



Over the Influence Presents

**Brian Robertson**

**Imaginary Friends**

**Exhibition dates: 21 August to 2 October 2021**



**Brian Robertson**, "Brian", 2021, Acrylic on panel, 41.5 x 33.5 cm, 16 x 13 inch.  
Courtesy of the Artist and Over the Influence. Photo credit Grant Gutierrez

Over the Influence is pleased to present American artist Brian Robertson's Asia debut exhibition *Imaginary Friends* in Hong Kong from 21 August to 2 October 2021.

*Imaginary Friends* is a meditative look at last year's social isolation where Robertson found himself weighed down emotionally from quarantine and disconnected from friends and family. The new collection of paintings is an explorative study of the artist's personal connections, artistic practice, self-identity, and preconceived reality.

In the past year Robertson experienced the phenomenon Apophenia, also known as the subconscious' ability to find patterns in seemingly unintelligible data as a way to find meaning amidst confusion. Classic examples of Apophenia is seeing the Man in the Moon, finding animal shapes in clouds and identifying constellations to represent a map of the night sky.

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The origin of Robertson's Apophenia was inspired by memories of loved ones, identifying specific shapes and patterns from the corners of his mind. The concept of *Imaginary Friends* stems from a photograph his friend took. He was inspired to paint the memories of people whose social connection were lost due to quarantine. Being away from loved ones creates misunderstandings, for the subconscious mistake memories as truth. Quarantine revealed to Robertson the primal desire for human contact.

Cactus is a popular motif found throughout his art. Robertson found solace with the American desert landscape, having spent most of his life living in this extreme environment. The paintings in *Imaginary Friends* reference Rorschach tests for the pairing of figures with cacti create a visual representation of a human emotion or an individual's personality. Akin with finding the Man in the Moon, Robertson's Apophenia is revealed in him finding anthropomorphic patterns with cacti and pairing this sensation with his memories of loved ones.

After spending the last year ruminating over the past, Robertson's experience of missing human connection is an experience shared with other individuals coming to terms with the time spent alone during self-isolation. Robertson has painted people whom he knows, and yet in this new context it is not them at all. Fueled by memory and absence these paintings depict an otherworldly community of friends and loved ones.

#### Artist Bio

Brian Robertson (b. 1978, Albuquerque, NM) has exhibited in Germany, France and has been in numerous exhibitions across the United States including The Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art and had a solo presentation at Volta, NY. Robertson's work has been reviewed by Contemporary Art Review, Hyperallergic, L.A. Canvas, The Rocky Mountain News and others. Robertson currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

#### Location

1/F, 159 Hollywood Road  
Central Hong Kong

#### Press Contact

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