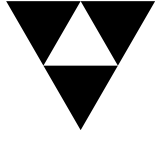


THE RACKET



80



THE RACKET

Hey.

I had reached out to a friend the other day to wish her well on her birthday. A few days later she reached out with utmost apologies about not responding/thanking me for the birthday wishes.

I wasn't having it.

For everything that a birthday offers (good, horrible and embarrassing in equal measures) the one truly splendid part about your particular Earth heading around the sun another time is this:

You don't have to answer your phone when someone (anyone, really) calls to sing you an off-key rendition of "Happy Birthday".

You don't have to respond to the well wishes of your friends and family. Not a word, a sentiment, or an emoji needs to be sent.

You can just sit back and watch those text messages pile up and without a lick of guilt, never, ever, even consider responding in kind.

It's your day, communicate how you see fit.

And as this is our 80th issue (yay!) and and as I think of every ten issues as a small birthday for this still fledgling publication (and because a family emergency casually swept my schedule off the table and on to the ground reminding me that no matter how hard I to try to cling to the fragile structure of time, the universe will, with no warning, sternly remind me who's boss) I'm eschewing the regularly scheduled Letter from the Editor.

It's The Racket's day, we'll communicate how we want to.

'Till next time.

-N

The Racket stands against
police brutality, racism and violence
perpetuated towards BIPOC
communities in all forms.

PROTECT TRANS KIDS.

THE TREVOR PROJECT

donate here

TRUE COLORS UNITED

donate here

TRANS YOUTH EQUALITY PROJECT

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BLACK LIVES MATTER

<https://blacklivesmatter.com/>

THE RACKET : QUARANTINE JOURNAL, Vol. 5, NO. 80

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A smart one to take away the dunk.



WE HAVE A PATREON

We aren't in this for the money.

But there are costs in doing what we do.

Any help with those costs (and with the costs of future endeavors) would be greatly appreciated.

If not, we get it and we still appreciate you.

THANK YOU TO THESE FOLKS

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THE RACKET

80



IMMEDIATE MOMENT
JUNE GUTMAN
2023



SUNMAN
JUNE GUTMAN
2023

Wasps

ALAN MASSEY

My mom calls,
tells me the wasps have come back.
She can't outrun a snail,
or so she tells me,
so she's got me at her place to spray those wasps.

When far away, the wasps' home resembles
a honeycomb, and they:
stalactites of their own.

But they fall and stiffen,
after the spray.
Only their death can bring me close and I
can see the complex patterns
of their curled bodies – thin yellow lines between
brown.

I can only get this far with it.
They make paper homes and
I wonder if I can make paper from it, as
stupid a thought as that is. Paper I can write
that letter I've been meaning to write, say.
I sweep them up and toss them into the flower beds,
and come inside to my mother trying to light a cigarette
on the gas stove, her head tilted to the side,
her hair pushed back behind her face.
She gets up and blows the smoke from her mouth
and I see

seventeen different colors in her hand.
The veins a blue and green and purple.
The skin glistening and translucent.
She tells me something,
but I don't remember what she says
after she says it.

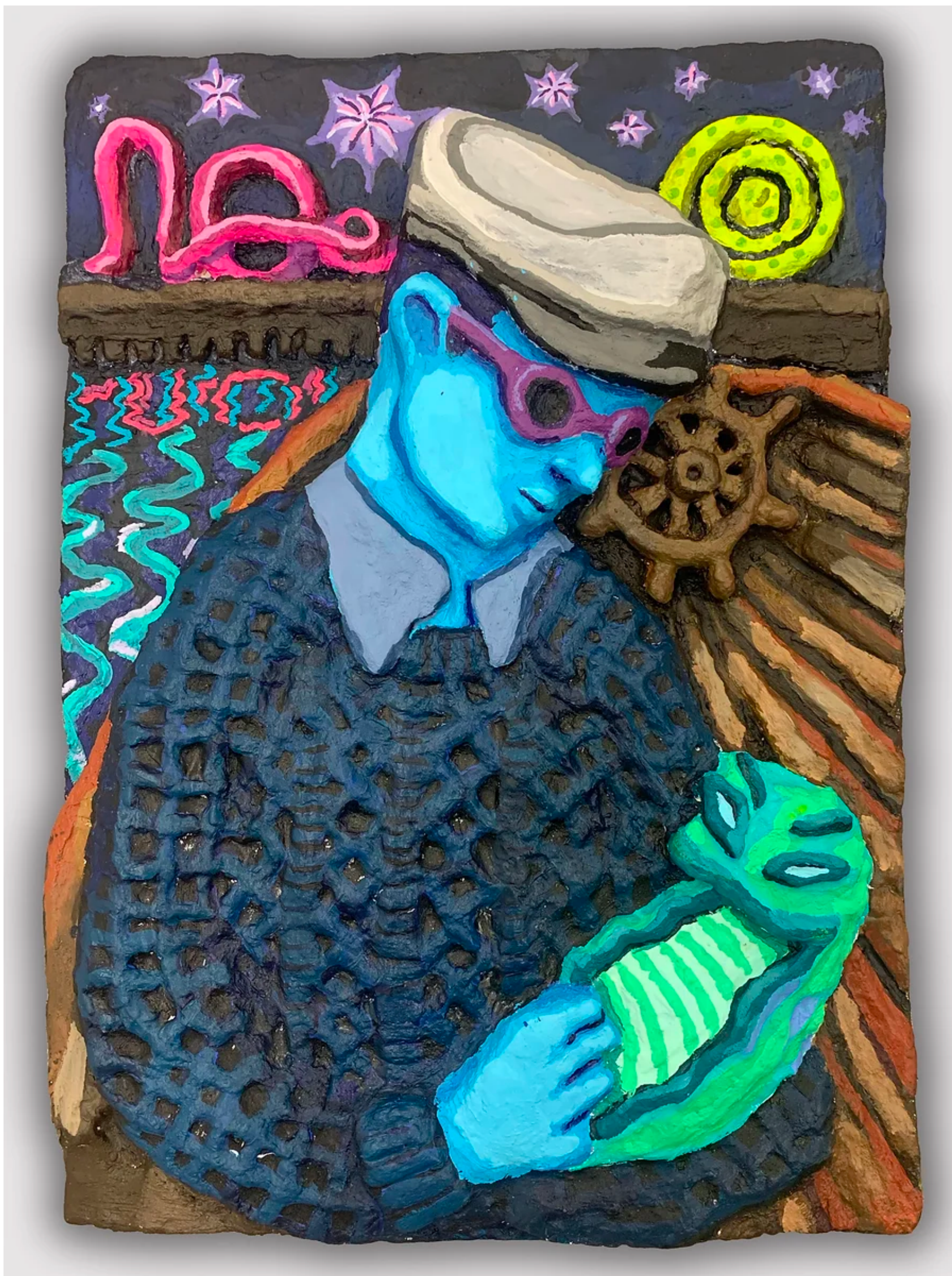


HORN
JUNE GUTMAN
2023

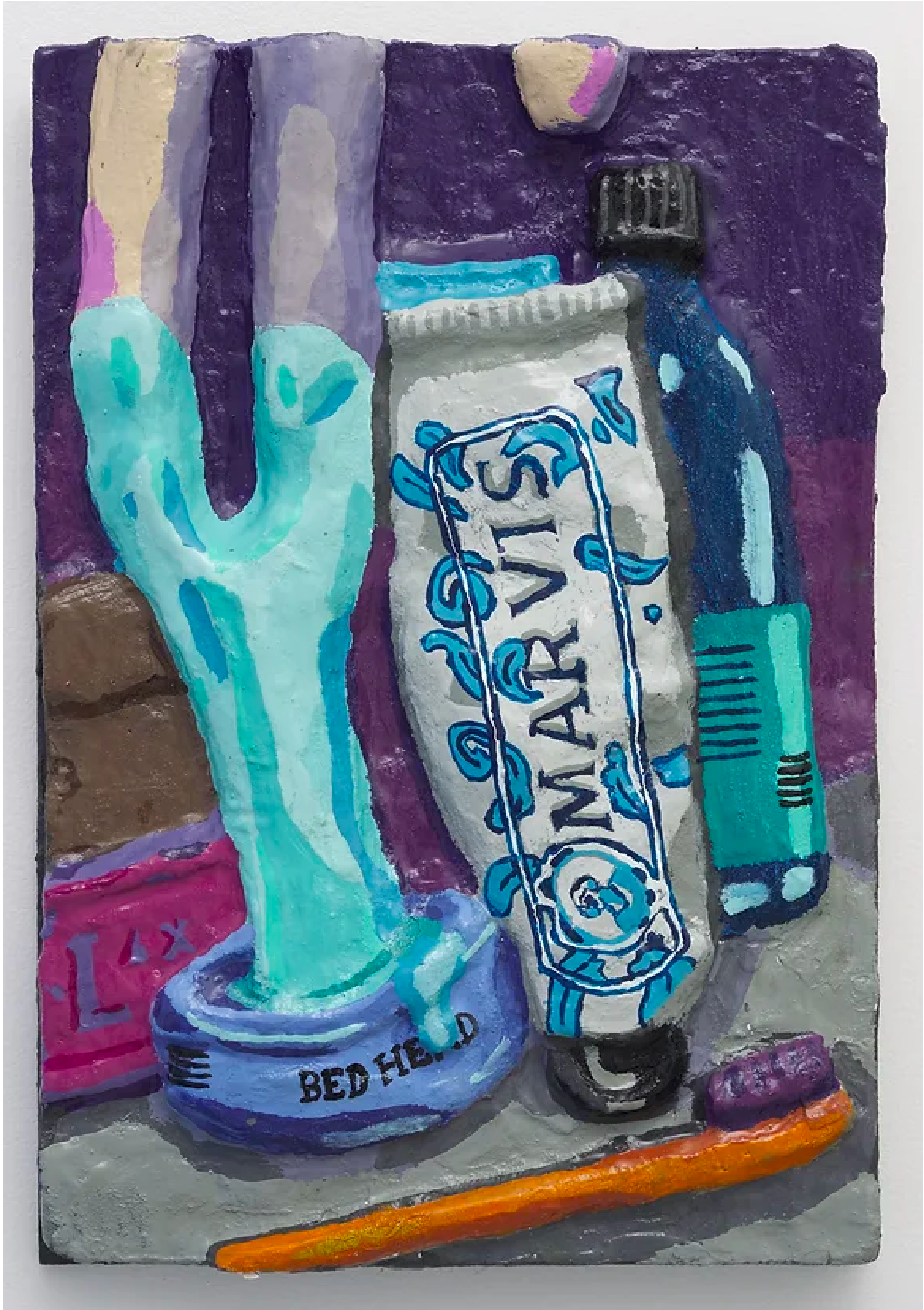
A Woman Walks Down Libery Ave 1

BRI GRIFFITH

in a juicy track suit — hot hot pink
& more, more — her gold hoop earrings
like CDs pulling @ her lobes, she's Hoku's
"Perfect Day" nothin standing in her way in fact
she's stepping on the sidewalk cracks —
don't curse my girl — don't you dare
she's got shit to do places to be
people to fuck, she's a blistering
marquee — a breaking
news headline — a wallet
so fat it won't close — people are walking past, faster
but she's already won this race —
Lisa Frank leopard print candy floss
hottest bitch on the block yinz can't
compete — touch her arm you'll hear
a sizzle — juicy jewels like crystal balls
I can see my future
from across the street
& in it I'm hot, paid, sparkling like
the bedazzled hand sanitizer
dangling from her pink fuzzy purse —
yinz can't stop a woman
who's on her own time



CAPTAIN AND SLUG
DANIEL TAYLOR
2022



BED HEAD
DANIEL TAYLOR
2022

A Woman Walks Down Libery Ave 2

BRI GRIFFITH

Surprise! It's me—
thigh high boot wearing disco
ball glittering martini glass fingering
the chocolate fountain @ ur father's second wedding
type bitch. Gas me up gas me up or else
I'll get bored, & trust me
I'd rather be dead than w/ you
wishing I were somewhere else.
I'm dangerously alive
walking to Rite Aid on Howley
tryna buy 2 Red Bull & a pack
of Ferrero Roche.
I want treats so sweet my teeth
feel loose, like vintage pearls or pop
rocks a lil sizzle in my gum pockets.
I want pockets fat w/ cash, a megaphone, a mirror
ceiling so my place feels infinite & full
of me. I want want want want want
& so what? I want a walk so hot
the ground cleaves & severs
like in a disaster movie. Mulch
spirals like dollars in a money booth,
cars catch fire & bang together,
the splintering bursts of danger can't
touch me—I live, I live I live.



AS IT GOES, SO DO WE
HIBA KALACHE
2020

Somewhere in Brazil

HOLLY DAY

When he reaches for me, in the dark, I pretend
my body has turned into flower-speckled peat
covered in sticky sundews clasping for gnats and flies
something suitable to briefly sink into
something invisible and soft and undemanding.

He tells me later how boring I am in the middle of the night
how lacking in spontaneity our lovemaking has become
I make a noise like a bird and flutter about the room
tell him not to expect great things from me when I'm asleep
he should not expect anything from me when I'm asleep.



PITCHED IN A SWIRL OF ABSURDITY
HIBA KALACHE
2020



IN A SILENT GRATITUDE, STILL ALIVE
HIBA KALACHE
2020

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**DON'T GO
WITH TEARS
ON YOUR FACE.**

