

Theta

Liste Art Fair Basel

June 12 - June 18, 2023

Stand 6

Elizabeth Englander

Elizabeth Englander renders figurative sculptures in idiosyncratic material choices that stem from rigorous art historical research. She dives deep into studies of icons throughout history and expressively reconstructs their forms using ephemera from everyday life. Englander's remodelings of icons—like a Diana archer composed of her late mother's often reused ribbons, or a wire-mesh body of crucified Christ with skin stitched painstakingly from old bathing suits, or Hindu/Buddhist yoginis built out of dismembered wooden Nutcrackers and old furniture—attempt dialogues between disparate histories, mediated through sculptural poses related to suffering, growth, sexuality, enlightenment, and renewal.

Built upon the bases of the nutcrackers she dismembered for her *Yogini* series, Englander's latest sculptures are modeled after standing Jain icons and a Hindu icon of the Supreme Goddess as Void. The reborn figures are assembled from nutcracker parts, used furniture, and post-consumer scraps—and in one case, cast in bronze. With this new series of folk-pop interpretations of Jinas, Bahubalis, and Voidesses, the artist offers her versions of icons manifesting the path through emptiness toward liberating insight.

Anchoring the presentation, a larger scale standing Jain figure, *Bahubali (Ghandiji)*, built from a wooden headboard originally painted to look like brass pairs thoughtfully with the artist's first ever bronze edition, *The Voidess*, modeled after the nineteenth-century Indian icon of the Supreme Goddess as Void, a small brass frame with legs, arms, and ears. The empty center of this cartoonish image of the godhead in its most dematerialized manifestation may have been used as a meditational projection screen.

Englander recreated the form with her standard Americana pop flair, bricolaging Ken doll legs, babydoll arms, Mr. Potato Head ears, and a Betty Boop hair silhouette for the crowning finial to a scrap wood frame with hooks for eyes. Cast in bronze, the dismembered familiar plastic and rubber emblems of childhood are drafted into the transmundane rhetoric of this Tantric icon, undermining the materialistic selfhood they were designed to encourage. The effect of the cast reinscribes her 21st century study into something like the sacred materiality of the original.

Elizabeth Englander (b. 1988, Boston, MA) lives and works in New York, NY. She received her BFA from The Rhode Island School of Design in 2011 and her MFA from Hunter College in 2019. Recent solo exhibitions include: *Eminem Buddhism*, Theta, New York (2022); *HEADMASTER*, Smart Objects, Los Angeles (2021); *Toteboat*, From the Desk of Lucy Bull, Los Angeles (2019). Group exhibitions include: *White Columns Looking Back / The 13th White Columns Annual* Selected by Olivia Shao, White Columns, New York; *Under the Volcano II*, LOMEX, New York; *Farah Al Qasimi, Elizabeth Englander, Bruno Zhu*, *What Pipeline*, Detroit (2022); *Deathbound and Sexed*, Theta, New York (2021); *Quickening*, Smart Objects, Los Angeles (2021); *Delusionarium 5 (Adaptation)*, Night Gallery, Los Angeles (2021); *Bone Meal*, Motel, Brooklyn (2019); *An eye that tried so hard to see one particular thing that it forgot everything else*, Safe Gallery, Brooklyn (2019); and *Fool's Prophecy*, Muzeum Ikon, Warsaw, PL (2018).