

# YOUNG ARTISTS 2023

Alex TATARSKY  
Theresa CHROMATI  
Emma STERN  
Aurel Haize ODOGBO  
Hardy HILL  
mosie ROMNEY  
Giangiacomo ROSSETTI  
Jasper MARSALIS  
Isabelle BROURMAN  
Kahlil Robert IRVING  
Shuriya DAVIS  
Willa NASATIR  
Omari DOUGLIN  
Oscar YI HOU  
Olivia VAN KUIKEN  
Oshay GREEN  
Cassi NAMODA  
Dominique KNOWLES  
Adam ALESSI  
Julia YERGER  
Connor Marie STANKARD  
S\*an D. HENRY-SMITH  
Jes FAN  
Violet DENNISON  
Charisse Pearlina WESTON  
Jo MESSER  
Adraint Khadafhi BEREAL

Being an artist is no ordinary occupation. It demands a way of seeing, a kind of relentless attention that can't be turned off. In recent years, creatives have been forced to contend with the increasing commercialization of the cultural ecosystem, a stormy political landscape, and a wobbling economy. Between the MFA-to-solo-show pipeline and an emphasis on relentless social media self-promotion, our culture has never been more focused on the question of how to “make it” professionally as an artist. How to make a life as one isn't as simple of a calculation.

*CULTURED's* eighth annual Young Artists list arrives amid this existential maelstrom. The 27 makers featured in these pages, all 35 or younger, are a testament to the resourcefulness and optimism required to choose not only the work, but also the life of an artist. They represent a wide range of geographies, mindsets, and mediums. Some have shown their work in august institutions; others operate entirely outside of the traditional gallery system. Some practice in a vacuum, while others would never dream of working alone. Some compare their work to committing a crime, others to creating an avatar. While the Hong Kong- and Brooklyn-based Jes Fan works at the molecular level, New York native mosie romney uses eBay hauls and dreams as raw material. LA-based Jasper Marsalis sees his practice as a “suite of questions” to answer each day, while Houston-born Charisse Pearlina Weston regards hers as a way to interrogate systems of oppression. What unites them all is a commitment to their unique visions and an urge to follow their own compasses, no matter the weather.



**A FACELESS MAN WHISPERS** into a woman's ear. Her face looks stricken, though the viewer will never know what she heard. Beholding this is like waking from a nightmare: You might not remember the dream, but you still feel the residue of dread hovering over your body. Adam Alessi based *Cruiser's Creek*, 2022—the titular artwork in a solo show at Clearing's Brussels location last year—on a still from a 1985 music video of the same name by British post-punk band the Fall. The composition mirrors the frame, but the woman's face was Alessi's fabrication. The artist will often rework a face in his paintings until "it feels like it's paying attention to you, it's judging you." These prying likenesses synthesize an almanac of references, from horror films to illuminated manuscripts to memories of his Los Angeles childhood.

Almost all of Alessi's countenances sneer, leer, or grimace—creating the claustrophobic feeling of being watched. If affect theory and informational surveillance networks are the two dominant epistemes of our moment, the artist traffics in both. While the 29-year-old's paintings resemble older traditions, like the works of Gustav Klimt and Aubrey Beardsley, the anxiety they provoke speaks to today's conditions, where total scrutiny

# ADAM ALESSI

29, Los Angeles

By GEOFFREY MAK

"[There's] the sense that, at any moment, a balloon behind my head is about to pop."

of civilian life has created an age steeped in self-consciousness. Alessi aims to trigger a feeling of "inescapable embarrassment," not sexual so much as perverse.

When Alessi was growing up in Los Angeles, he couldn't look at stacks of folded clothes, because he would see faces in the creases. Eerie visages, dumbstruck and skewed, populated his first solo show at Smart Objects in Los Angeles in 2020. He has since included grids and landscapes in two recent solo shows for Clearing—first in Brussels, then in New York this summer—displaying his signature palette of lilac, burnt umber, and moss.

In his Los Angeles studio, Alessi is tinkering with surreal ceramic cups, funky descendants of Méret Oppenheim's fur-covered table setting. He's also embarked on a series of grid paintings—patches of moody ochres, stone gray—that evoke the same sinister feeling of his goblins, but abstracted. He's noticed that after an intense period of painting, he sleeps more deeply. The comedown of what he describes as an "anxiety-based practice" affords him, and by association the viewer, a kind of purge. The work, though, remains—continually bearing witness to these suspended moments of horror, the sense "that at any moment, a balloon behind my head is about to pop."