

Apart / A Part Curatorial Statement:

A group exhibition showing socially distant art.

It can feel heavy with longing, and heavy with longing, in my mind, is preferable to hollow, which one also feels. If I'm heavy with longing, at least I have some idea of what I want. Robert Pinsky. This year has forced us to live, create and become apart. As the pandemic crept across the globe, the reality of living separate lives crawled into the global consciousness, like an ever-advancing flood. Yet, as humanity have been forced to be Apart, we remain A Part of the greater whole. The uncertainty, the loss of surefootedness, the general feeling of the very earth shifting constantly only served as confirmation that nothing will ever be certain again. We, the storytellers, illustrators, creators responded by observing, researching, reflecting the new social reality. We did what we do best, we made meaning of an utterly incomprehensible reality.

Months into the pandemic, the first Lockdown themed exhibitions started appearing. Galleries both locally and abroad strove to regain some footing by launching online exhibitions, almost universally with a lockdown theme. Calls went out across the world for artists to submit work they created during lockdown; all social platforms were flooded with masked portraits, scenes from mundane life, even horrific reflections of the impact of the pandemic. Recent comments and reactions on social media reflect a sense of lockdown art Ad Nausea, leaving you, the reader to wonder what new sense could still be made from this "fresh hell"(Meade 1989:i). Apart / A Part is not intended to explore the banality nor the cliché of lockdown art.

The intention of this group exhibition is to delve into the human psyche, to explore the longing, the reflection, and the horror of living social distant lives: as artists we almost universally create in isolation. Solitude provides rich and fertile soil for creation; we are no strangers to it. However, what has become apparent over the past few months is an interesting manifestation of the longing of the human psyche for connection. Within the pandemic zeitgeist, three universal themes have emerged as indicators of where the human soul searches for connection.

These themes: The Mundane, The Sublime and The Abject, are reflected in the work created by selected invited artists. Within these spheres, we see the reflection of the human condition as it manifests when connections are stretched, severed or temporarily suspended. As the artists submitted work for this exhibition an interesting phenomenon emerged: the themes overlapped, they intermingled, it became a beautiful organic process, completely unplanned. I have come to realize that all of life is essentially a dance on the precipice between the mundane, sublime and abject.

Laurette de Jager (Curator)

Sources:

Pinsky, R 2019. *The Mind Has Cliffs of Fall: Poems at the Extremes of Feeling*. New York: WW Norton Publishing.

Meade, M. 1989. *Dorothy Parker: What Fresh Hell Is This?* New York: Penguin.