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Ava McDonough. All I hear is the symphony

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Installation view: Ava McDonough, All I Hear Is the Symphony. Courtesy of Lowell Ryan Projects

Lowell Ryan Projects is pleased to present All I Hear Is the Symphony, Ava McDonough's debut solo exhibition. McDonough is a 24-year-old, self-taught artist based in Los Angeles, CA. Comprised of paintings, sculpture, and video, the exhibition explores depictions of recollections, illusions, and dreams through the artist's unique process that simultaneously fades and expands as time progresses. All I Hear Is the Symphony endeavors to create systems to remember while also understanding the temporal and relational aspects of memory and its effect on our psyche.

Utilizing an ever-expanding symbolic language of imagery drawn from the artist's subconscious, McDonough creates monochromatic collages out of linocut prints that form the basis of her painting process. A routine of intensive writing and meditation allows the artist to channel the information for her drawings, which she then carves into

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linoleum blocks. These figurative depictions encompass a rich mixture of her current enthusiasms— stories, dreams, nightmares, people, places, and objects—and capture her emotional state towards them as vestiges.

By the repeated process of printing on paper, the blocks gradually deteriorate, resulting in the imagery of varying saturation and symbolizing our relationship to memory— sometimes intensely vivid and other times as if slowly erased. These prints are then used to form elaborate collages that are emblems of a continuous process containing encounter and resolution, suffering and exhilaration, tragedy and comedy through a pictorial field that references a form of storytelling. The ensuing works are both highly personal while encompassing the universality and absurdity of the human experience.

McDonough's current printmaking practice began in a hospital bed. After a severe accident in 2020, the artist had a near-death experience, undergoing extensive surgeries and episodes of hospitalization. A poor reaction to high doses of Fentanyl combined with extended periods of isolation due to COVID-19 visitation restrictions led her to spend a week in a dream-like state, enduring intense hallucinations and delusions which continue to inform her practice.

Notable in the exhibition is the large-scale triptych I, *As a SkyPainting Journeyman*, 2023, in which the form of a pelvic x-ray emerges from the gestalt of dissected and collaged prints affixed to the panels. Upon closer approach, the paintings parade ages of life and death; imagery such as pill bottles, deities, graves, gardens, ladders, scissors, and lovers transform into waves and patterns, a nebulous subconscious portrait of the artist.

Engaging with McDonough's creative practice is like unraveling a labyrinth of narratives and emotions, each layer revealing the intricacies of her mind's musings, while at the same time inviting viewers to delve into the depths of their interpretations and sentiments. Ava McDonough was born in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 1999 and lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. A self-taught artist, McDonough graduated magna cum laude from Cornell University, majoring in Environmental Science in 2021.