

# Lyles & King

## KALEIDOSCOPE

The folk tale of “stone soup” is a familiar one: a beggar comes to the door of a farm house, advertising a magical stone which can produce soup. He asks for just a few ingredients to activate it, and by the end of the story, the farmer’s wife has provided enough of her own goods to make a hearty soup, which they then enjoy together. Artist Olivier Babin applies this story to the second show at his former studio and now ad hoc art space, C L E A R I N G.

Currently showing work by New York based sculptor Esther Kläs and mostly Paris based painter Thomas Fougeirol, the space provides ideal natural light, high ceilings and white walls. Beyond the neutrality of the room, one can view the gleaming, warped mirrored exterior of the former waste management center across the street (the functioning one is down the street) and the expansive sky above the industrial-studio landscape of Bushwick, Brooklyn. Kläs shows a trio of new sculptures with a direct relationship to her body. A pale green cast of her knees sits high atop a concrete pedestal, though it takes some time to identify what exactly these abstracted bulges really are. The size of the tall, top heavy yellow slab with a blue undercoat, was determined by the greatest mass that she could carry on her own. A mold of her forearm pushes down on the floor beneath a long, empty frame of patterned carpet, which hangs down from the ceiling and causes a momentary reversal of the weighty materiality associated with her sculptures. It offers an open window onto one of Fougeirol’s two paintings, in a welcome moment of overlap. As Babin considers the pairing of the two artists, the bright colors and physicality of Kläs’ work make it the generous farmer’s wife to Fougeirol’s wanderer, who can offer only a stone and enough cleverness. Whereas we are able to compose a type of exquisite corpse portrait of Kläs’ body, Fougeirol’s paintings reveal very little. His consistently black paintings are impressed with found material; the larger with pieces of pegboard, creating a series of miniature moons which Babin likened to “an obsessive astronaut mapping the cosmos”, and in a smaller work, a bundle of string. Using his paintings like monoprints, this painting had a twin, its mirrored reflection, above the toilet in the makeshift viewing room.



The idea of Babin giving up his own studio in order for other artists to inhabit it is an unusual one in this particular corner of Bushwick, where every brick warehouse hold hundreds of artists working alone, side- by-side and top of one another. (Both Kläs and Fougeriol have studios in the neighborhood.) Works exist in progress, in storage waiting for a new home, but almost never in a state to be seen; C L E A R I N G provides a moment for these works to live on their own, while remaining in the comfort of the studio environment.

– TAN LUM I –