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Catherine Birk

*House-Tree-Person*

April 3<sup>th</sup> - May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Opening Reception: April 4<sup>th</sup>, 6-8pm



D. D. D. D. is pleased to present *House-Tree-Person*, an exhibition of painting, sculpture, and video work by Catherine Birk. This will be the artist's first solo exhibition in New York City.

The title of the exhibition refers to the personality test of the same name. She depicts 'house,' 'tree,' and 'person' through an exploration of the physicality of domestic space and the icons and iconography that define it in her personal psychology. Infused by a consideration of Birk's identity as a trans lesbian and her concomitant desire for stable domesticity, the works take on a legacy of lesbian home-making and explore the ideas of self, queer identity, and abstraction.

Central to the exhibition is the video *hut (for the barefoot contessa)*. The work stars a cast silicone bust of the artist, adorned with a large chin and nose referencing the enchantress Strega Nona, a modern folkloric figure particularly known for her housekeeping and cooking magicks. Embodying her roster of domestic icons, Birk melts and molds wax for another work, *hut (for Strega Nona)*, as she recites recipes from the lesbian archive.

The paintings in the show are divided into two groups, *hut* and *dam*, each with a different system of abstraction. The hut paintings make use of netting to deconstruct geometric representations of houses. The resulting paintings mutate, distort and ultimately transform initially schematic images into something both constructed and naturally arrived. The dams maintain a similarly distorted grid, accented with miniature silicone figures; beavers, dollhouses, and fireplaces physically render signs of domesticity and the home.

Grappling with it formally, narratively, and ideologically, Birk claims abstraction as a gesture of ensuring transness' presence in public and private life: reframing domestic labor as an embodied practice of trans world-making.



Catherine Birk | *hut (3)*, 2025  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium and netting on canvas  
16.25 x 17.5 inches

(CABI0005)



Catherine Birk | *hut (blizzard)*, 2025  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium and netting on canvas  
15 x 16 inches

(CABI0006)



Catherine Birk | *hut (interference)*, 2025  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium and netting on canvas  
13 x 15.5 inches

(CABI0007)



Catherine Birk | *hut (interference)*, Detail



Catherine Birk | *hut (on a hut)*, 2026  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium and netting on canvas  
13 x 14 inches

(CABI0008)



Catherine Birk | *hut (2)*, 2025  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium and netting on canvas  
16.25 x 17.5 inches

(CABI0004)



Catherine Birk | *hut (for the midwest)*, 2025  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium and netting on canvas  
21 x 25 inches

(CABI0009)



Catherine Birk | *hut (for the midwest)*, Detail



Catherine Birk | *hut (for Thomas Nozkowski)*, 2026  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium, beeswax and netting on  
canvas  
25 x 27 inches

(CABI0010)





Catherine Birk | *dam (twin flames)*, 2025  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium, and Dragon Skin Silicone  
on panel with artist's frame  
13 x 19 inches

(CABI0016)



Catherine Birk | *dam (twin flames)*, Detail



Catherine Birk | *dam (I)*, 2025  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium, and Dragon Skin Silicone  
on panel with artist's frame  
11 x 17 inches

(CAB10011)



Catherine Birk | *dam (2)*, 2025  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium, and Dragon Skin Silicone  
on panel with artist's frame  
11 x 17 inches

(CAB10012)



Catherine Birk | *dam (2)*, Detail



Catherine Birk | *dam (3)*, 2025  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium, and Dragon Skin Silicone  
on panel with artist's frame  
17 x 21 inches

(CAB10013)



Catherine Birk | *dam (5)*, 2025  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium, and Dragon Skin Silicone  
on panel with artist's frame  
13 x 19 inches

(CABI0017)



Catherine Birk | *dam (for Morandi)*, 2025  
Oil, acrylic, cold wax medium, and Dragon Skin Silicone  
on panel with artist's frame  
17 x 21 inches

(CABI0018)



Catherine Birk | *dam (for Morandi)*, Detail



Catherine Birk | *Strega Catherine*, 2025  
Dragon Skin silicone, pigment, artificial wig, clothing, embroidery, thread,  
beeswax, latex, acrylic paint, elastic thread, map pins, and vintage crock pot  
L 11 x W12 x H16.5 inches

(CABI0019)



Catherine Birk | *Strega Catherine*, Detail

Pot  
Cooker

High



Catherine Birk | *hut (for Strega Nona)*, 2026

27 cast beeswax slabs; dried herbs and essential oils of rosemary, thyme, basil, sage, and oregano; cast urethane rubber; bolts

Dimensions variable: 11 x 14 inches each

(CABI0020)





Catherine Birk | *hut (for the barefoot Contessa)*, 2026  
Single channel video installation  
Not for Sale  
(CABI0021)

Artist Biography

**Cat Birk (b. 1994, Michigan)** is an interdisciplinary artist based in Madison, Wisconsin whose practice brings transgender studies, queer theory, and critical theory into the expanded field of painting. Birk earned her MFA in Painting at the University of Wisconsin - Madison (2024), and BAs in Studio Art and Art History from the College of Charleston (2016). Solo exhibitions include *My mother is a horse.*, at the Chazen Museum of Art (Madison, WI). She has exhibited in group shows nationally, including at Redux Contemporary Art Center (Charleston, SC), Trout Museum of Art (Appleton, WI), Arts + Literature Laboratory (Madison, WI), Real Tinsel (Milwaukee, WI), and D. D. D. D. (New York, NY).



Artist CV**Education**

- 2024 MFA, Studio Art, University of Wisconsin - Madison, Madison, WI
- 2016 BA *magna cum laude*, Studio Art, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC
- 2016 BA *magna cum laude*, Art History, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC

**Solo Exhibitions**

- 2026 *House-Tree-Person*, D.D.D.D., New York, NY
- 2024 *My mother is a horse.*, Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, WI
- 2023 *the rehearsal*, Gallery 7, University of Wisconsin - Madison, Madison, WI

**Selected Group Exhibitions**

- 2025 *Unboxed: Rethinking the Grid*, Brick City Gallery at Missouri State University, Springfield, MO (Curators: Erin Tyler, Colby Jennings)
- 2025 *Hard Color*, D.D.D.D., New York, NY (Curator: Damien Ding)
- 2024 *Sword Thumbs*, Real Tinsel, Milwaukee, WI (Curator: Kaden Van De Loo) *Heal, Create, and Share*, Arts + Literature Laboratory, Madison, WI (Curator: Roberto Torres Mata)
- 2023 *TMA Contemporary*, Trout Museum of Art, Appleton, WI (Jurors: Frank Juarez, Riley Niemack, Christina Turner)
- 2022 *Microdosing Madness*, Art Lofts Gallery, University of Wisconsin - Madison, Madison, WI
- 2021 *Pick Three Words*, Backspace Gallery, University of Wisconsin - Madison, Madison, WI
- 2021 *Small Things Considered*, Backspace Gallery, University of Wisconsin - Madison, Madison, WI
- 2020 *Frontyard, Backyard, Street*, Redux Contemporary Art Center, Charleston, SC (Curator: Susan Gregory)
- 2020 *A Study of Humans and Place*, GHOST Art Project, Omaha, NE (online, Curator: Ian Tredway)

**Professional Experience**

- 2026 Adjunct Instructor, Rock Valley College, Rockford, IL (courses taught: Drawing 1 and Drawing 2)

- 2023 - 2024 Project Assistant, Derrick Buisch, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI (digital fabrication, preparation of painting surfaces and materials)
- 2023 - 2024 Instructor, University of Wisconsin - Madison, Madison, WI (Introduction to Art, Fall 2023, Spring 2024)
- 2021 - 2023 Teaching Assistant, University of Wisconsin - Madison, Madison, WI (courses taught: Foundations of Contemporary Art, Fall 2021, Fall 2022; and Current Directions in Art, Spring 2022, Spring 2023)

### **Awards**

- 2025 Comfort Station's 2025 Chicago Artists to Watch, Comfort Station, Chicago, IL 2024 Russell and Paula Panczenko Prize, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI
- 2023 TMA Contemporary Juror Favorite, Trout Museum of Art, Appleton, WI 2017 Bryan and Katherine Rutenberg Award, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC

### **Bibliography**

Ella Saph, "Cat Birk Contemplates Trans Solidarity in Art Exhibit 'My mother is a horse,'" WORT FM, Madison, WI, April 24, 2024. <https://www.wortfm.org/cat-birk-contemplates-trans-solidarity-in-art-exhibit-my-mother-is-a-horse/>