



“Fatherhood”
A Group Show

Opening Reception: February 16, 2019, 11 AM - 6 PM
Exhibition Dates: February 14 - March 31, 2019

So you're a dad? Big whoop. So is he. And him, and him. (He isn't, but not because he couldn't be, if he wanted to.) Fatherhood is the condition that unites perhaps half of half the world's population. It is a trans-cultural common denominator, a leveler and a baseline, so ubiquitous as to usually pass without comment. It is both nothing special and the most special thing in many men's lives.

Fatherhood, it should be understood, is not the same as patriarchy, except literally. While patriarchy implies male power and dominance, for myself and most fathers I know, fatherhood is the experience of the very opposite. To become a father is to be displaced from the center of one's own psychic universe, to be forced to make space for another who will – for the foreseeable future – become the sun around which all planets orbit. While you may, for now, be a central figure in your child's world, you occupy that position in the understanding that it will gradually dwindle as she or he grows into an adult.

What does fatherhood feel like? Mostly, it feels like the pursuit of an impossible standard, a sensation of near-constant inadequacy, unpreparedness, ineptitude, impotence, humiliation, frustration, fear, panic, emotional and physical exhaustion. It feels like failure, over and over again, and the worry that those failures will have lasting consequences for those about whom you care most deeply. It feels like being at the helm of an enormous space ship in which you have only the faintest idea of what any of the buttons do, and no time to read the manual.

But it's also fun, sometimes. And often laugh-out-loud funny. It is liberating to become stupid, to utterly debase oneself in the happy abjection of apocalyptically messy infant mealtimes, or ridiculous role-play, or make-believe and story-time, or den-making, or piggyback rides. To encounter the world with the clarity and vividness of a child is to



These are all clichés, I realize, but they are true. To be a father is to become just a little less cynical, to become both younger and older, dumber and smarter, all at the same time. Most artists – male or female – feel all of these things anyway, and are thus perhaps better equipped for parenthood than the rest of us. Maybe the experience of fatherhood has not made one iota of difference to the work of the artists in this exhibition. Though that would be hard to imagine.

Written by Jonathan Griffin

Fatherhood will include: Dan Basen, Peter Linde Busk, Scott Campbell, Philip Diggle, Günther Förg, Rashid Johnson, Michael Kagan, Mike Lee, Herman Menzel, Joel Mesler, Ryan Mosley, Reko Rennie, Kenny Scharf, Aaron Spangler, Alfie Sue, and Michael Williams.

Location

833 East 3rd Street
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