

# Theta

## David L. Johnson and Kelsey Isaacs

Paris Internationale 2022

Booth 3.9 B

October 18- October 23, 2022

Theta is incredibly excited for the opportunity to present two New York-based artists, David L. Johnson and Kelsey Isaacs, to European audiences for the first time at Paris Internationale.

Their juxtaposition engages a dialogue between two seemingly disparate practices that set off on entirely different motives, but both deal with unexpected and abstracted notions of architecture in oddly severe and seductive manners.

David L. Johnson (b. 1993) makes work attuned to the streets of New York City, pinpointing moments of slippage between public and private property. His practice utilizes photography, video, found and stolen objects, and installation to consider the politics, histories, aesthetics and forms of use that produce contemporary urban space.

For Paris Internationale, Johnson presents new works from his Loiter series (2020-ongoing) of removed hostile architectures. Throughout New York City streets, standpipes, or inactive fire connections, jut out from building bases like unofficial seating. Though the standpipes themselves are standardized, it is up to the discretion of building owners (after whom Johnson's pieces are parenthetically named) to retrofit custom spikes, or not, to prevent the use of their surfaces for loitering. These varietal spikes are material forms of surveillance that target people seeking temporary respite or shelter, people participating in informal economies, or simply workers on a lunch break. Mounted to the wall at the heights of their past lives' installations, Johnson's sculptural act is the deinstallation of these spikes. Leaving the standpipes bare once more, the Loiter works exist simultaneously inside the white cube and scattered across public space, inviting resurgent forms of city life.

Kelsey Isaacs (b. 1994) paints from photographs of scenes she has staged and spotlit. Translated into oil on linen, plastic rhinestones and tinsel fragments of gimcrack miscellany are assembled on glossy grounds that often reveal the process of their making.

Isaacs's use of photography to mediate her scenes expands the conventions of still life painting and articulates the self-reflexive qualities of her composition-making. One set-up might give way to multiple frames; one angle might reflect unique artifacts, collapsing the rippled context of methodology and the room in which they're photographed into the plane of the painting. Isaacs does not seek to build narratives in her work, but a logic of dimensionality. Her paintings refer back to one another, expressing a formal architecture in the language of trompe l'oeil that almost approaches abstraction.