage, and paint on paper, mounted on panel, 48 x 36 in 121.9 x 91.4 cm

“I want my work to reflect the ambiguity of the every day; thus redemptive and wickedly subversive, gorgeous and undone—something to be celebrated and subject to suspicion as a marginalized site. All at the same time! In many ways, I am a painter of Folly!”—Phyllis Bramson

“Humor is part of my life. It is how my family communicated when I was growing up. Humor was used to cut through the seriousness of life. I use humor in my artwork as a tool to make touchy subject matters more palatable. With humor, there is no subject matter that cannot be discussed.” —David Leggett

ENGAGE Projects is excited to announce our upcoming exhibition, “Double, Double Toil and Trouble” by David Leggett and Phyllis Bramson. The titular incantation derives from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, in which three witches cast a spell on Macbeth over a boiling cauldron, vexing his plans to ruin. Recontextualizing the phrase in this blended exhibition, Bramson and Leggett use elements of collage, comedic relief, and a maximalist style of painting to contribute to contemporary movements of feminist iconography, pop cultural commentary, and the fight against racial injustice. Both borrowing from the dominant cultural aesthetics of their time, the pair’s disparate backgrounds and life experiences coalesce in the taboo, daring to call attention to what others might simply sweep under the rug.

For further information, please contact info@engage-projects.com



Crowdsourcing much of his imagery and text from online communities, 80s and 90s pop culture, and even commentary on his own work, David Leggett recycles media familiar to the masses, using painting as a platform for comedic relief amidst the sometimes grating realities of the day-to-day. His compositions include an array of motifs, including witches and cartoons like Bootleg Bart and Fat Albert, often trading the traditional canvas ratios for squares and circular panels that pull at the nostalgia for vinyl album covers and compact discs. Giving gravity to the small laughs that get us through the day, Leggett says, “I take many of my cues from standup comedians, which I listen to while in my studio. Humor and the use of color are two tools that I employ to bring the viewer in for closer examination.” Leggett’s hyper-modern collage aesthetic and traditional use of allegorical symbolism merge to address recurring themes of hip-hop, art history, sexuality, the racial divide, and the self.

A self-described “painter-comedian,” Bramson’s palette is a colorful array of beauty, humor, love, and lust. Bramson is a Rococo artist of the present day with an acute awareness for painting’s long history of male-gaze media. Engaging with imagery that depicts women as objects of affection rather than humans of individual agency, Bramson flips this narrative on its head by centering women’s empowerment and pleasure with her erotic anecdotes. The female figure is often enlarged in Bramson’s compositions, with male characters depicted in supporting or subservient roles such as holding the subject’s skirt. Her paintings carry an air of consciousness for proper decorum while at the same time contesting these traditions of etiquette and prescribed gender roles. She says, “In the studio I don’t practice good behavior. I maim; I raid; I give myself freedom.” It is this self-emancipatory action that characterizes her practice, connecting deeply with a feminist audience.

Bramson received her BFA in Drawing and Painting from the University of Illinois-Urbana in 1963 followed by her MA in Painting from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1964 and an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1974. She has been awarded grants and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation (1993), the Rockefeller Foundation (1997), and the National Endowment for the Arts (1976 and 1983) among others. She has shown work in galleries and museums in the U.S. and internationally including the New Museum of Contemporary Art in NYC, Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, and the Rockefeller Center for Studio Arte in Bellagio, Italy. Bramson’s work is part of numerous private and public collections such as The Bronx Museum of Arts, Rhode Island School of Art and Design Museum, and the Chazen Museum of Art at the University of Wisconsin-Madison to name a few. Bramson serves as an advisor to MFA students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

David Leggett is a visual artist who lives and works in Los Angeles, California. He received his BFA from Savannah College of Art and Design (2003), and an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (2007). He also attended The Joan Mitchell Foundation Artist-In-Residence program (2018). He ran a daily drawing blog Coco River Fudge Street that started in 2010 and ended in 2016. He has shown his work throughout the United States and internationally, including a recent solo show at Anthony Gallery in Chicago (2021) and a group show titled Hotline at The Long Beach Museum of Art in Long Beach (2022). He received the visual artist award from 3Arts Chicago in 2009.