

KAPP KAPP

Velvet Other World: *Bimboteque*

Part I: June 10 – July 8, 2023.

Opening celebration: Saturday, June 10, 6-8pm.

Part II: July 14 – August 4, 2023.

Opening celebration: Friday, July 14, 6-8pm.



Velvet Other World © *Lady be Careful*, 2023 & *Glitterotica*, 2023.

Kapp Kapp is pleased to announce Velvet Other World: *Bimboteque*, the gallery's second solo exhibition with the artist-duo and their first solo exhibition in the gallery's expanded exhibition space in Tribeca. Presented in two parts, with distinct focuses on Velvet Other World's painting and drawing practices respectively, *Bimboteque* represents a further investigation of the duo's ongoing examination of the constructive and protective nature of dress. Through the hyperbolic and highly-aestheticized lens of bimbofication, Velvet Other World's latest work is both more plastic and more sensitive than ever.

The curtains open on Act I, revealing the artists' elaborate blackbox theater. Immediately engulfing their audience within their signature greyscale schema, Velvet Other World's body of ten new oil on canvas paintings reflect the artists' desire to perfect the ornate exteriors of their figures.

The duo's collaboration, which began in 2021 with their charcoal on paper practice, has always looked to the history of theater and pageantry to find insight in costume's relationship to identity, utilizing its ability to transform and preserve the body to invent their alien archetypes. *Bimboteque* is the ultimate expression of Velvet Other World's relationship to costume. As the title suggests, the artists' have tapped into the bimbo as the peak of aesthetic transformation, looking to bimbofication as the purest manifestation of sexual futurism. As the artists see it, "contemporary bimbo culture embraces queerness, hyperfemininity and hypermasculinity" alike, "bimbofication can be a process of discovering a self that's not for others."



Take *Lady be Careful*, 2023, one of the duo's new oil on canvas works, which poses the shadowy contour of a female figure seated with a toppled crystal sherbet dish. The figure, who is almost entirely obscured into the pure blacks of her hair and body, is most discernable by the intense detail of her eyes, which appear to be visible through a mask or face covering, and by the dramatic chiaroscuro highlighting her artificially ample breasts. As we join the figure in gazing down at the mysteriously undisturbed dish, it becomes unclear whether the figure can actually see the ice cream herself or whether her own view is impeded by her breasts, Velvet Other World creating their own yassified Venus of Willendorf. In fact, was it her breasts that toppled the dish in the first place?

The impenetrable plasticity of the figure suggests she might be unbothered either way, but her eyes hide a somberness which feels starkly foreign to this scene. As the artists see it, their figures are avatars, unrestrained by human bodies and altering their physical forms as barricade from their environment. Akin to sporting a VR headset, their figures' extreme exteriors provide a protective isolation, their eyes remain the only window to their hidden vulnerability. In the age of the internet, this resonates equally as metaphor for humans' online personas, inventing appearingly perfect versions for the world to see but existing vulnerably behind them.

Enter stage left, *Glitterotica*, 2023, a charcoal on paper drawing, which sets the scene for Act II. Where their former figure's body was obscured in shadow, *Glitterotica's* figure, which is covered in a coat of silky black fur, has their body on full display; with a built in bustle, the figure's pose is reminiscent of a Sport's Illustrated Swimsuit cover. While projecting a hypersexual appeal onto the otherwise concealed body, Velvet Other World masks their avatar in a futuristic, motorcycle helmet. Again, subverting any opportunity to see the truth of who or what lies beneath the costume, the artists' toy with interpretation as the soft vs. structural and the man-made vs. the natural is considered through materiality, at once dissolving any clue to their avatar's identity. Velvet Other World's characters might be on full display, but you will never know who they are.

Bimboteque will be on view at Kapp Kapp through August 5.

Josh Allen (b. 1995, Andover, MA) and **Katrina Pisetti** (b. 1996, Austin, TX) live and work in Providence, Rhode Island. Allen received his BFA in Illustration and Printmaking, Pisetti in Printmaking, both from the Rhode Island School of Design, where the two met. Allen and Pisetti began their collaboration under the moniker Velvet Other World in 2021.