

SOLOWAY

348 South 4th Street, Bklyn, NY 11211 • soloway.info • contactsoloway@gmail

GROTTO: SHRINE

February 18 – March 24, 2024

Opening Reception:

Sunday, February 18th, from 5:00–7:00 pm.

Soloway Gallery is thrilled to present Grotto: Shrine, a group exhibition of sculpture/Installation curated by Hannah Barret and Saul Chernick and featuring works by: Orli Swergold, Laurel Sparks, Ben Pederson, and Saul Chernick.

Shrines: Table altars transmit to invisible forces; *Grottos*: Fake caves submerged by artifice. Up and out, around and down, shrines and grottos use scale to relate to the body and to transport to celestial, underworld, ritualistic and imaginative realms. Contemplative versus immersive - is the gallery a shrine or a grotto?

The shrines traffic in obsolete electronics, dried grains, shadowy landscapes, and the archeology of the heart. Ben Pedersen and Saul Chernick practice an alchemy of labor, transmuting their ingredients beyond recognition into portals and dioramas of jewelry-level craftsmanship. The grottos are shaggy and jagged, tactile and fiercely material: paper pulp and shiny metal or glitter and trinkets. Orli Swergold and Laurel Sparks forge stalagmites and cement incrustations as they reveal and ornament the cavern.

Shrines and grottos are not necessarily opposites. “Shrine” can also mean “tomb”, and shrines may also be found in grottos. The artist may also be a vessel or a medium: the sorcerer's apprentice inhabiting the studio, striking with dwarf hammers and burrowing with troll talons.

Text by Hannah Barrett

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*22,000 years, 2023
Steel and paper pulp
22" x 10" x .5"*

Orli Swergold is an artist and curator from Westchester, N.Y. After graduating from Brandeis University (B.A., Studio Art and Art History, 2018), Swergold trained at Brandeis' Post-Baccalaureate program. In 2021, Swergold earned her M.F.A. in painting from the Rhode Island School of Design, where she exhibited in three juried group exhibitions and received the competitive Graduate Commons Grant. Her work is on permanent display in the Brandeis University Library Art Collection and she has exhibited with Asya Geisberg Gallery, 81 Leonard Gallery, Room 68 Wellfleet, Two Palms NY, Project Gallery V, and Site:Brooklyn. She has curated shows at Soloway Gallery and the Cigar Factory LIC. Swergold lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

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untitled, 2023 (installation detail)
Yarn, canvas, paper pulp, pigment,
trinkets
Dimensions Variable

Laurel Sparks is a Brooklyn and Hudson Valley based painter whose work applies esoteric correspondence systems to materialize structures outside of perceptible reality. Exhibitions include solo shows at Kate Werble gallery, NYC; Knockdown Center, Brooklyn, NY and group shows at Cheim and Read gallery, NYC; Leslie-Lohman Museum, NYC; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY; and DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA. Awards include a MacDowell Fellowship, Elizabeth Foundation Studio Intensive Program at Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, NY, Fire Island Artist Residency, NY, Berkshire Taconic Fellowship, SMFA Alumni Traveling Fellowship and an Elaine DeKooning Fellowship. Sparks holds an MFA from Bard College and a BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston at Tufts University. In 2022/23 Sparks received a project grant to produce an

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immersive installation for Invisible Prairie at Tinworks Art, Bozeman MT. Their forthcoming solo show Time Machines will open at Kate Werble Gallery in March 2024.



Sculpture Land, 2019
Wood, cardboard, plaster gauze,
epoxy clay, acrylic paint, vinyl paint,
plexiglass
60'' x 30'' x 28''

Ben Pederson was born in 1979 in Grand Rapids Michigan and received his B.A. in Studio Art from Aquinas College in 2003. He went on to obtain his M.F.A. in Sculpture from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 2007. After graduate school Ben moved to New York and continued to make and show work locally and nationally. In 2013 he was invited to be the Resident Artist at Materials For The Arts in Queens, NY, as well as a participant at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. In January of 2015 he was a resident at Yaddo, in Saratoga Springs, NY. In January of 2018 Ben received a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation. He had his first

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solo show in New York at Ortega Y Gasset Projects in January of 2019. Ben works out of his live/work studio in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.



untitled, 2023
Homemade sculpting compound,
plexiglass, wood, amaranth, armature
24.5" x 18.75" x 4.25"

Saul Chernick, (BFA RISD, M.F.A. Rutgers University), creates intimately scaled sculptures, often incorporating found objects, such as obsolete electronics and elemental materials such as stones and dried grains. An ode to playfulness, these objects invite the viewer into the unconstrained headspace of sci-fi and fantasy. Chernick has exhibited in numerous galleries, museums, and cultural institutions including the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, the Bronx Museum of Art, the Jewish Museum, the Lower East Side Printshop, Rush Arts Gallery, Senior & Shopmaker Gallery. He has had solo exhibitions at Soloway Gallery, Max Protech Gallery, Franklin Art Works, La Montagne Gallery, and NURTUREart. He resides in Kingston, New York.

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Hannah Barrett has been a Co-Director of Soloway since 2019. Barrett is a Brooklyn and Hudson Valley based painter whose work embraces gender fluidity and the grotesque. Recent exhibitions include the Schoolhouse Gallery, Provincetown (2023) Childs Gallery, Boston (2020) Platform Project Space, Brooklyn (2019), La MaMa Galleria, NY (2019) Columbus Property Management, NY (2018), and Yours Mine and Ours, NY (2018).