

Allison Schulnik
Hatch



February 20 – March 21, 2020
Opening Reception: February 20, 6-8 PM

P·P·O·W is pleased to present *Hatch*, Allison Schulnik's first solo exhibition with the gallery. In the first presentation since Schulnik gave birth to her daughter Tupelo and moved to the remote mountain area of Sky Valley, California, *Hatch* incorporates the myriad methods that comprise Schulnik's practice. Working in paint, sculpture, and animation, Schulnik seamlessly transitions between mediums, imbuing her work with a distinct sensibility that melds theatricality with intense emotional vulnerability. Known for her uncanny approach to traversing the internal and immaterial terrains of nostalgia, childhood memories, and dreams, Schulnik choreographs an honest, complex and contemporary portrait of new motherhood and life seen through the red haze and black silence of the desert.

Journeying into new physical and spiritual wildernesses with *Hatch*, Schulnik responds directly to the present as it unfolds around her, revealing that constant flux between life and death in the surrounding desert. While it can be dark, coarse, silent, and still, the desert can also be vibrant, blooming, and full of life. Connecting this new awareness of nature with the birth of her daughter Tupelo, Schulnik uses paint like clay to sculpt daily interactions with the natural surroundings where the fantastic and the real merge. In *Tupelo's Fox*, Schulnik paints from memory a moment when she and a bright-eyed fox, a regular nighttime visitor to their property, locked eyes during one of her midnight nursing sessions with Tupelo. The fox, having been spotted, stares elliptically back at the viewer through the frozen black night. Although shrouded in stillness, with the rich impasto strokes, *Tupelo's Fox* teems with energy and life.

Over the course of the exhibition, Schulnik excavates the psychological, spiritual, and literal terrain of early motherhood. In three very different portraits completed months apart, Schulnik renders each of, what she calls, "Tupelo's sides." Schulnik describes the side depicted in *Tupelo #1* as "fiercely confident, mesmerizing, and otherworldly." Painting her daughter on their living room carpet staring up at her with huge lashes and electric blue eyes, Schulnik creates an image that can be viewed literally, psychologically, and spiritually all at the same time. Such works for Schulnik also exist within the present, the past and the future, ultimately. Occupying this liminal space, *Hatch* bridges the real and magical through Schulnik's painted environments of motherhood and the desert that expresses to the fullest both life and death simultaneously.

Allison Schulnik (b. 1978, San Diego, CA) lives and works in Sky Valley, CA. Her films have been included in internationally renowned festivals and museums including MASS MoCA, the Hammer Museum, LACMA, Annecy International Animated Film Festival and Animafest Zagreb. Her latest film *Moth* is the Times Square Arts' January 2020 Midnight Moment, the world's largest, longest-running digital art exhibition, synchronized on electronic billboards throughout Times Square nightly from 11:57pm to midnight. Solo exhibitions of Schulnik's work have been presented at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT; Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA; Oklahoma City Museum of Art, OK; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS; Mark Moore Gallery, Los Angeles; ZieherSmith, New York, NY; and Galeria Javier Lopez & Fer Frances, Madrid. Schulnik's work can be found in numerous museum collections including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; Santa Barbara Art Museum; Musée de Beaux Arts (Montreal); Laguna Art Museum; The Crocker Art Museum; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art; and The Albright-Knox Gallery.

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