

REYNOLDS GALLERY

For Immediate Release

ROCK CANDY

Siemon Allen • Sarah Briland
Ben Durham • Meghan Gerety
Alison Hall • Corin Hewitt
Ron Johnson • Jason Keith
Brittany Nelson • Leigh Suggs
Heide Trepanier • Jack Wax

June 3 – July 1, 2016

Opening Reception
Friday, June 3
7 – 9 pm



Problematica (Pink Crystal), 2015
Erbium-tinted cast glass, alum crystals, steel and concrete
42 x 14 x 12 inches
Photo courtesy of Terry Brown

Reynolds Gallery is pleased to present *Rock Candy*, an exhibition of new works by select gallery artists and artists new to exhibiting with the gallery. The exhibition features painting, sculpture, installation, and glasswork. Artists include Siemon Allen, Sarah Briland, Ben Durham, Meghan Gerety, Alison Hall, Corin Hewitt, Ron Johnson, Jason Keith, Brittany Nelson, Leigh Suggs, Heide Trepanier, and Jack Wax. *Rock Candy* opens with a reception for the artists on Friday, June 3 and continues through July 1, 2016.

Rock Candy is a varied, multimedia exhibition that presents ambitious projects by all artists included. The works are tied together by the artists' intensity of process and conceptual richness. Many of the artists approach their work with scientific methods, using experimentation, hypothesis, and categorization as lynchpins in their studio practices. Below the gallery highlights the fascinating and complex practices of Siemon Allen, Sarah Briland, and Meghan Gerety.

Siemon Allen presents a snapshot of South African identity in his recent work *Gems*. Accumulating over 7,000 stamps from the late 1970s into the early '80s, the South African native catalogues the decolonization of Zimbabwe through the large-scale painting and artifact display. Between 1978 and 1980, Rhodesia became Zimbabwe in the final stages of the country's decolonization which resulted in newly issued stamps. The two sets of stamps and their respective country of origin act as a physical index marking the colonial to post-colonial moment. Each one depicts a specific gemstone, which Allen employs as a plotting map to hand-pin the specimen on cloth-covered panel. His technique is much like an archivist, each collected item bringing with it the narrative of its production, dissemination, and function. Organized by color, value, and number, the stamps fabricate a sterile grid yet represent a personal and political tapestry. The result is a strata-like work that returns the stamps' "gems" to a metaphoric zone that references not only areas where the stones were mined, but also the

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R E Y N O L D S G A L L E R Y

concept of mining reaching beyond physical borders to link distinct political entities. *Gems* budded from Allen's previous *Stamps* project (2001-2010), where over 50,000 South African stamps were collected and installed.

Born in South Africa, Allen received his National Higher Diploma in Fine Art (1992) and Masters Degree in Technology, Fine Art (1999) from Technikon Natal in Durban, South Africa. He was awarded a 2013 Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship and served as an artist-in-residence at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA, where he currently lives and teaches. Internationally, he has mounted major group exhibitions at venues including the 2011 Venice Biennale in Italy, Kulturhuset in Sweden, Galerie West in the Netherlands, Deutsche Guggenheim in Berlin, the 2nd Johannesburg Biennale at the South African National Gallery, and the Institute of Contemporary Art in South Africa. He has also shown nationally at the Whitney Museum, New York, NY; Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, MD; Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, MI; Corcoran Museum, Goethe Institute, and FUSEBOX, all, Washington, DC.

Sarah Briland draws on her background as a geologist and questions what impact the plastic age will have on the geological record by creating her own fossil-like objects. Briland collects aluminum foil, plastic bags, foam, and miscellaneous packaging which she recycles to form *problematica*. She defines *problematica* as "the term given to geological specimens that defy categorization; they may be true fossils of organic origin or specimens that merely resemble once-living things. They are objects of unknown origin." Briland's pieces are shaped by conventional sculptural methods which intentionally mimic forces of nature, such as crystallization and lithification. Specifically, *Problematica (Pink Crystal)*, fuses a rare earth element called "erbium", commonly used in lasers and other technology, with found products to form a large, translucent crystal-like object. Briland's process transforms the chemical reactions unravelling in the kiln into highly individualized and seductive objects. Through her execution and combined geological and philosophical imprints, she forges a relationship with each "specimen" representative of both the natural and artificial: the artistic and scientific. This relationship translates as viewers interact with the sculptures to assess the work both visually and academically, inviting wonder into scientifically grounded, process-based work. Briland's hand captures a blip in geological time that transcends current artistic or biological classifications.

Briland was born in West Virginia and currently lives in Richmond, VA teaching at Virginia State University. She received her MFA from VCU (2013) after receiving a BFA from Washington University, St. Louis, MO (2003) and completing a post-baccalaureate study at University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY (2008-11). She has mounted solo and group exhibitions, including those at UrbanGlass, Brooklyn, NY; Robert C. Williams American Museum of Papermaking, Atlanta, GA; The Visual Arts Center of Richmond, Anderson Gallery, both Richmond, VA; and the KMAC Museum (upcoming), Louisville, KY. Briland has received multiple accolades and artist-in-residences.

Meghan Gerety applies techniques of printing, painting, drawing, and carving to demonstrate the fluidity between two- and three-dimensional art works. Her work records the hand, framing ideas of space, nature, and growth around repeated gestures of arboreal and floral imagery. Drawing inspiration from eastern art philosophies and childhood landscapes, she depicts painted trees and carved-out stars in rich volumes and textures. In her *Small Trees* series, each tree lies exposed on layers of rich magenta or viridian green, seemingly transportable, and ungrounded in their mystically natural habitat. The carefully placed negative space lends to a quietness coexisting with scratchy trees and bright hues. Gerety's larger works on canvas such as *Magenta Star* further speak to hybridity in art and nature. *Magenta Star* is a unique work

R E Y N O L D S G A L L E R Y

on canvas created with woodblock printmaking techniques, and the forms are inspired by leaves in nature yet the brilliant pink edges towards pop culture references. Gerety's reimagined places are magical yet somehow familiar.

Meghan Gerety was born in New Haven, CT and currently lives and works in Marfa, TX. She received her BA in Studio Art from Barnard College after attending Atelier Clouet in Paris. Her work has been exhibited at Marfa Contemporary, Marfa, TX; White Columns, Andrew Kreps Gallery, both New York, NY; Engholm Engelhorn Galerie, Vienna, Austria; Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; the University of Richmond Museum, Richmond, VA, among others, and is held in numerous public and private collections. In 2012, she was awarded the prestigious Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant.

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