



Nino Mier Gallery presents a selection of new works by Portland-based artist Blair Saxon-Hill, featuring analog book page collages and monumental fabric works on panel that include new and found materials.

As a material driven artist, Saxon-Hill works across mediums to create figurative collages and assemblages that are pedestrian and raw, turning the viewer to a visceral world of paint and matter to register current cultural and political realities. Throughout the artist's oeuvre, are a cast of characters that she has developed that are queer, surreal, humorous, gritty, and urgent. The characters in Saxon-Hill's current works are born out of the collective experience over the past year's pandemic, where those that we know and do not know are reduced to the proximity of the screen. In today's world, heads have become larger than life and the experience of the other has become less about the totality of personhood, but rather that of talking heads. Saxon-Hill has produced a series of expressive heads that at times include painted fragments of arms and hands alongside the cloth remnants. In Saxon-Hill's *Mother, Poet and the muse, Kiki de Montparnasse*, we see archetypes that dawn vintage crocheted afghans, mopheads, scrub brushes, mohair and tulle and are easily recognizable and at once new. Saxon-Hill activates, limits and exaggerates the senses of her characters as we may have been in the pandemic, as seen in the character of the listener, *Silent Sounds*, and the survivor, *Fevered Prayer*. Further speaking to our crisis, *Die Kissing*, pictures the gambler kissing a die. This work makes a linguistic and subject play to our cultural moment. For unlike Gran Fury's iconic statement "Kissing Doesn't Kill..." produced in the wake of the AIDS crisis, today, Saxon-Hill directs her viewer to the risks of engagement.

Saxon-Hill's stylistic slippage of knowing, generated from the diversity of her materials and manner of her making, is also evident in her, often surreal, paper collages. Obfuscating context, Saxon-Hill's collages most often draw their source material from the textures, shadows, and shapes of published documentation of sculpture. This folding origin and general material uncertainty imbue the collages' characters with juxtapositions that startle or evoke empathy.

In addition to her works on panel and collage works - her sculptures anticipate their relationship to a staged performance and work to ensure that they are capable of conversing with the daily news in installation. At times, her figurative assemblages are found marching in protest around gallery walls or otherwise are organized as a pedestrian frieze. Adding to dimension, the sculptures can be 'read' and further understood through the distinct material lists for each piece which are often long and poetic as they name selected finery and detritus alongside more traditional studio materials.

Blair Saxon-Hill was born in 1979 in Eugene, Oregon and studied studio art at Reed College. She has lived and worked in Portland, Oregon for over 15 years. Blair Saxon-Hill has been awarded fellowships from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission and the Hallie Ford Foundation. Her work has recently been exhibited at the 500m Museum in Sapporo, Japan, JOAN in Los Angeles, VENUS Over Los Angeles, Maccarone LA, the Hallie Ford Museum and Artist Curated Projects. Saxon-Hill's work has been reviewed in numerous arts' publications and two recent solo exhibitions received ArtForum Critics' Picks. Additionally, Saxon-Hill's publications with Soberscove Press and Colpa are forthcoming. Blair Saxon-Hill will be included in the New Museum International Triennial of Contemporary Art opening this year.