

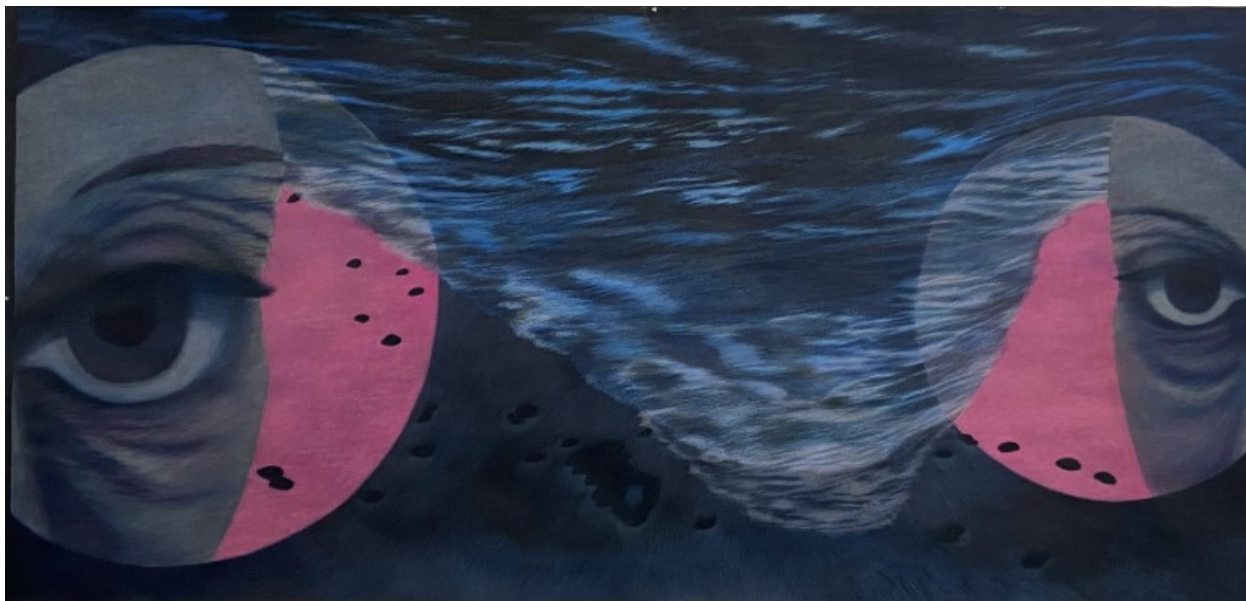
Press Release

## An Ouroboros of Looking

HEIRESS

January 13th - March 3rd, 2023

Opening Reception: January 13th, 6 - 9 PM ET



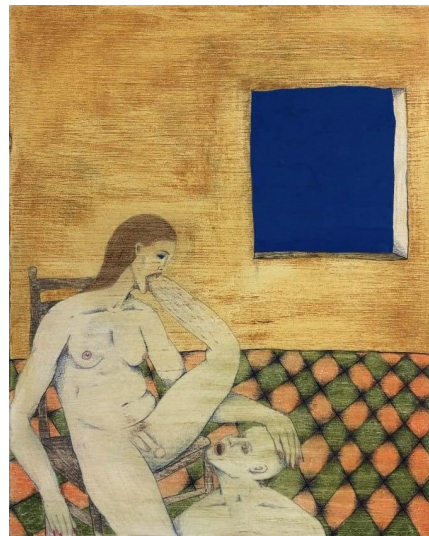
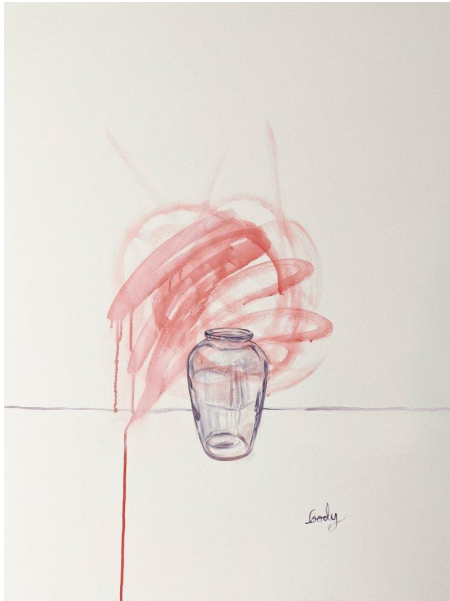
HEIRESS is pleased to announce its first show of the year, *An Ouroboros of Looking*. The exhibition features seven contemporary artists, all of whom make work that engages the cyclical nature of observation and performativity.

The exhibition was conceived after reading an essay by writer and adult performer, Stoya, titled *Graphic Depictions, Scene 01*. In the essay, Stoya writes about the multiple and varied layers of observation that are inherent to the processes of producing and consuming porn. How, in her words, “each layer of being observed tends to bring an increase in reaction to that observation”. She, in a sense, speaks to the levels of awareness required to engage in making not just any content for consumption but content that commands attention and provokes critical reflection. The connections between the ideas presented in Stoya’s essay and how such notions correlate with art and its ecosystems of perception/consumption serve as the conceptual foundation of this exhibition.

Art is made to be perceived (obviously) and when an artist understands that their work can not exist in a vacuum, they assume a role greater than that of merely a creator; one more akin to that of a performer, possessive of an awareness to the fact that they are facilitating an experience. This awareness has the capacity to change the artist’s approach to making entirely. In a way that is maybe most easily compared to how, according to quantum theory, even photons act differently upon being observed. A similar condition often arises for the viewer, as they become self-conscious about the act of observing and thus distracted from partaking in the very kind of engagement that artwork requires. In such instances, viewers take on a

“pseudo-observational” state, where one might be looking, but not necessarily seeing what’s in front of them.

The ouroboros here, really is as follows; the artist makes, the artist observes themselves making, the artist understands that eventually (hopefully) many sets of eyes will be observing the work, the finished work itself serves as a culmination of and response to these multiple layers of observation, the viewer sees the art and then through the art is able to observe the artist. Sometimes, if one is lucky, the art looks back. And the cycle continues.



The works included in *An Ouroboros of Looking* all circle these ideas, or shift focus to specific layers of observation.

**Trinity Oribio's** painting depicts a building rendered as though being seen through thermal imaging. She puts herself as well as the viewer into the position of voyeur. It reminds the viewer of the feeling of being watched and not necessarily being able to pinpoint the source of the looking. At the same time, Oribio's work keeps one from looking away, our gaze into the night is steady, the concept of being watched becomes less visceral when you are the one watching.

**Codi Barbini's** large scale photographic grids made from scans of found images, show and recontextualize stills from someone else's life. The work invites the viewer to consider their own personal histories. What does it mean to be seen and documented by those closest to us? What function does the family photo album really serve? What happens when that documentation is lost and then found and repurposed? Can the recontextualization of our histories change the past? Or does it present us with an alternative narrative?

**Paul Pfeiffer's** well known video sculptures exist in a liminality within the ouroboros. They often center widely consumed cultural moments. Whether that is a famous boxing match, basketball game, or the game shows we would watch on television with our families after dinner. Moments that have been well documented, talked about, familiar. Pfeiffer removes context; he edits the narrative. Suddenly a game show isn't a game show anymore, the sound is removed, the host is removed, the prizes are removed. The work now centers these seemingly ordinary people who exist in a perpetual state of contemplation. He creates a reality parallel to our own where these people exist infinitely without promise of conclusion, always to be looked at, always searching for something, and never being able to obtain that which they are searching for.

**Nash Glynn's** work in this exhibition is a departure in comparison to the figurative self-portraiture that one's come to expect. Glynn exerts a tight level of control over how much of herself she provides or allows to be seen in her paintings. Sometimes, she gives just her back, in this case she gives a vessel. The level at which one is able to observe the artist in this specific work is entirely dictated by her, you see what she wants you to see, the ball is unequivocally and forever in her court.

**Creighton Baxter's** seductive works show intimate and questionable depictions of consumption in what seem to be sacred spaces. In her video, *Drawings for Eating*, originally taking place in front of a live audience at MOCA Geffen (Los Angeles), the stage is first set, viewers are given glimpses of the performers, and then confidently and with ease, the ritual of consuming her own drawings begins. Talking about layers of observation in Baxter's work feels almost too obvious. The work sometimes feels as if it exists as every part of the cycle at once. The act of consumption within the work almost nullifies the purpose of the viewer entirely. In a way it asks, What are you willing to look at? How long are you willing to participate in this ouroboros? And finally, is there a way out?

**Tanner Simon** makes paintings that sit at a dwarfing 102 by 87 inches. The sheer size of the canvas makes them the type of works that are difficult to look away from. They are by all accounts, Slow Paintings. Simon sizes the majority of his paintings to reflect that of *Napoleon Crossing the Alps* by French, Neoclassical painter, Jacques-Louis David. This particular move feels incredibly grand in the way it strives to self-situate the works into the lexicon of art history. These paintings are the culmination point of the ouroboros, existing in reflection to the previous observations made by the artist in his practice; not-so-humbly awaiting the observation of others.

**Tess Bilhartz** presents a large scale colored pencil drawing. The size paired with sheer craft and attention to detail makes us wonder if in making, the artist was able to momentarily transcend the ouroboros. There's a subconscious repetitiveness to the mark making as if it could induce a state of meditative gnosis through process alone. The drawing appears to us in something that can only be compared to a vision. In an obvious sense, the Gatsby-esque eyes featured have an unyielding gaze; forcing us to a moment of reckoning in regards to the question of perception, and exactly, who or what is ultimately on which end of that process.

HEIRESS looks forward to presenting *An Ouroboros of Looking* which will be on view from January 13th through March 3rd of 2023. We are excited to share this collection of works with our community here in the Tampa Bay area and encourage those who are interested to come participate in the Ouroboros themselves.

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**HEIRESS**

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Wednesday - Saturday  
Noon to 3pm EST or by appointment

**For immediate release**

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**Caption and courtesy information**

Tess Bilhartz  
*What Replies, 2022*  
Colored pencil on paper  
52 x 108 inches

Nash Glynn  
*Body, 2023*  
Acrylic on canvas  
48 x 36 inches

Creighton Baxter  
*display in front of blue, 2022*  
Acrylic, ballpoint, color pencil and metal foil on wood panel  
8 x 10 inches