

Matthew Bede Murphy

If the Shoe Fits

December 15 – January 22, 2023

Shelter is thrilled to put a little pep in your winter step with Matthew Bede Murphy's debut solo exhibition with the gallery, *If the Shoe Fits*.

There is an undergirding playfulness to Murphy's work that nonetheless takes its objects and subjects very seriously. They all certainly have something to say, but what that is isn't entirely clear – to the viewer or to the artist. Speaking on his new series of shoes with random objects attached, from genitalia to fruit, Murphy truly highlights what the experience of creating his work entails:

"If you're wondering how I decided to combine these images, join the club. I wish I could tell you, but that would require a level of self-knowledge that I have yet to attain. So instead, feast your eyes on some imagery that seems straight (well not that straight) out of a gay telenovela. Or a Tender Vittles moment gone horribly wrong (and fabulously right)."

Murphy highlights his materials as a central theme to his work, painting his sketchbooks and recreating the images within, assembling tableaus from domestic spaces and those around him in candid, intimate moments. This overarching theme of world-building is central to the artist's practice, while working with recurring objects and subjects: flowers, landscapes, diaries, the self, sailors, and even aliens.

Though ranging across many extremes, a great sensitivity to color provides a connection that is distinctly his own. The artist's palette bridges gaps between childlike curiosity and classical sensibilities; the absurd and the revered. Never shying away from bold colors set against neutral backgrounds, it is impossible to look away from the sheer vibrancy of the exhibition as a whole.

Matthew Bede Murphy (b. 1968) is a painter, printmaker and keeper of a vast sketchbook library. He uses traditional media applications in unusual ways, and is interested in the dissolve between painting, drawing and mechanical application. Humor and whimsy are often a focus, as well as the exercising of random anxieties in dream-like settings.

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During his 20+ year artmaking career, Murphy has exhibited widely in the US and abroad. In 2019, his work was shown in Vienna and Montreal, with recent American group shows including New York's LMAKGallery. In 2009, he collaborated with UFO Devotee group UNARIUS for 2 exhibitions in Los Angeles, California at the 18th Street Art Center and La Mama Gallery in NYC. Murphy's work was featured alongside weavings by Cynthia Alberto in Shelter's 2019 inaugural exhibition.

Murphy co-founded Brooklyn's LAND Studio and Gallery in 2003. With close to 30 years of experience in the field, he has an extensive background serving developmentally disabled adults in art related affiliations. Murphy has also built partnerships with museums, galleries, non-profits, and other institutions stressing inclusion, advocacy, and collections.