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# Breaking Currents: *eddy* at M23 by Corey Durbin

JANUARY 14, 2021



Courtesy of M23

An eddy, the titular inspiration for this show, is a flowing water phenomenon where the current is disrupted by inverse movement, causing a whirlpool. This exhibit of young emerging sculptors makes a similar gesture against a cultural current, long spiraling toward doom. M23 is a small gallery in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, the island itself a gaudy illustration of excess and wealth disparity. We're closing out a year spent mostly in quarantine insulted and endangered by the self-serving ineffectiveness of our leadership. Giant corporations and their owners have increased their wealth by billions, assisted by the government as their own employees struggle, at risk to their own health, and people all over have their basic needs neglected. This is the result of the American dream – an insatiable need for more. Even the purpose of creativity is made a facilitation of problem solving, unique solutions toward increased productivity and net gain. In a crisis of this magnitude, where people are so malnourished as we drown in excess, Art can feel as absurd, as superfluous, as it can be vital. As we're seeing

waves of digital fair booths and online viewing rooms offering little to the present, *eddy* is a reminder of the power of sharing space and time with art.



Courtesy of M23



Clare Koury,  
**Feast of the Ascension, 2020, track light  
 heads, corn kernels, double cherry tokens,  
 Cosmic Brownies, 120 x 12 x 6 inches  
 (Courtesy of M23)**

Entering M23 I'm pulled to the right, to Claire Koury's ten-foot stack of hollowed track lighting, *Feast of the Ascension*. A few lights are repurposed as containers, overflowing with corn kernels, tokens impressed with cherries, or Cosmic Brownies, a monolith to the ways in which we've commodified all aspects of nature. Following to the left is Koury's other work, *Panic Bars*, a triptych of metal bars sucked tightly to the wall and each other, obscuring the method of their function, with a cold indifference to the traumatic energy held in their material title and purpose.



Quay Quinn Wolf, *Try to Relax*, 2020, chrome hospital bed side rails, steel zip ties, stainless steel screw clamps, selenite, leather, custom polyester straps, 30 x 25 x 4 inches (Courtesy of M23)

Quay Quinn Wolf's *Try to Relax* is a floor sculpture in the hallway I found myself almost stepping over as opposed to around. Its neatly bound assemblage on the floor mirrors the piles of discarded cardboard compressed in twine or packaging tape, littering the streets around the gallery. The brick of metal piping reveals itself to be hospital bedside railings collapsed and bound together with black straps, now translating more as restraints. Echoing the horror of production and capital in the exploitation of unpredictable and unavoidable hardships in being human. A story of contemporary American life as common and dismissable as so many cardboard bundles on the streets of New York City.



Clare Koury, *Panic Bars*, 2020, panic bars, hardware, 36 x 10 x 2.5 inches (Courtesy of M23)



Courtesy of M23

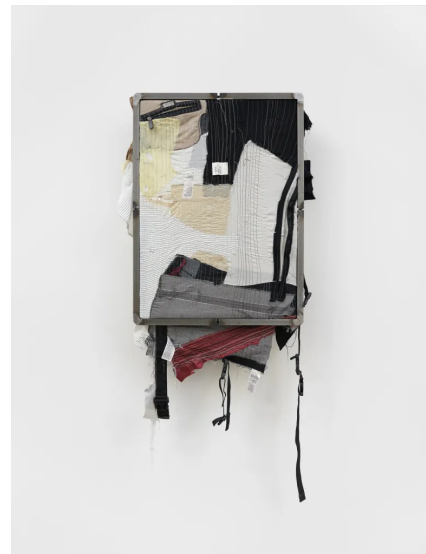
Looming just over Wolf is a metal-framed fabric stitching from Dutch Artist Tenant of Culture. It's a composition of recycled garments, tags and all, that both illustrate the excess in manufacturing as well as the cultural and political constructs built around products for consumption. Companion to that are two fabric works from Vladislav Markov in the back room. Though, as opposed to the deconstruction and reconfiguration of manufactured material, Markov's objects are alterations of the source material. The fabrics are chemically scarred with a repeated pattern; something like the teeth of a zipper, but minimal enough to be self-determined. It's my own interpretation of this shape, by assuming a functional reference first. Similar to the fabrics themselves, fairly common, you don't have to touch them to know how they feel. I consider what garments the



Vladislav Markov, *Burnout (GSC)*, 2020, chemical etching on cotton jersey, 69 x 16 x 5.5 inches; *Burnout (is 15)*, 2020, chemical etching on cotton jersey, 69 x 9 x 5.5 inches (Courtesy of M23)

abstracted shapes sewn from cotton jersey are referencing, and what chemicals were soaked into these sheets of velour during production-reassessing our relationship to them.

Circling back around to the front I notice Daniel Beckwith's sculpture, so subtle and delicate I missed it in the first pass. A spider's web is thread in silk and polyester, obscuring a message of "Do You Wish to Continue"- less subtly titled *environmental threat*. Occupying a liminal space e between us and nostalgia, the cartoonish comfort of Halloween decorations and Charlotte's Web, or the constructed reality of a video game, where progress is



Tenant of Culture, *Grip and Stitch*, 2020, steel, recycled hand bag linings, miscellaneous recycled garment pieces, thread, padding, 29 " 21.5 " 5 in (Courtesy of M23)

more blatantly, purposefully, cyclical and life is never truly terminal. But, regardless of how often you fail and continue to retry from the same point again and again, the hours spent playing the game continue to add up. I think again about the Cosmic Brownies this work faces, and the existential throbbing it induces. Like so many spider webs, tucked away or easily dismissed, growing in every repetition of the same routine.



Courtesy of M23

*eddy* is body v. industry, a reflection on how we manufacture our nature and reality or else be subjected to it. We

escape more than ever into new planes invented to cope with the one we're handed. We look more to our communities for support, even as we are separated from them physically. This is a show of lived experience and being present, using the process and material of a harsh and cruel reality to find empathy, sentimentality, and righteous anger. The events of 2020 opened more eyes than ever to the web of violence and deceit spun into the fabric of capitalism and contemporary society. Do you wish to continue?



Daniel Klaas Beckwith, *environmental threat*, 2020, silk, polyester, metal pins, 40 x 40 inches (Courtesy of M23)

M23 is hosting *eddy* through January 24, 2021.

Artist bios are courtesy of M23.

M23

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**Vladislav Markov** (Russian, b. 1993) lives, works in New York City. He holds an MFA from Cornell University (2019), and a BFA from Parsons School of Design (2016). Markov's first solo exhibitions *Extra Medium*, Spazio ORR, Brescia, Italy, and *Vladislav Markov*, M 2 3, New York were presented in 2020. The artist was included in the M 2 3 exhibitions *Seven Artists/Seven Works* (2020), and *Brian Dario, Liza Lacroix, Vladislav Markov* (2018); *Donovan, Markov, Mildenberg*, Olive Tjaden Gallery at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (2018); and has exhibited at *Lily Brooke Gallery*, London (2017); *Project Fabrika*, Moscow (2016); and at the Cornell University MFA exhibitions *On High Water*, Safe Gallery, Brooklyn, NY (2019), and *Big Snack*, Signal, Brooklyn, NY (2018).

In 2018 and 2019, Markov participated in Harvard University's visiting artists program as guest lecturer. Markov's work has been published on several platforms, including Artforum, The Artnewspaper, and Brooklyn Magazine. Forthcoming exhibitions include a solo presentation at Fragment Gallery, Moscow (2021).

**Tenant of Culture** (Dutch, b. 1990) is the artistic practice of Hendrickje Schimmel who lives, works in London. Tenant of Culture holds an MA in mixed media from Royal College of Art, London, UK, (2016) and a BA in Womenswear, from ArteZ Hogeschool voor de Kunsten, Zwolle, Netherlands (2012). Tenant of Culture is the recipient of the 2020 Camden Art Centre Emerging Artist Prize with Frieze. Tenant of Culture, who is represented by Soft Opening, London, will realise a major exhibition at Camden Art Centre, London in 2022. Recent solo exhibitions include Tenant of Culture, Fries Museum, Leeuwarden, Netherlands (2019), Exterior Assemblage, Soft Opening, London, UK (2019); Eclogues (an apology for actors), Nicoletti Contemporary, London, UK (2019). Forthcoming exhibitions include solo presentations at Sophie Tappeiner, Vienna, Austria (2021), Kunstverein Dresden, Dresden, Germany (2020), and Fons Welters, Amsterdam, Netherlands (2020).

**Quay Quinn Wolf** (American, b. 1989) lives, works in New York City. Recent exhibitions include Tensions, Jack Barrett Gallery, New York (2020), Pink Velvet Dress with the Fur Collar, Interface Gallery, Oakland, CA (2019); Arrangements, Jack Barrett Gallery, New York, (2018). His work was included in the exhibitions Ghosts, Jack Hanley Gallery, New York (2019), Haptics Tactics, and Leslie-Lohman Museum, New York (2018); and published in ArtNews and Artforum.

**Daniel Klaas Beckwith** (American, b. 1988) Lives, work in Los Angeles, CA. He holds an MFA in Sculpture from Yale University, New Haven, CT (2015), and BFA in Sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA (2010). Beckwith's work has been presented in solo exhibitions at MEYOHAS, New York, and M 2 3, New York. His work has been included in exhibitions at Fisher Parrish, Brooklyn, NY; Motel, Brooklyn, NY; GAIT, Los Angeles, CA; as well as exhibitions in Tokyo, Ecuador, and Leeds, England, UK.

**Clare Koury** (American, b. 1993) lives, works in New York City. She holds an MFA from Columbia University (2020), and a BA from the University of Chicago (2015). Koury's work has been included in exhibitions in New York, Chicago, and London, as well as presented at The Jewish Museum, New York (2019); The Fireplace Project, East Hampton, NY (2019); and online via Steve Turner, Los Angeles, CA (2020)

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**COREY DURBIN** is an artist, writer, and photographer from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; living and working in Brooklyn, NY.

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