



FLEISS-VALLOIS
1018 Madison Ave, FL 5 & PH

Windchimes and Prayers

An exhibition of Julia Wachtel, Wendy White, and Jason Yates
Curated by Julia Wachtel

May 6 – July 25, 2025



Julia Wachtel, *energy*, 2011

Fleiss-Vallois is pleased to present *Windchimes and Prayers*, an exhibition curated by Julia Wachtel with works by Julia Wachtel, Wendy White, and Jason Yates.

Much like her canvases which juxtapose disparate images in order to establish an ideological connection, Wachtel has selected three works from each artist which together investigate the language of symbols, the emotional manipulation of advertisements, and the commodification of culture in our image-dominated and consumer-driven world. Each artist memorializes, edifies, and analyzes omnipresent yet disposable images and items.

An artist associated with the Pictures Generation, Julia Wachtel culls images from pop culture sources such as magazines, reality TV, newspapers, and virtual games. She explores the vast,



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disorienting space of the internet, distilling its endless stream of images into concentrated compositions that challenge their original logic, context, and meaning. Wachtel examines how media images are designed to evoke emotional responses. By combining these images, she utilizes their inherent emotional implications to establish new emotional states and emphasize cultural critique through points of comparison.

Wendy White similarly employs ubiquitous language and symbols such as corporate logos and emojis intended to render content more quickly digestible by simplifying emotions and information. White juxtaposes these symbols with atmospheric backgrounds – her own personal pictorial code. She combines cues from historical periods in American culture and the urban environment, using fluorescent hues and three-dimensional forms to expand beyond classical painting dynamics.

Jason Yates combines abandoned trinkets, counterculture graphics, and kitsch objects in his all-black arrangements. He composes still life scenes with both literal and symbolic signs of joy, youth, transforming them into a memento mori of the suburban ideal and childhood innocence. Yates' work balances the disquieting effects of nostalgia and American consumer desire with humor and satire. His obsessive, labor-intensive process is a personal investigation of the crosscurrents of craft, outsider art, and folk art with references to modernist abstraction, assemblage, minimalism, and pop art.



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Wendy White, *Uncontained (Pixel Heart)*, 2020



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Jason Yates, *How I Became One of The Invisible*, 2020



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If you're not paying for the product, then you're the product being sold. Self-optimization ensures a martyr's death: we're groomed to be actualized as the ideal entrepreneurial body, or actualized as perfect warm organic matter for the drone's crosshairs. Concerning the infantilization of the American consumer, the ends justify the means. One must first take a morally fluid perspective on tradition: emblems that resonate dubiously with the populus—Halloweens that never happened, imaginary tailgate parties, lawn ornaments that never saw fresh sod. Conjure this torrent of false memories into a continent-enveloping gyre that bleeds disposables off shores and into unseen depths of psychic oceans. This heap of injection-molded signs is briefly whipped up by fleeting consumer desire, only to sink back down into the wastes and spandrels of cities and towns.

Why is a doll's gaze so frightening?

Every vector of a human life follows the contours of achievement—turning something into something more. A marriage cannot merely embody the lifelong encounter with the mysterious other but must generate a steady stream of added-value: sex, excitement and fun. Child-rearing must continue and exponentialize the caregiver's unrealized goals. Leisure time must produce its own dividends, and be executed in form-fitting attire to maximize mobility. A career must somehow become an exponent of the identity, with the corollary being that the identity must be the exponent of a career. Self-actualization, the cruel promise and portent developed during these artists' mutual lifetimes—the exuberant 1980s is reaching its logical terminus. Stripped to bare commodified life, the distance between the consumer object and consumer subject has narrowed dangerously: formerly hallowed ground like the home (now a workplace) and religion (now another tool for personal achievement) have become matrices for capital creation. The movies have covered the ground of toys-to-life but are perhaps avoiding the far more chilling genre of life-to-toys. The irony is that these briefly-lovable objects and signs (like those on view in this show) are far more permanent than we are. Their expectations are surprisingly similar to those of their custodians: make the right amount of money, and stick around for as long as you can. Perhaps the most alarming aspect of the commodification of the achievement-subjects is not only their disposability, but their biodegradability.

– Todd von Ammon



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Fleiss-Vallois is founded in the spirit of collaboration, as the New York partnership between two iconic French galleries: Galerie 1900-2000 and Galerie Georges-Philippe & Nathalie Vallois. The Fleiss and Vallois families have maintained a friendship for decades and have joined together in their expansion to the US. Each gallery already works with several US museums and institutions; Galerie 1900-2000 has well-known expertise in Dada and Surrealism, and Gallery Vallois has recognized skills in Nouveau Réalisme, Photorealism, and Contemporary Art.

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