

Glen Baldrige

Wigwag

January 6 - February 11, 2023

OPENING RECEPTION:

Friday, January 6, 6-8PM



Glen Baldrige's studio, Portland, Maine, 2022.

In Jennifer Egan's novel "The Candy House" a slightly futuristic world is connected through an experimental technology — Own Your Unconscious — that can capture consciousness. It allows people to upload their memories to a collective archive and access others'. Time travel through the brain of another.

A scene in the novel, where a character relives her father's memory of stumbling stoned through a redwood forest in the 1960s, haunted me long after I read it. Glen Baldrige's new show "Wigwag" is the visualization of this double take on our possible collective consciousness.

Did it occur to me 20 years ago when I first set foot in Glen's Brooklyn studio — in a then viciously seedy part of the borough, soon to be gentrified into Fika-hell — that this talented Montana kid with a penchant for reimagining subcultures (switchblade and tattoo needle lying around the studio, bullet holes in canvases) would one day put together a show of deranged Hattifatteners from the Moomin-books, of psychedelic bacon strips and flesh-colored Christs that glow in the dark?

But the fun house of a Rorschach test that is "Wigwag" — one man's Hattifattener is another man's sex toy I guess — is also a trapdoor to the next revelation. Behind an onslaught of colors that would make a microdosing candy store blush, behind bleeding gouache that makes one think of tie-dye, children's books, and old inkjet printers, lies the speed of our past decades. The speed in which a phrase such as "TBT" or a subculture is no longer stable for more than a few milliseconds before its meaning has traveled the world. Hashtagged, shared, hollowed out and changed.

Bob Dylan proclaimed that "there are no truths inside the gates of Eden" and 50 years later the author Peter Pomerantsev, describing a career in Russian reality tv, titled a book "Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible". In "Wigwag" the gravures Baldrige made in 2017 — "Modus Tollens", nighttime photos of wildlife where something is lurking behind harsh flashes — re-emerge in the gallery through the wormhole of climate change. Or is it what you might see while staggering amongst the redwoods wearing your father's stoned eyes; a gang of one-eyed owls and flesh-eating squirrels?

KLAUS VON NICHTSSAGEND GALLERY

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If “The Candy House” is an attempt to fictionalize a world-shifting phenomenon that defines an era and connects strangers, Baldrige creates a black hole that sucks everything of that era in. Perhaps to point out that the connection is false. Not unlike what happened to the promise of a democratic internet, digital highway turned nightmare roller coaster, and free elections. It only took several lies for words and photographs to lose their taken-for-granted meanings and their truths.

Here are the crossroads where Own Your Unconscious and Glen Baldrige’s vision meet. Eden is officially on fire and so are the tech bros. What if the expertise of fungi beats fiber optics? The hunt for a new interconnectedness is on.

— Hynek Pallas is a Swedish writer.

Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery is excited to present *Wigwag*, a solo exhibition of new gouache works on paper by Glen Baldrige, his ninth show with the gallery.

Featuring stylized images of owls, branches, colorfully ambiguous figures and acorns, each work is meticulously hand painted with accumulated multicolor brushstrokes done in “wigwag” patterns. Some of the pictures are calligram forms, generated from phrases like “No Way”, or “Whatever Forever”. In these works, Baldrige continues to blur the boundaries between youth and stoner sub-cultures, traditional painting techniques, and a deadpan sensibility that belies a high level of artistic sophistication.

Glen Baldrige is based outside Portland, Maine. His work has been exhibited at institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the RISD Museum in Providence, RI, ICPNY in New York, the Pizzuti Collection in Columbus, Ohio, and the Spencer Museum in Lawrence, KS. Recent solo shows include at Halsey McKay in Easthampton, William Patterson University in Wayne, NJ, and Fourteen30 Contemporary in Portland, OR. Baldrige has had print works published by Forth Estate Editions, Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, Dieu Donné, Flying Horse Editions, PS Marlowe, and Du-Good Press. His work is included in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, The New York Public Library, RISD Museum, Yale University Art Gallery, and The Library of Congress, amongst others.

For images or more information please contact the gallery at klaus@klausgallery.com or call 212-777-7756

Gallery Hours: 11AM–6PM, Tuesday through Saturday

Subway Directions: 1 at Franklin Street, 4 5 6, J M, N R Q W, and A C E at Canal Street