

HYBRIDS II

December 2 - 29, 2018

Opening Reception: Sunday, December 2, 2-4:30pm
Playground Brooklyn, 540 President Street BD, Brooklyn, NY 11215

For access, please call 347-633-1333 or 215-756-2567.



Brooklyn Art Cluster is pleased to announce *HYBRIDS II*, new work by Mary Murphy on view at Playground Brooklyn December 2-29, 2018. An opening reception will be held on Sunday, December 2 from 2:00-4:30 PM.

Mary Murphy is a painter based in Philadelphia and New York. She earned an MFA from Tyler School of Art, an MA in Art & Education from Teachers College, Columbia University, and a BA *cum laude* from Barnard College. She also studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture and The New York Studio School. She is the recipient of an NEA Fellowship in Painting, a PA State Council on the Arts Fellowship in Painting, and is a three time finalist for a PEW Fellowship in the Arts. She has also been a finalist for a Fulbright Award to Spain, and a finalist for the Franz and Virginia Bader Fund Grant.

A solo exhibition of Murphy's work, *Hybrids*, was on view at Hillyer Art Space in Washington, DC this past February 2018, and she participated in the 2018 Gowanus Open Studios in October. Her work will be seen at Aqua Art Miami December 5-9, 2018 as part of ArtHelix Gallery/SHIM. Past solo shows include *Grotesques*; *Mary Murphy: Self-Portraits*; and *Mary Murphy: Family Portrait(s)*, all at Schmidt/Dean Gallery in Philadelphia; *Mary Murphy: Self-Portraits* at the University of AL, Anchorage, AL; *Translations*, at dfn Gallery, NYC; *Focus* at Larry Becker Contemporary Art in Philadelphia; *Fleisher Challenge Grant #4* at the Fleisher Art Memorial, Philadelphia; and *Contemporary Miniatures* at S.P.A.C.E.S., Cleveland.

Murphy's work marries traditional illusionistic painting space with the latent psychological aspects of digital manipulation to explore the sexual unconscious.

Her images are intimate, even erotic and reference various body parts, some comic, others hideous. These images are compelling, even disturbing, but also playful, straddling comedy and tragedy. She sees the grotesque as a reflection of her own reality and these works embody the tension she feels between the deadly serious and the blackly, subversively humorous.

Murphy's work is not conventional realism, although she uses a photographic source: the face of one sibling from a commemorative family portrait. She manipulates the face of this sibling in Photoshop, recording her feelings about the dynamics of their relationship. These images are then enlarged and translated into visceral paintings on paper that combine the precision of digital imaging with the tactility of oil pastel.

She considers these works hybrids firstly because they are composite portraits comprising her sibling's face and her emotional and bodily experience; secondly, they combine seeming contradictions (interior/exterior spaces, abstract/representational imagery, painting/digital languages); and lastly, hybridity expresses her fundamental belief that nothing is pure or without aspects of other realities.

Murphy references Surrealism's imaginative reworking of reality, using the familiar to create the jarringly unexpected. Distortion is a metaphor in her work for physical and psychological transformation. The seamless spatial and scale disjunctions of digital language evoke the illogical juxtapositions of dreams. Teeth and eyes mutate into abstract forms suggesting sexual orifices and protrusions, creating 'disembodied' figures that are uncanny and absurd. Unlike conventional figures, they resemble cross-sections of the interior body: the translation of facial topography into sexual anatomy mirrors the movement from exterior to interior, from object to subject, from male to female.

In these works, Murphy provides a psychological, visual, and material context for a moment of transition, of something becoming - a new entity, a merged whole - through the integration of color, surface, and light.