



KATHLEEN HENDERSON
BLUEBEARD AND OTHER POOLINGS

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May 7 - July 2, 2022

TRACK 16 GALLERY

in the Bendix Building

1206 Maple Ave, #1005
Los Angeles, CA 90015

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For inquiries, please email

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KATHLEEN HENDERSON

BLUEBEARD AND OTHER POOLINGS

Artist Kathleen Henderson's new exhibition, "Bluebeard and Other Poolings" peers through the looking glass to explore the inner lives of humanity calculating an impending apocalypse. For twenty years Henderson has fashioned blob-like ghosts and beings to expose narcissism, vanity, and feelings of powerlessness in the face of mounting challenges that threaten society and existence itself. Animated in oil stick on paper, her figures assemble in an array of poses that reveal our inability as a collective to gather behind solutions, instead choosing to cheer on chaos or focus on how photogenic we'll appear in insurrection selfies.

Henderson freely acknowledges the influence of the January 6th insurrection on her current series, and much of her work depicts our brutality and insistence of passing on destructive traditions. Throughout the exhibit, her characters run amok, and hint at the growing radicalism that is infecting every aspect of our society, accumulating not just onlookers but active participants. Blue-bearded figures, the personification of murdering misogynists, make multiple appearances including parading their way onto a school board, presumably to ban books and purge curricula. No image more directly addresses the characteristics of crowd mentality than Procession, which eerily mirrors the political pageantry of our former president and his minions on their march to disassemble democracy and establish an exclusionary society.

Many of Henderson's drawings in the exhibition derive from her self-described "doomsday residency" at 18th Street Art Center in Santa Monica which bridged her experience not just during the pandemic, but also through the attempted coup. There, in her month-long solitude, Henderson drew on a daily basis, with news radio filling the space of her studio and imbuing her drawings with a sense of timeliness and urgency behind our societal collapse.

Henderson explains, "Facing the loss of the natural world, there is no time for despair. If you're despairing, you need to get over it. I hope that these drawings address our singular ineptitude and the necessity to work together as a collective instead of as a collection of individuals."

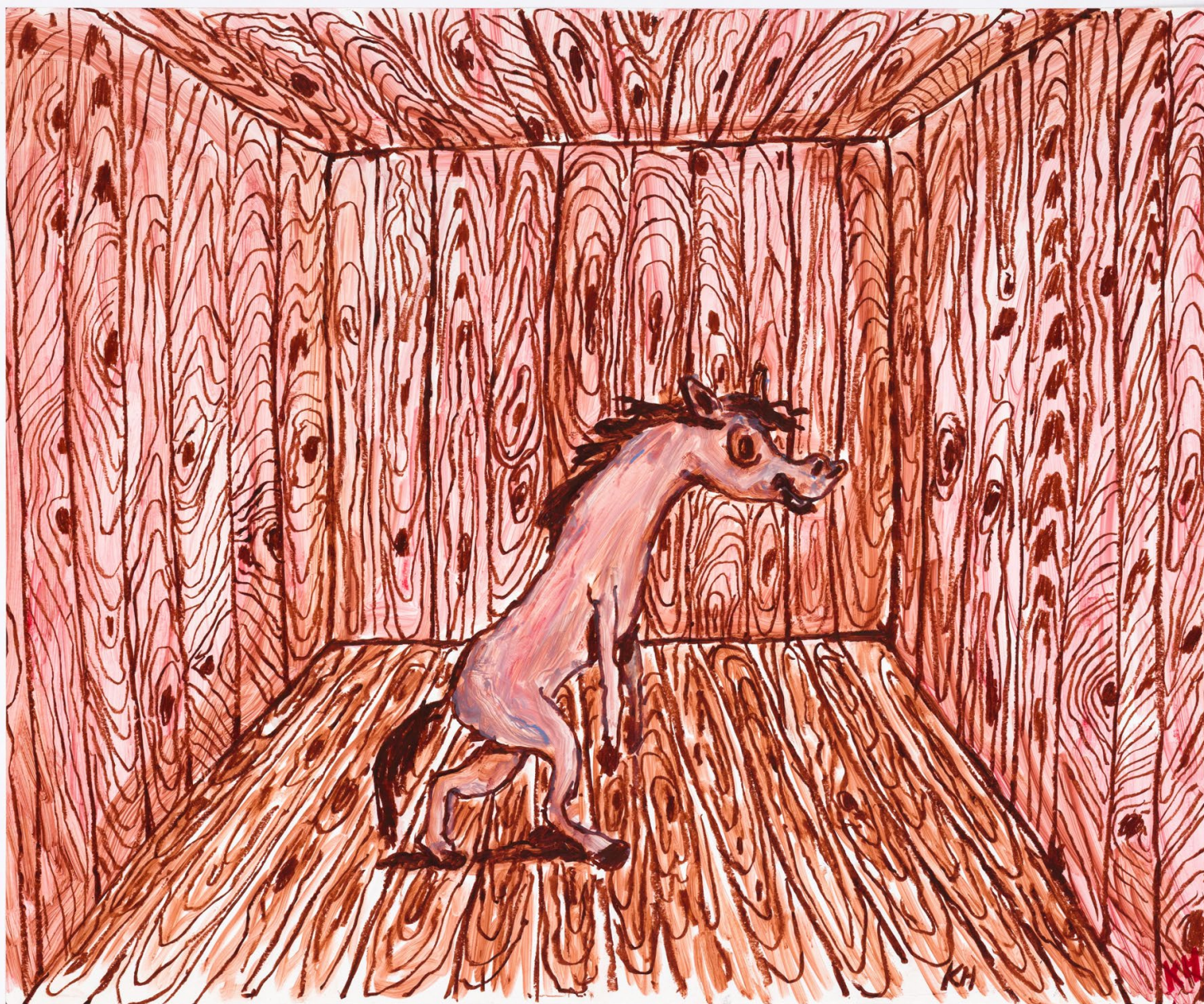
The urgency of her greasy lines and the palpable immediacy of her beings build scenes that disturb us with cutting humor. Experiencing her drawings is to hold hands with her while laughing and crying through the pinnacle of fright in a haunted house. Her cartoonish lampooning is a portal to engagement. Henderson remarks, "There's truth in line, there's truth in the details, and there's truth in scale. Tragedy is everywhere but to make it look like comedy, it stops the clock, and opens a small space allowing us to begin contemplating the unimaginable." As critical of her subjects as Henderson can be, there's also universality – something of self-portraiture in them. We all have weakness, folly, and base desire.

Donald Kuspit, writing in Artforum, explains, "Folly is an old god, celebrated by Erasmus. Stoic comedy is not a bad response to a feeling of meaninglessness; indeed, to laugh at the acedia that art and life seem to have become is self-preserving. Humour is the last saving grace – the only way of avoiding self-deception."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kathleen Henderson is a visual artist living and working in the Bay Area. Her work has been the subject of numerous solo shows in Los Angeles and San Francisco as well as the Drawing Center in New York. She has received a National Endowment for the Arts grant and is in the collections of the Hammer Museum and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. She has been a staff artist at Creative Growth Art Center in Oakland for over ten years. She is the founding editor of the Creative Growth magazine, which showcases the unfolding and expanding world of art and disability. She is the executive director of Studio Route 29, a progressive art studio in Frenchtown, New Jersey slated to open Fall 2022.





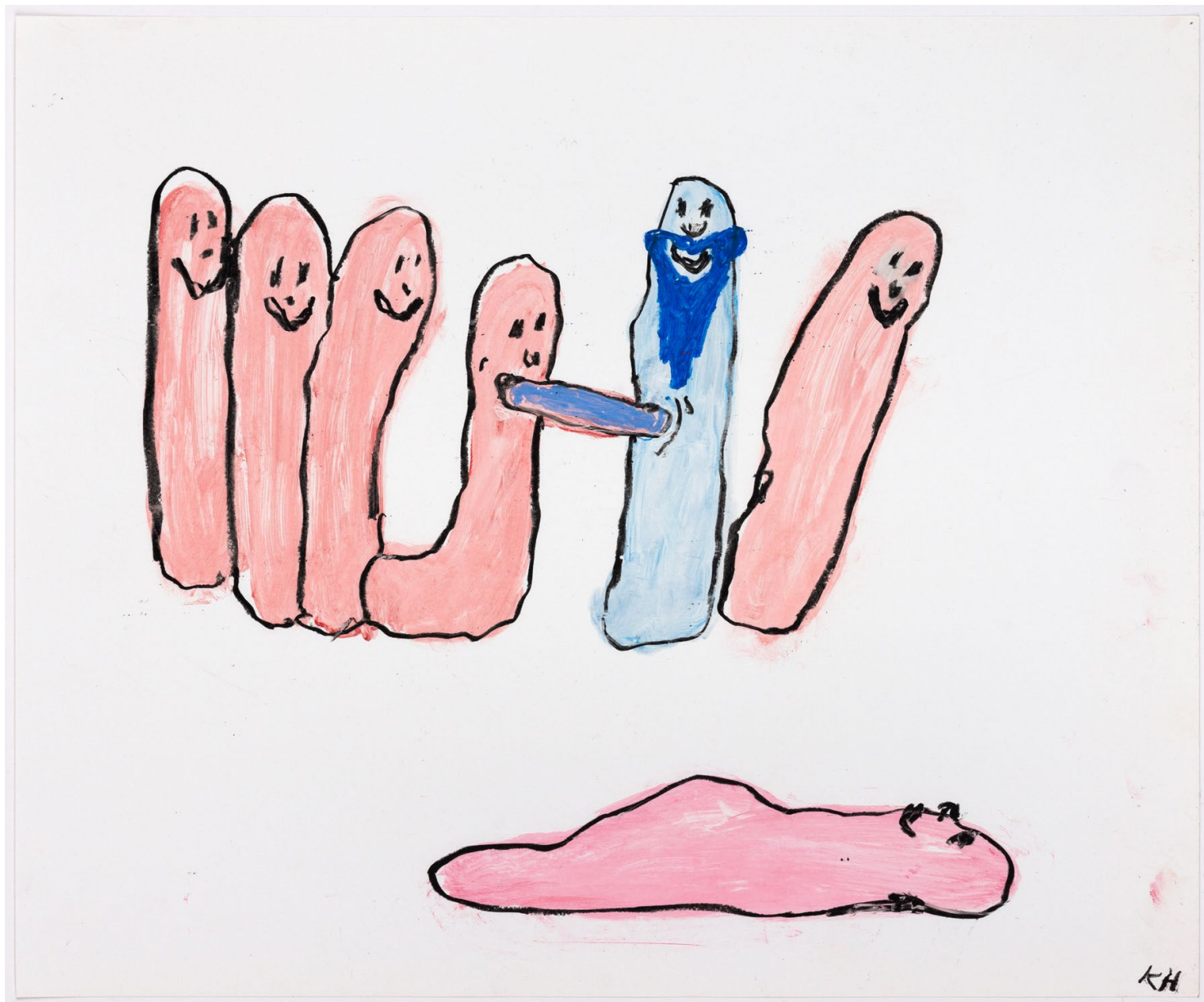
Pacing, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19 x 23 inches
\$2,600



Bluebeard, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19 x 23 inches



At Peace with the Past, in Step with the present, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
18.5 x 22.5 inches



Blowing Bluebeard, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19 x 23 inches



Ghost on the rug, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
18 x 22 inches



Walking, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19 x 23 inches

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Running for School Board, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19 x 23 inches



Untitled (Bluebeard in the rain), 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
16 x 20 inches



Laps, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19.25 x 26 inches



Basket, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
20 x 24.5 inches



Untitled (two figures in landscape), 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
20 x 23.25 inches



Untitled, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
17.25 x 22.5 inches





Soft Power / Rug #2, 2021
Fabric, wood, thread and wire
14.5 x 8 x 8 inches



Soft Power / Chair, 2021
Fabric, wood, thread and wire
21 x 12 x 11 inches



Soft Power / Ottoman, 2021
Fabric, wood, thread and wire
20 x 6.5 x 6.5 inches





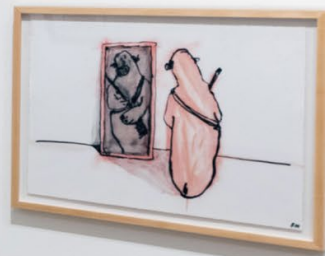
After Church, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
22 x 32.5 inches



Big Rabbit, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
21 x 30 inches

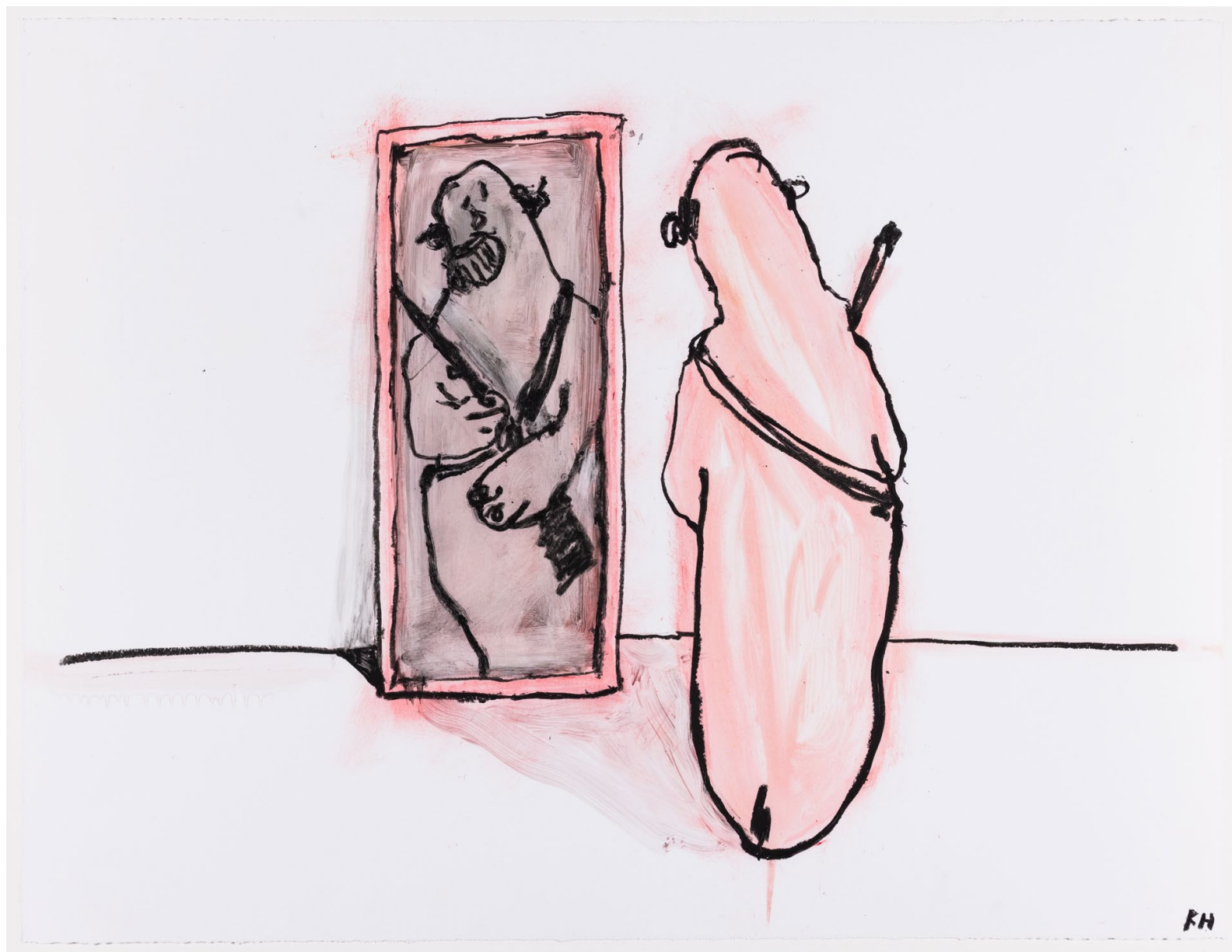


Cage, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
24 x 28.5 inches





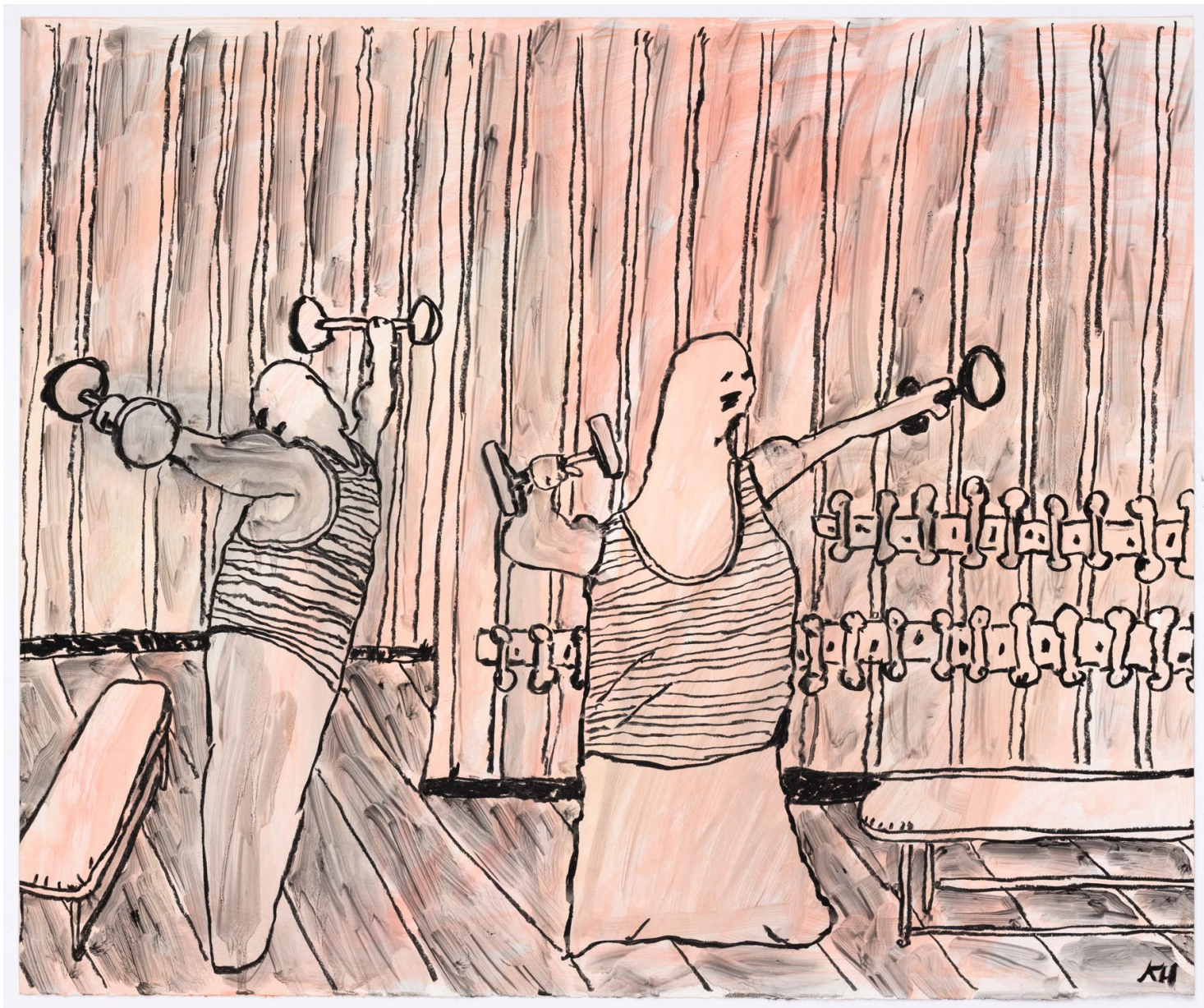
Procession, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper. Framed.
19.25 x 26 inches



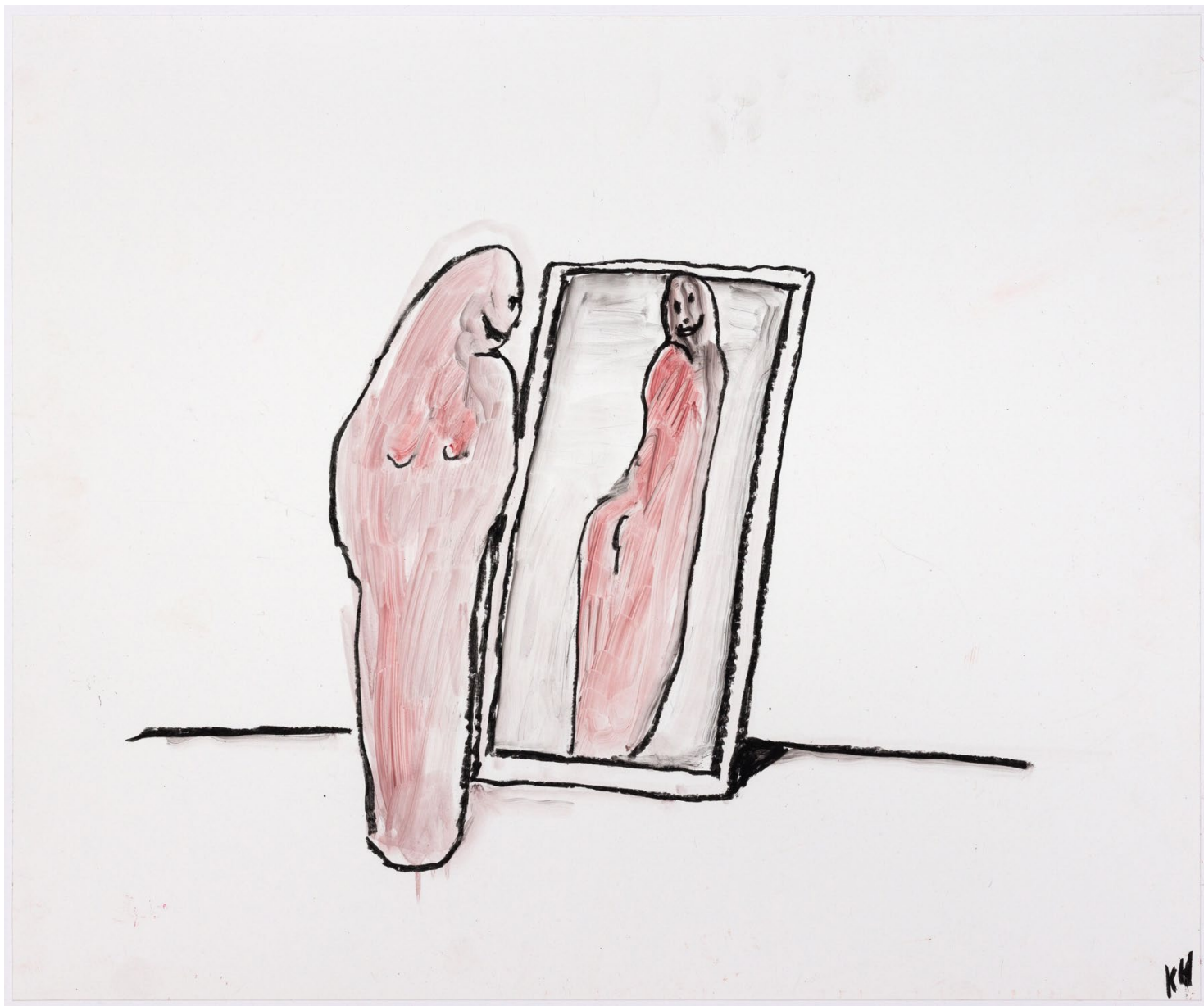
Pinkie, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper. Framed.
18.5 x 24.25 inches



Mr. Edwards, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
26 x 17 inches



Weights, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
20 x 26 inches



Untitled (pink looking in mirror), 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19 x 23 inches



Double-crosser, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19.5 x 25 inches



Triumph, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
22 x 32 inches





Flood Plain, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19.5 x 26 inches



Beatty, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
22.5 x 24 inches



Dawn, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
20 x 26 inches

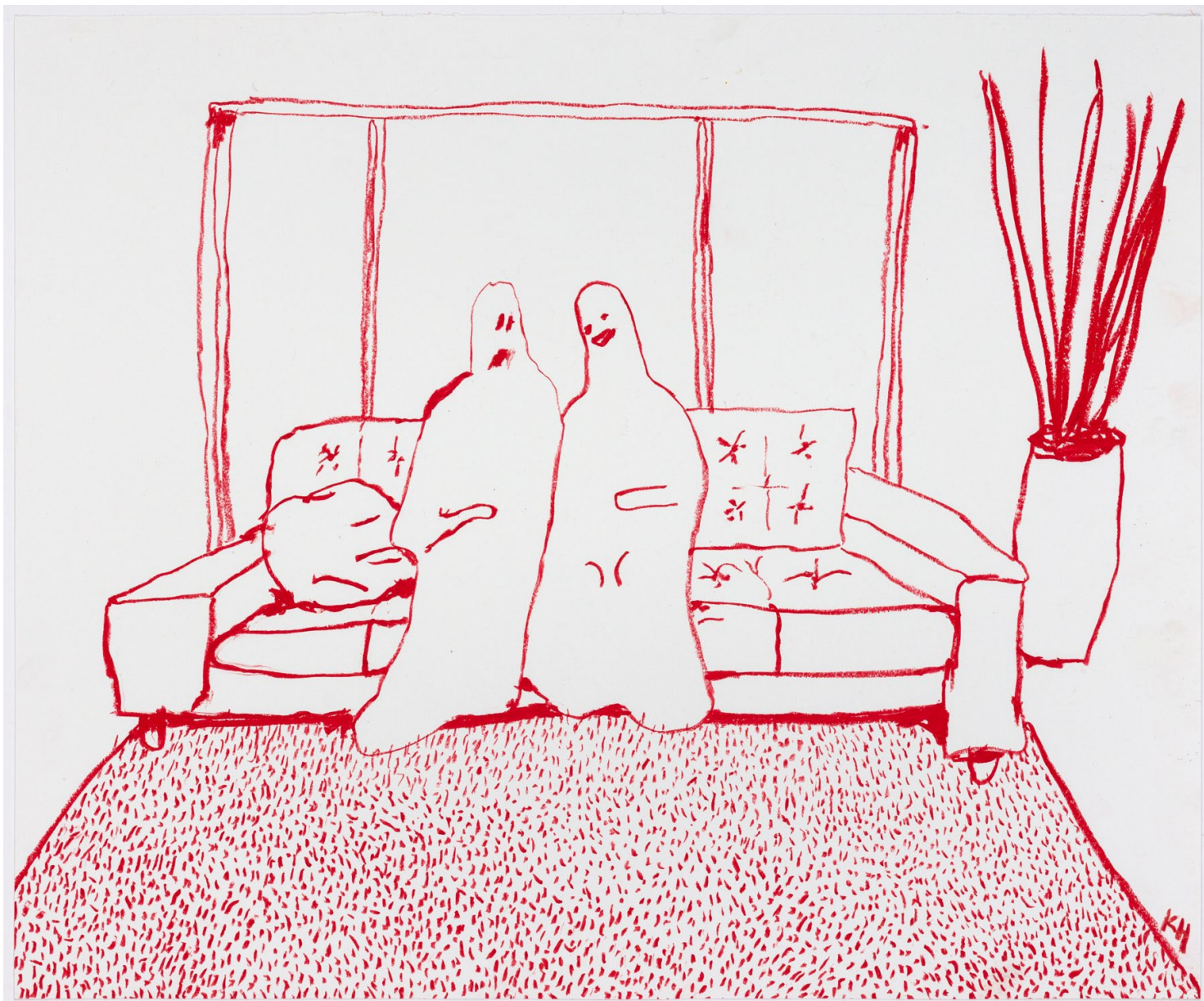




Camper, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19.75 x 24 inches



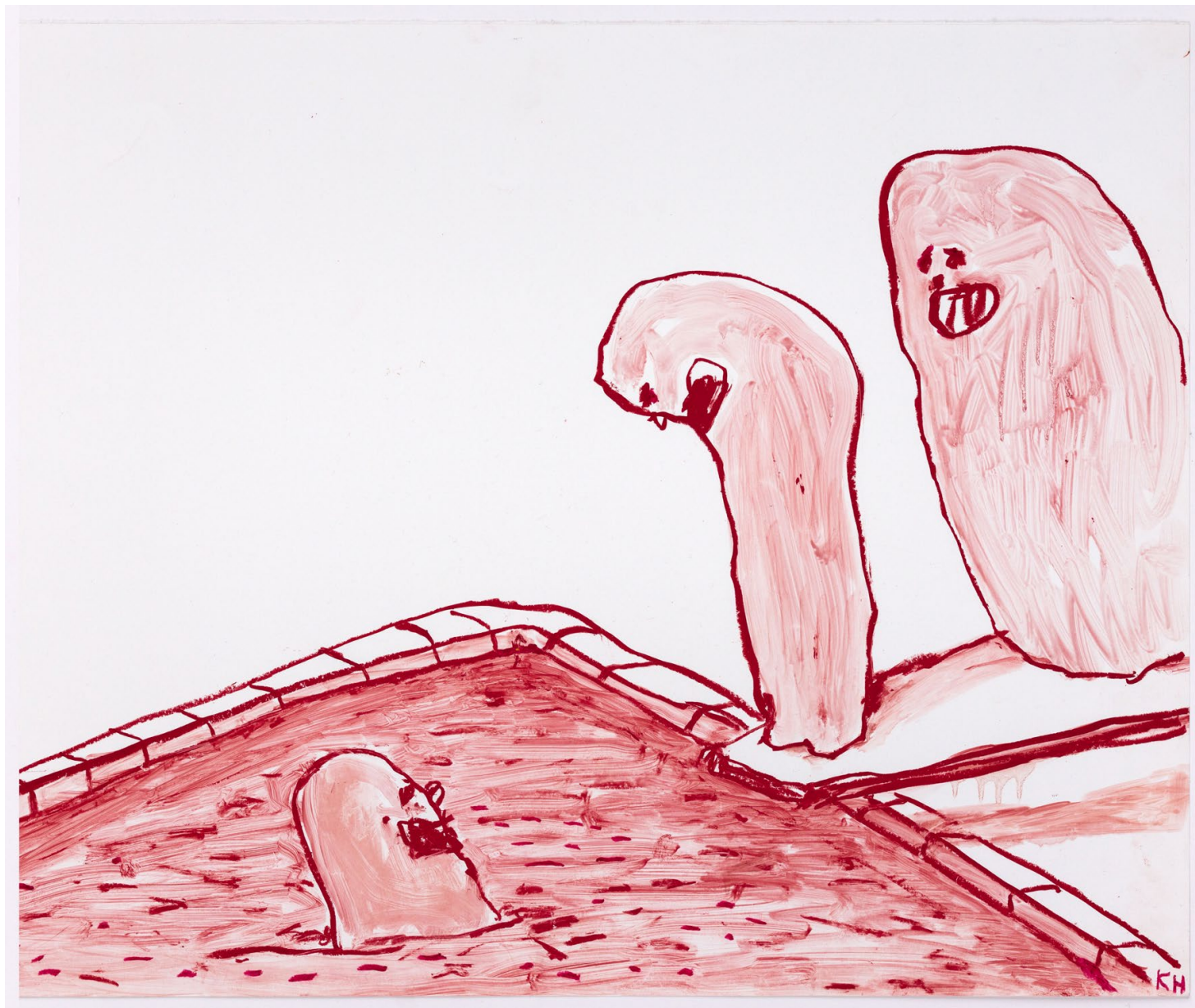
Sash, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
20 x 26 inches



Shag, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19 x 23 inches



Seal, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19 x 23 inches

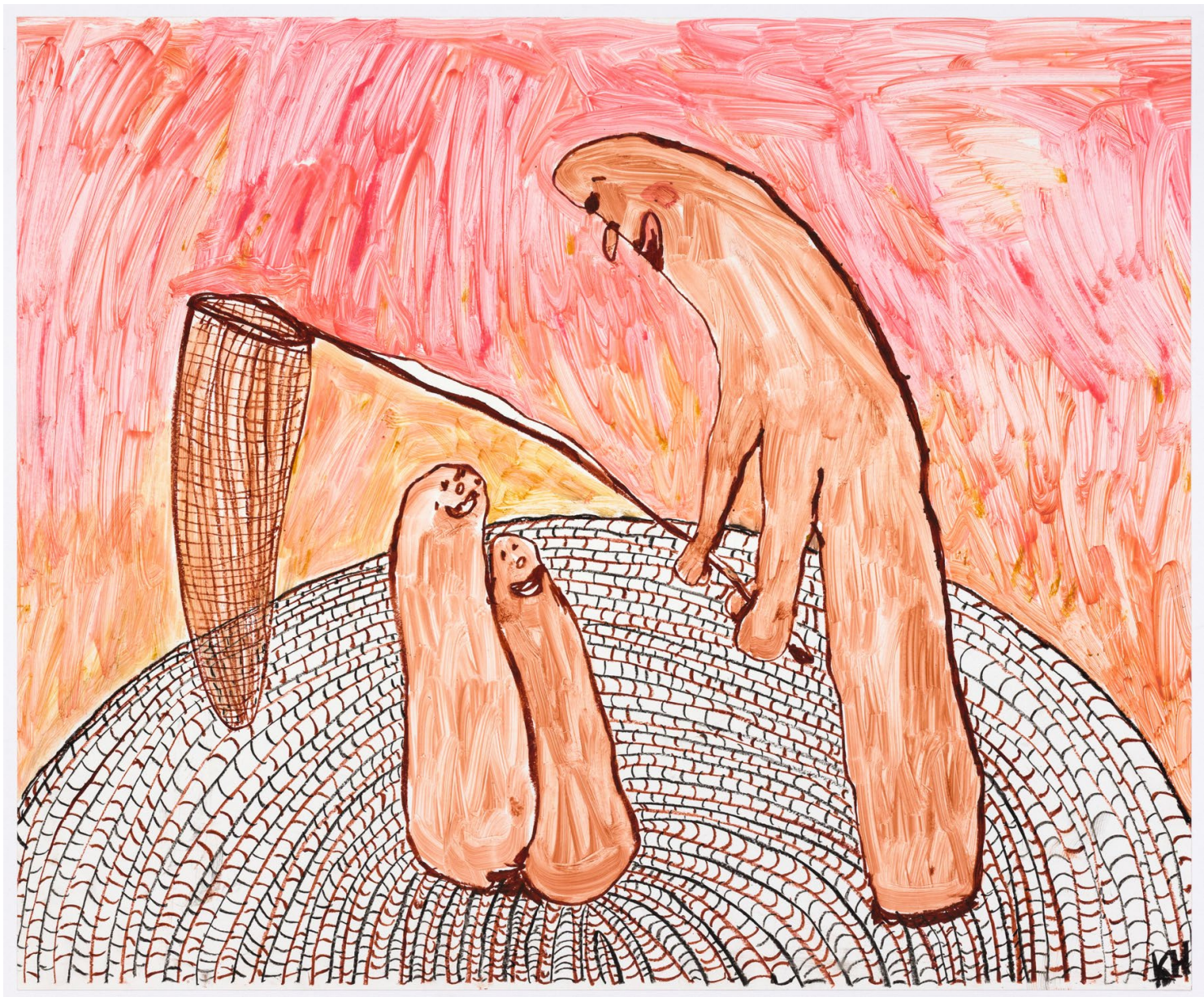


Pool, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19.25 x 26 inches



Puddle, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19 x 23.75 inches





Trinity, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19 x 23 inches



Nets, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19 x 21 inches



Wax Figure 1, 2022
Wax
8.5 x 5.5 x 5 inches



Wax Figure 2, 2022

Wax

9 x 3.75 x 2.75 inches



Rabbits, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
24 x 30 inches



Yellow Light, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
19 x 23 inches



Boom, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
17.5 x 21.75 inches





Wax Figure 3, 2022
Wax
9.75 x 5.25 x 4 inches



Wax Figure 4, 2022

Wax

9.75 x 5 x 4 inches

Wax Figure 5, 2022

Wax

9.25 x 4.5 x 3.75 inches





Wax Figure 6, 2022
Wax
9 x 5.75 x 3.25 inches



On the Beach, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
23.25 x 36 inches

Wax Figure 7, 2022

Wax

10.5 x 3.75 x 4 inches





Desert Shoot, 2021
Oil stick and oil on paper
23.25 x 33.25 inches



Wax Figure 8, 2022

Wax

9.75 x 6.25 x 7.5 inches



Soft Power / Rug #2, 2021
Fabric, wood, thread and wire
14 x 8.5 x 9.5 inches





ARTIST CV

Education

MFA Program, Queens College, Queens , New York

BFA Painting, Boston University, Boston, MA

Solo Exhibitions

Watch Me Make You Disappear - Track 16, Los Angeles, CA, 2020

The Story of How This All Came to be is Long and Complicated - Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Santa Monica, CA, 2014

Drawings - Paule Anglim Gallery, San Francisco, CA 2012

Notes on a Gathering Crowd - Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Santa Monica, CA, 2012

Irresistible Empire - Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Santa Monica, CA, 2010

I Shew You A Mystery - Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Santa Monica, CA, 2008

What If I Could Draw a Bird That Could Change the World -
The Drawing Center, NY, NY, 2008

Time and Space Can Change Your Life - Rosamund Felsen
Gallery, Santa Monica, CA, 2007

Salvador Donkey - Ashby Stage, Berkeley, CA, 2005

Drawings - Stephen Wirtz Gallery, San Francisco, CA, 2002

Selected Group Shows

This is America - Kunsthalle Kade, Amersfoort, NL, 2020

Democracy Shop - Frieze Art Fair, LA, CA, 2020

Didn't you Know What You were Carrying On Your Back - Rosalux, Berlin, Germany, 2019

The End is Here - Rosamund Felsen Gallery, LA, CA, 2016

The Nothing That Is: A Drawing Show In Five Parts - CAM
Raleigh, Raleigh, NC, 2015

The Possible - Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA, 2014

La Bete - Galerie Impaire, Paris, France, 2010

Hot and Cold - Baer Ridgeway Exhibitions, SF, CA, 2009

Good Doll- Bad Doll - Armory Center for the
Arts, Pasadena, CA, 2008

Who New? - Recent Art from the Bay Area - Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Santa Monica, CA, 2005

Drawing First - Southern Exposure at Project Artaud, SF, CA, 1993

Awards

Yellow House Foundation, 2009

National Endowment for the Arts, Works on Paper, 1992

Selected Bibliography

Leah Ollman, Review: Villain or victim? Comic or tragic? The unsettling art of Kathleen Henderson, LA Times, Jan. 2020

Jody Zellen, Review, What's On Los Angeles, 1/16/2020

Matt Stromberg, ArtRXLA, Hyperallergic, 10/14/2014

Renee Hoogland, A Violent Embrace, Art and Aesthetics after Representation, University Press of New England, 2014

Leah Ollman, A Cynical and Raw Approach Turns Searing, LA Times, Oct. 2012

Leah Ollman, Reviews, Art in America, Sept. 2012

Leah Ollman, Issues Tend to Draw Her, LA Times, June 2010

Sharon Mizota, Critic's Pick, Artforum.com, Nov. 2008

Leah Ollman, Keeping it Simple and Stark, LA Times, Dec. 2008

Holland Cotter, What if I Could Draw a Bird That Could Change the world?, The Listings, NY Times, Sept., 2008

Leah Ollman, Going Bit by Bit to a Larger effect, LA Times, March, 2007

Jody Zellen, Kathleen Henderson at Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Artillery, Vol. 5, 2007

Lindsey Westbrook, Artweek, Vol. 36, July/Aug., 2005

Tripwire #6, Fall, 2003

Kenneth Baker, Goode and Henderson at Wirtz, San Francisco Chronicle, March, 2002

Public Collections

The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA

Residencies

Surf Point Foundation, York, Maine 2021

18th Street Arts Center Residency, Santa Monica, CA 2021

Lucas Artists Residency Program, Montalvo Art Center,
Saratoga, CA, 2017, 2015, 2012, 2009

Creative Growth Art Center, Oakland, CA, 2012, 2009

The Oxbow School, Napa, CA, 2012, 2009

ARTS & BOOKS



"KISS" by Kathleen Henderson evokes Narcissus, but the reflection the subject so admires is seen in what seems shaped like a ghost.

There's trouble ahead

BY LEAH OLLMAN

We aren't beauties, we humans. At least not on the inside, not always. Kathleen Henderson practices an excruciating realism when it comes to our species. In 35 blistering recent drawings at Track 16, greed, pride and vanity play out in oil stick on paper — raw impulses matched by raw, urgent line.

Henderson, based in the Bay Area, hasn't shown in L.A. for five years. Much has happened since then. In scene after tragicomic scene, Henderson registers the dismaying state of the union and the planet.

Two figures under an umbrella pose as if for a classic, nature-as-souvenir snapshot made comic by one woman's awkward-sexy stance and made tragic by the green rain spit down from the clouds, the drops curdling into clots that litter the bare ground. In "Team Building With Rabbits," a man wears nothing below the waist, jacket and tie above, and on his face a dumb grin of self-congratulation over the carcasses clutched in each hand.

Henderson toggles astutely between representing concealment and revelation, power and vulnerability; sometimes the conditions oppose each other, sometimes they reinforce.

Most of her subjects, for instance, are hooded, their heads reduced to lumpy white domes with clumsily cut-out eyes and mouths. But those overly simplified features read also as unguarded, brutally transparent expressions. Henderson has referred to mummies' costumes as a source of the hoods, but the cloth covering carries multiple and varied associations, from innocent Halloween ghost to devious criminal or torture victim. The drawings derive a distinctive, searing energy from that constant oscillation.

Henderson borrows not just from popular culture but also history and myth to render the tainted spirit of the here and now. A current favorite is the ancient Greek goddess Artemis of Ephesus, a protector of mothers, traditionally portrayed with a chest barnacled by breasts. Henderson shows her naked, onstage, before a curtain drawn as if of streaked blood — again, strength and vulnerability uneasily fused. Many of the characters appear at microphones, engaging in some sort of public address, or posing with their conquests. Like good 21st century citizens, they are at once performing and exposing themselves, through the masking device of persona.

Are we doomed? Perhaps, perhaps not. But ridiculous creatures we most definitely are. Henderson allows for lewdy and also tenderness, even if skewed: A man kneels to kiss a dismaying ghost, outlined in red on the ground; the self-loving Narcissus is drawn as an earnest clown. Henderson's work might be pared down, but it is sociologically dense. Her palette of dilute pinks and greens verges on the sickly. Her line is insistent. Like the figures it circumscribes, it flaunts an innate lack of grace.

As with the mummies, her model too may be the Greek god Momus, who personified mockery and blame, exercising an essential role as social critic. According to one of Aesop's fables, Momus faulted the design of the human body for hiding the heart inside. It should be visible, he felt, the better to detect its corruption. Henderson too believes in exposing humankind's base motivations — exploitation, domination — and does so brilliantly, whether stripping her characters or cloaking them.

Track 16, 1206 Maple Ave. No. 1005, Wednesdays to Saturdays, through Feb. 1. (310) 825-8080. www.track16.com



"GREEN RAIN" could be a cheery vacation photo if not for the acid spitting from the sky. Henderson's drawings at Track 16 depict a planet and its population in peril.



"PINKIE" drops into a news conference. Henderson, a Bay Area artist, depicts most of her subjects in hoods, a masking device that she has compared to mummies' costumes.

THERE'S TROUBLE AHEAD

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Pick of the Week

by Jody Zellen

January 16, 2020

Kathleen Henderson
Watch me make you disappear
Track 16 Gallery
January 4 - February 1, 2020



Kathleen Henderson

Kathleen Henderson has a facile hand and a keen wit. She mines the news media for content and rather than make didactic and preachy work about the state of the world, she offers humorous interpretations of these troubling times. Her oil stick and oil on paper works have a gestural urgency and her thick strokes suggest her characters, rather than render them realistically. In the past, the drawings were black oil-stick outlines on white paper but now her palette has expanded and many of the works have pink and green lines and shading as well as brushed background tonalities. The latest drawings depict nude and hooded figures, animals, office spaces and political events with and without speakers.

There are also images that suggest the unpredictability of nature and the changing climate.

Henderson's deadpan titles make reference to the works content, yet are often more metaphoric than specific. For example, *Mushroom Cloud Party Hat Party*, (all works 2018-2019) pictures a smiling, multi-breasted Venus of Willendorf-esque figure in mid-jump in front of a stone wall and a distant urban landscape with a green-toned sky. Scrawled on the wall are the words: mushroom/cloud/party/hat./party. The who, what, when and why remain a mystery. This ambiguous figure also makes an appearance in *Artemis of Ephesus on Stage*, as well as in many of Henderson's *out-takes*, smaller (8 1/2 x 11 inch) works presented as a large grid in the back room of the gallery. Within this seductive and engaging presentation are crudely drawn prisoners, the devastation of hurricanes, masked men with guns, crowds, politicians, skeletons and oil rigs.

The cumulative effect of viewing these 150-plus works on paper is like mainlining a year of news, taking in the foils, destruction and ruin through a sigh of disbelief. In many ways, Henderson's *out-takes* function as the index, opening possibilities for the creation of relationships and finding similarities between the larger and smaller works. Though not studies in the traditional sense, the out-takes represent the expansive nature of Henderson's undertaking.

Henderson's work speaks directly to the moment. She is not shy about expressing her political beliefs and pointing a finger at the absurdities within the current administration. While there are moments of reflection like in *Kiss*, where a figure leans over to kiss the ground or *Narcissus* in which a figure confronts his reflection, the overall effect of the exhibition is an expression of the dire state of our world.



ARTIST TALK - JANUARY 30, 2020

KATHLEEN HENDERSON AND CURATOR JESSICA HOUGH

<https://youtu.be/ryiLhyIrNk4>

