

Visitors from Shallow Space

A sci-fi experience featuring the work of...

Adam Dalva / Howard Fonda / Paul Gagner / Annie Hémond Hotte

Ryan Johnson / Sophie Larrimore

Curated by Annie Hémond Hotte and Nora Nieves

Text by Helena Haines

Fresh Window Gallery's current group show takes its inspiration from the pages of OMNI – the cult science magazine published from 1978 – 1998. Oriented around factual and fictional ideas of the future, OMNI entranced its readers with lavish space art; in-depth interviews with the era's leading scientists; and tales of parapsychology and fantasy, all combined with some of the twentieth century's most crucial science fiction stories from such greats as William Gibson and Arthur C Clarke.

Visitors From Shallow Space takes its curatorial cue from OMNI's candy-coated visions of past potential futures; its presentations of 'real world' science as filled with wild possibility, rather than just drably informative: featured article titles from the March 1982 edition, for instance, included Sperm From Deep Space, How to Design Your Own Dreams, Laser Facelifts, Animal Teleportation and The Secrets of A Long Life – all advertised on an exuberant illustrated cover depicting an intergalactic view from the surface of a rocky planet.

The works in the show place a similarly idiosyncratic, often sharply humorous mirror to our current reality. **Paul Gagner's** paintings use his characteristically wry sensibility and bold visual language to comment on some of the more absurd aspects of contemporary life. In *Three Full Moons* (2018), for example, Gagner takes aim at the tendency to filter so much of our lived experience through a smartphone's deadening lens. **Sophie Larrimore's** canvases use a combination of dog and human motifs as springboards for her explorations of texture, color and form. Her definitively democratic renditions of animal and human subjects hint at ideas around speciesism, complicating what we think it means to exist as dog or person.

Ryan Johnson makes inimitably humorous sculptures that combine made and repurposed materials to offer his singular, surreal take on everyday objects. In *Dog* (2015), Johnson messes with our sense of two and three dimensionality to produce a dry, witty piece that's as strange as it is beautifully crafted. **Howard Fonda** draws on Romantic themes and a Modernist visual vocabulary to create bold, intensely wrought paintings that hover between the representational and the abstract. Included here is a hyper-stylised image of a female face – Fonda regularly returns to female figures in his work, seeing them as symbols of power and intelligence. **Annie Hémond Hotte's** resolutely rendered paintings, meanwhile, are preoccupied with a very human nostalgia for past visions of the future: her intensely saturated scenes and staring faces inhabit static worlds that are at once familiar and utterly alien. In addition to the exhibited works, writer **Adam Dalva** will also be performing a new, sci-fi-inspired text piece on opening night.

Adam Dalva is a graduate of NYU's MFA Program, where he was a Veterans Writing Workshop Fellow. His writing has been published by The New York Review of Books, The Paris Review, Tin House, The Guardian, and others. Adam has received fellowships from the Atlantic Center for the Arts and the Vermont Studio Center. He teaches Creative Writing at Rutgers University and is a book critic for Guernica Magazine. His comic book, OLIVIA TWIST, will be published by Dark Horse in Fall 2018.

Howard Fonda is an artist, former educator, father and husband living in Portland, OR. Philosophical and introspective, Fonda's work expresses a romantic worldview and mystical inner journey within a painterly dialogue. He has been the recipient of grants from a number of institutions including the Joan Mitchell Foundation. Previously an instructor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Fonda has lectured, served on jurying and critique panels and pursued curatorial projects at numerous universities and art centers. His work has been exhibited throughout the United States and abroad.

Paul Gagner is a painter and sculptor living in Brooklyn, NY. He holds a B.F.A from the School of Visual Arts as well as an M.F.A. from the City University of New York at Brooklyn College. Paul's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including at Katharine Mulherin, Toronto; The Community, Paris; Hashimoto Contemporary, San Francisco; Halsey McKay gallery, East Hampton, NY; Allen & Eldridge, NYC; and the Sheila & Richard Riggs Leidy Galleries at the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore. He's been featured in *Hyperallergic* and *Art21* magazine, and was also recently featured on the cover and in an interview piece for the print magazine, *Art Maze*.

Annie Hémond Hotte was born in Montreal and now lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She received a BFA from Concordia University and a MFA from Goldsmiths College, London, UK. She also attended the Atlantic Center for the Arts Residency (hosted by Dana Schutz). Her paintings have been presented in publications such as ArtMaze Mag, Border Crossing, New American Paintings and The Guardian. Annie's work has been exhibited across Europe and North America and Korea including *Panic Myth* (a solo show at Centre Clark, Montreal, Canada), *Spirit of The Dead Watching* (Devening Projects + Editions, Chicago, IL). *I'm a Painting* (Kumu Art Museum of Estonia, Tallinn), *Two Positions* (Thomas Rehbein Galerie, Cologne, Germany).

Ryan Johnson was born in Karachi, Pakistan, and now lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. He's a graduate of Pratt Institute (BFA) and Columbia University (MFA), and has exhibited in numerous solo and group shows in the US and internationally including *Life Study*, a solo show at Nicelle Beauchene Gallery, NYC, *Self Storage*, a solo exhibition at The Suzanne Geiss Company, New York, NY *Cupid Angling*, John H. Baker Gallery, West Chester University, West Chester, PA; *Fort Greene*, curated by Adrienne Rubenstein, Venus LA, Los Angeles, CA, *Eagles II*, Galeria Marlborough, Madrid, Spain and *Abstract America: New Painting and Sculpture*, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK. Johnson's work has been reviewed in the New York Times, the New Yorker and Modern Painters Magazine, among many others.

Sophie Larrimore was born in Annapolis, Maryland. She received her BFA from The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including recent group exhibitions mounted at Pt.2 Gallery, Oakland, CA; J. Hammond Projects, London, UK; and HVW8, Berlin, Germany. In 2017 a solo exhibition of her work was presented at Nationale, Portland, OR. Sophie's work has appeared in publications including Maake Magazine, Ambit, and Art Maze Magazine. Sophie lives and works in New York.