

Toronto Exhibition

Suspended Disbelief

GROUP EXHIBITION

Curated by: Anaïs Castro &
David Liss

June 14 – Aug 14, 2021



Oda Iselin Sønderland, *The Head*, 2021, Watercolour on paper, 12 x 16 in

Amanda Ba	Eden Seifu	geetha thurairajah
Manal Kara	Oda Iselin Sønderland	Jessica Westhafer

After many weeks in lock down, Arsenal Contemporary Art Toronto is delighted to reopen to the public with a new group exhibition titled *Suspended Disbelief*, co-curated by **Anaïs Castro** and **David Liss**.

In short, myths reveal that the World, man, and life have a supernatural origin and history, and that this history is significant, precious and exemplary.

- **Eliade Mircea, Myth and Reality, 1963**

While our society may be built upon knowledge and principles that we understand to be logical, fixed and impartial, we nevertheless struggle to understand occurrences, phenomena and forces that are elusive or perplexing. For as long as humanity has existed, and in every culture, storytelling offers ways to interpret these exceptional experiences by articulating them into language, narratives and forms of communication. Magical tales, epic mythologies and elaborate fictions prompt unexpected revelatory insights into deeper truths of our existence and subjectivities. As audience to these tales, we willingly disregard the improbability of these fictions to achieve pertinent catharsis. Samuel Coolidge described this as the 'suspension of disbelief' (*Biographical literaria*, 1817).

Suspended Disbelief is a group exhibition that brings together six international artists from diverse social and cultural backgrounds who all explore otherworldly realms of fictional narrative charged with myth, fantasy, horror, anxiety and wonder. While the artistic intentions of each are unique to their practice and respective pictorial language, together, they represent a new generation of figurative-based artists. Their work is grounded in an open embrace of eclectic influences and forms drawn from art history, ancient mythology, anthropomorphism, Surrealism, outsider art, comics, social media and pop culture. These diverse sources situate their imagery clearly within the spirit and pulse of our times. Whether dealing with deeply personal issues, esoteric themes, dreams, trauma or fictions based upon real or fabricated events, they engage the transformative power of illusory pictorial space via imaginative, hallucinatory, mind-bending imagery.

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