



For Immediate Release:

# DEATH CARD

January 27, 2024 - March 9, 2024

Reception 1.27.24 5-8pm

Ian Bosak, Jen Brown, Marilla Cubberley,  
Marcelo Daldoce, John Erwin Dillard, Liisa Nelson,  
Joni Sullivan, Matt Witmer



BIG RAMP is pleased to announce our inaugural exhibition *DEATH CARD*, a curatorial collaboration with our neighbors and fellow gallerists at Information Space. Spanning both spaces (which share a party wall), the exhibition features the work of eight artists working in various types of object and image making, spilling into the two interiors with both frenetic fervor and quiet presence.

In Tarot, the Death Card signals change, transition, or transformation, indicating the end of one phase or project and the beginning of a new one. A powerful symbol, the Death Card acknowledges death, both literally and figuratively, as a significant part of the experience of life. As cultural producers, we naturally find ourselves addressing the uncertainty of changes around us, confronting the urgency of our evolving political experience, or marking the shifting of a cultural moment. To close and open these doors with the potent cocktail of excitement and fear, brings together the artists in this exhibition around our new collective endeavor.

Experiments with new materials or techniques are seen in Marcelo Daldoce's expanded drawing practice where forms are drawn and redrawn, deconstructing the stability of images to become installation. Sculptural works by Marilla Cubberley, Liisa Nelson and John Erwin Dillard give new life to materials discarded as waste, serve as vessels for alchemical concoctions, and reflect on the destruction/creation dialectic. Works that mark new projects and milestones, like Jen Brown's textiles featuring dyes made from plant life across the Kensington neighborhood and Joni Sullivan's painting finished soon before becoming a mother, are the results of putting out new roots and making new connections. Others create new works to engage our theme, such as Matt Witmer's holy water "Font," assembled from blown glass and carved particle board sourced from cheap IKEA furniture, and IAN Bosak's material shift from large-scale sculpture to pastel drawings, marking a shift towards softer and more personal attitudes of making.

As BIG RAMP builds a new space culled from the remains of an old one, we reflect on these transformations and the entropic forces of decay that present opportunities for new growth. We seek to immerse ourselves in our new surroundings as allies and members of a creative community that can be welcoming and inviting to our neighbors and comrades. As we mutually discover our goals and interests as a curatorial team, we come together knowing the uncertainty of becoming, but confident that our identity will be determined through discourse and interaction with our peers, learning, failing, and rebuilding as we go. Demonstrating the synergistic potentialities of new creative approaches and curatorial practices, we together pay tribute, perhaps indirectly, to the ever-present spectre of death and her tools of transformation that give us affirmations of life.

## Artist Bios:

**Matt Witmer** is a sculptor, writer, performer, and birder studying the way industrial systems and objects interact with arbitrary and inaccurate conceptions of nature. Previous works have: supplied visitors with the tools necessary for industrial sabotage, attempted to prevent the death of The Last Bird, and forced at least one gallery closure. Matt lives and works in Philadelphia, PA along what used to be the banks of the Schuylkill River.

**Joni Sullivan** is an artist based in Philadelphia, PA, born in Northampton, MA, in 1995. Her oil paintings explore color, time, and growth. Joni has exhibited in group shows across New England, New York, and Illinois. In 2018 she attended the Chautauqua School of Art Residency. Currently, Joni works as an Adjunct Professor at the Tyler School of Art and Architecture. She holds a Bachelors of Humanities and Arts in Psychology and Fine Art from Carnegie Mellon University and a Masters of Fine Arts in Painting from Boston University.

**Liisa Nelson** is an American artist born and raised in Montana. She holds an MFA from Alfred University, and a BFA from Pacific Lutheran University. She is a current Artist in Residence and Windgate Fellow at the Clay Studio Philadelphia (2022-24). Past residencies include the Red Lodge Clay Center (2021), the Jingdezhen Ceramics Institute, Jingdezhen, China (2019), and Pottery Northwest (2019). She was a Visiting Artist at The Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, China (2019) and has taught at a number of prestigious institutions including Alfred University and the Maryland Institute College of Art. Her work is in private and museum collections nationally and internationally.

**John Erwin Dillard** (BFA,MFA) B. Gulfport, MS, USA 1995. Exhibiting nationally and internationally including solo exhibitions at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp, BE and Espace Maurice in Montreal, CA. Participating in residencies at Penland School of Craft, and George Enescu University of the Arts among others. Citing sculpture as “ a site where magic, technology, spirituality and science are merged to imagine new expectations of reality.”

**Marcelo Daldoce**, born in 1979 in Brazil, resides and works in Philadelphia, PA. In 2016, he received his MFA from the New York Academy of Art, and has earned residencies at the Leipzig International Art Program in Germany and the Eric Fischl Residency in Maryland. Daldoce has shown in museums in Austria and Brazil, as well as at art fairs and in private collections. His work has also been featured in group exhibits in Brazil, New York city, Sotheby's, and many other galleries around the world, as well as on the cover of various art publications and mainstream magazines like *There* and *GQ*. Daldoce was awarded the Elizabeth Greenshields Grant in 2017 and 2019.

**Marilla Cubberley** uses found and made objects to create installations, animations and digital collections. Born and raised in rural Tennessee, she now resides in New York City. Her work has been exhibited at Temple Contemporary, SPRING/BREAK Art Show, Wavelength Space, Atelier Art Gallery, Site:Brooklyn, Atlantic Gallery, Dodomu Gallery, BWAC Gallery, The Defy Film Festival and The Coney Island Film Festival. Cubberley has been an artist in residence at I-park Foundation, NARS foundation, and Walkaway House. She holds an MFA from Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia.

**Ian Bosak** is an artist and writer living in Philadelphia. He is known for his extravagant readings and colorful lifestyle. After receiving his BFA in Sculpture at Tyler School of Art he has pursued a career in fabrication and has become a highly successful fabricator in the Philadelphia area. Recently his art practice has taken on a new life in the form of dreamy and flamboyant pastel drawings that depict the ordinary as sometimes obscene and always beautiful. When not in the studio or in the shop, Ian says he is constantly daydreaming about owning the Tom's River Planetarium.

**Jen Brown** is a multidisciplinary artist who seeks to ask and answer questions through their holistic practice of making and moving through the world. Jen depicts the beauty in sadness, and vice versa, that they connect with in the world. Their work absorbs and contains moments as a personal placemaker. The act of documentation feels at once futile and vital; the act of creating is narcissistic, luxurious, wasteful; empowering, joyful. Creativity, critical thinking and collaboration both challenge and reward. Integrating community, domesticity, and paid work into social practice, Jen appreciates the balance of all things within perpetuity. Jen Brown is an artist, gardener and community organizer. They have lived in Fishtown/Kensington//Philadelphia since 2009. They have worked in museums, galleries, bakeries, gardens, construction, and have assisted in countless projects. Jen is passionate about composting, curating, community, and absorbing the incredible fine art, music, theatre, and food in Philadelphia. Jen takes great joy in connecting people with resources.