

Dreamsickle

Kahlil Robert Irving
Lyndon Barrois Jr.

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“What happens to a dream deferred?/ Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?/... Or crust and sugar over—like a syrupy sweet? ... *Or does it explode?*”—*Harlem*, Langston Hughes

Kahlil Robert Irving and Lyndon Barrois Jr. present “Dreamsickle,” their second joint exhibition, which brings together ongoing dialogue between the two artists around collective experiences of time, memory, and the construction of perspective through cinema and digital media. The works in this exhibition shift between signifiers of simultaneous timelines and parallel existences, and bring into frame the life cycles of mediated dreams—how and when they end and are born again.

Sixteen fragments of blue sky that comprise Irving’s *Sky_High (Low & fractured SMAERD)* (2021) float at eye level on a thin shelf on the main wall of the gallery. Cropped from a continuous digital composition of clouds and sky that Irving has been adding to and manipulating over the years, the overlapping panels create an inversion suggesting a skyline. The repetition and reappearance of this visual motif gestures at a whole that can’t be seen in its entirety, and the collective composition becomes an amalgamation of an altered reality. Alternately, his digital collages are composites of social and cultural references online. The collages dislocate, realign and complicate the timeline of a vast personal cache of found and shared images online. Shot by shot, frame by frame, the layered geometries in Irving’s compositions evoke a kind of illusory twist in modernist fate.

In Lyndon Barrois Jr.’s circular installation, *Perpetual Dilation* (2021), closeup images of timepieces from an assortment of films highlight a complex weaving of narrative time. In cinema, such shots are deliberate, making the viewer aware of time constructed within a film and at points of its runtime. Cue marks, a material reference specific to celluloid film, punctuate each image. Where they once signaled to projectionists the end of a film, they function here as openings, or black holes for time hopping, looping each story into the same dimension. And a blood moon, for the end of times, hangs above the titular character, cast in shades of red, from Juzo Itami’s film *A Taxing Woman* (1987). Like the drama that unfolds in the sky or on screens, Barrois’ employment of film references captures the distance between images conjured and perceived—omnipresent yet out of reach or out of time. Timelessness is reflected in his floor sculptures of ready made sundials, an anachronistic technology displaying our static pursuit: “Grow old along with me the best is yet to be.”

Kahlil Robert Irving (b. 1992, San Diego, CA) is an artist currently living and working in St. Louis, Missouri. He received a MFA from the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Art at Washington University in St. Louis in 2017, and a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in 2015. In 2017, he had presented first solo exhibition, *Streets:Chains:Cocktails*, at Callicoon Fine Arts in New York. In 2019, he was selected to participate in the Great Rivers Biennial hosted by the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, where he had a solo exhibition in May 2020, and will participate in the 2021 New Museum Triennial opening this fall. He was previously awarded the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Grant and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant. His work has been exhibited at the Whitney Museum, New York City; the Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, Ohio; the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas; the Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles; the RISD Museum, Rhode Island; and Wesleyan University's Center for the Arts, among others. His work is in the collections of J.P Morgan Chase Art Collection, New York; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas; the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York among others.

Lyndon Barrois Jr. (b. New Orleans, LA) is an artist based in Pittsburgh, PA as an Assistant Professor of Art at Carnegie Mellon University. He is half of LAB:D, with artist Addoley Dzegede, with whom he has collaboratively staged two exhibitions, and co-authored a book of essays (*Elleboog*, at the Jan van Eyck Academie in 2019). Using magazines, advertising, cinema, and vernacular imagery as primary subjects of inquiry, Barrois' practice breaks down and re-configures the languages of print, design, and popular culture in order to investigate underlying ideology, ethics, and conceptions of value.

In January 2022, he will open a solo exhibition at Artist Space, New York, his first institutional solo exhibition in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Others Who Struggle with Nature* at the Rubber Factory, New York; *Vague November* at the Jan Van Eyck Academie, Open Studios 2020; and *Zaal 8* at the Kasteel Oud-Rekem, Belgium. Barrois Jr. received his MFA from Washington University in St. Louis (2013), and his BFA in painting from the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore (2006). He has recently completed residencies at Loghaven, Knoxville; the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht, Netherlands; Fogo Island Arts, Newfoundland; and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland.