

Intimacy: The Artistic Community of PASC at MOCAD

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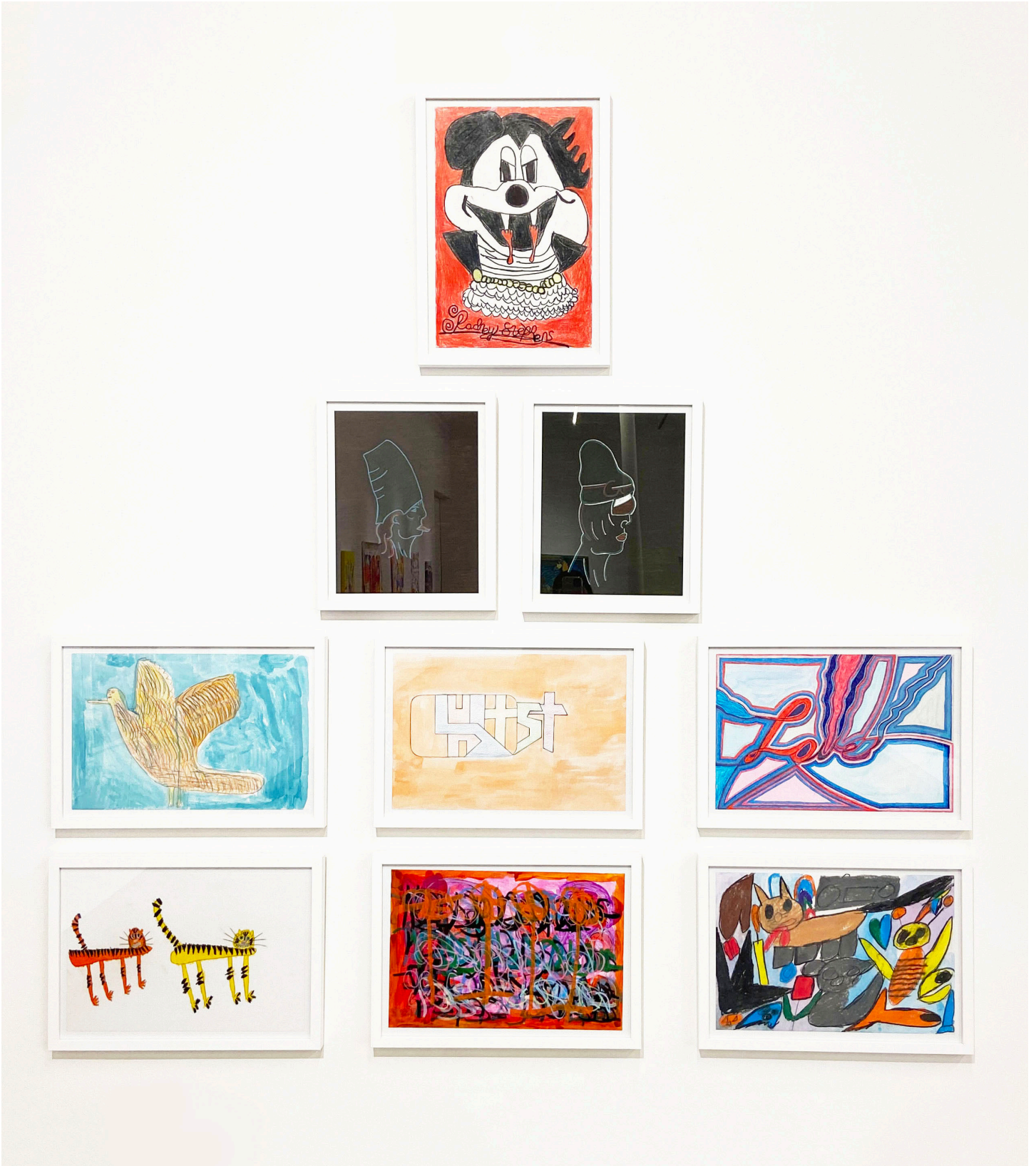
Marissa Jezak

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A liveliness radiates from the vivid, energetically charged works by Progressive Art Studio Collective (PASC) members, currently on view at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit. Featuring 37 artists, the exhibition marks the progress of the past three years of the program, which offers artistic guidance and exhibition opportunities for adults with disabilities in the Metro Detroit area. They currently have three studios located in Detroit, Southgate, and Westland, with plans of opening a new Detroit location soon. This show—curated by Abel González Fernández and Anthony Marcellini, covers a vast expanse of the museum space, and features dozens of drawings and paintings, as well as some small sculptures, all of varying mediums and styles. Clay, paper mache, fibers, sculpted foam, colored pencil, marker, crayon, and watercolor are some of the materials present in this versatile display of media and technique. Among the works are bold hues, intricate line work, portrayals of animals and monsters, nature, and abstract compositions.



Installation view



Installation view



Marquise Rucker. *The Alien Vampire Circus Wheel*. 2023. Mixed media

Themes of the mythical and fantasy narratives are explored in drawings such as *The Alien Vampire Circus Wheel* by Marquise Rucker and *Centaur Woman After Gustav Klimt* by Ronald Griggs. Different creatures, including a red dragon, birds, and monsters occupy the low white pedestals placed throughout the space. Piglet from Winnie-the-Pooh is present among them, made from carved styrofoam that has been painted to resemble the iconic Disney character, known for his small stature, kindness, and hidden courage. Other characters and imagery from pop culture and religion have been depicted in the show, like Mickey Mouse, Pee Wee Herman, a piñata, the devil, and a voodoo doll. In contrast, there are also many artworks that focus on more abstract content, or images of nature. For example, Darmeka Bailey's *Sunflowers and Tulips* focuses on the relationship between colors, in an intricately color-blocked illustration that utilizes the repeated image of the sunflower—adorned with thin, pointed petals.



Ronald Griggs. *Centaur Woman After Gustav Klimt*. 2023. Mixed media on paper

Other works incorporate personal narratives that communicate specific dates, places, and events. The mixed-media canvas work *Detroit Summer* by Chris Wansac is an example of this—the artist has brought us into their experience by using symbols representing local freeways, the Detroit Tigers colors, and portraits of their smiling friends, aspects that collectively represent a memory, or rather *memories* of their summer. On the far end of the room, rows of drawings line the walls, many of which contain detailed patterns of repeated geometric shapes in a plethora of hues and orientations.



Darmeka Bailey. *Sunflowers and Tulips*. 2023. Mixed media on paper



Chris Wansac. *Detroit Summer*. 2023. Mixed media on canvas

Overall, the collection reflects the pure uninhibited creativity of its makers, and the diversity of experience and expression that culminates in the work. While reminiscent of what Jean Dubuffet might classify as “art brut”, or art that is made outside of the academic or traditional fine art context, the presentation of these peculiar works of art within MOCAD effectively positions it directly *inside* the art world, thereby securing its social status and cultural import alongside other relevant contemporary artists of our time.

The exhibition runs from December 2, 2023 through January 14, 2024.

More information on PASC and this show can be found here:

<https://www.progressiveartstudiocollective.org/>

Images by Marissa Jezak



Manual Bart. *Devil*. 2023. Fabric and ink

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