

WORK is pleased to announce the opening of LIVING CLAY, HEAVENLY FLAME, a two-person sculpture installation by Jonathan Bridges and Mary Johnson. Bridges' haunted vessels and Johnson's hybridized creatures populate the sculptor's imagined world. An organic fusion of plastics, pelts, porcelain and heavy metal animate a kingdom of anguished monsters and whimsical mutants. These totemic figures inhabit richly ornamented domestic spaces constructed as offerings as much as objects. Born within traditions of craft, vessels outgrow former shells as they mature into an assemblage of menacing forms - as in Bridges' Ethereal Cockfighter - before reclaiming the fantastical levity and innocence of a piece like Johnson's Nightengale Rug, a poignant and humorous take on traditional craft notions of domesticity and utility. Steeped in tradition, laced with pop, and at turns elegiac and comedic, the sculptors' reality envisions a dreamlike procession of souls in various stages of metamorphosis.

Jonathan Bridges lives and works in Kansas City, MO. He holds a B.F.A. from Alfred University and an M.F.A. from University of Minnesota. His current body of work is informed by the traumatic experience of a car accident in 2004, which left him in a coma for 17 days. Following extensive rehabilitation, Bridges' style has developed a dark self-reflexivity brimming with animism, entwined with a technique of adding materials he calls "ocular hedonism". In recent work, spirit figures occupy and protect elegantly damaged shells of space, lending a visceral, fragile beauty to investigations of decomposition, decay and sublimity.

Mary Johnson lives and works in Minneapolis, MN. She holds a B.F.A. from University of Wisconsin Eau Claire and an M.F.A. from University of Minnesota. Both optimistic and enigmatic, her current body of work takes on the opposing natures of nostalgia and meditation. In her series of cast bronze Cupie dolls and accompanying shrines, Johnson reexamines traditional craft inspired doll making in the context of ritualized space, offering a curious amalgam of domesticity and spirituality.

LIVING CLAY, HEAVENLY FLAME is the first exhibition of work in New York for Bridges and Johnson.