

# HEADSTONE

## *Rumor Mill*

Gretta Johnson and Christine Stiver

December 2, 2023 - February 25, 2024

For Immediate Release:

Headstone is delighted to close out 2023 with the radiant work of Gretta Johnson and Christine Stiver in *Rumor Mill*. Johnson's new body of work, an extension of her recent solo at Tappeto Valente in Brooklyn, combines a faint, color-blocking and Kandinski-esk aesthetic that feels chillingly sexy - unsure if it's *real* or just imagination. Stiver, a prolific painter, presents a series of wall sculptures and a few in the round; looking like ears of various animals in our kingdom, each made of paper and paint - floral with a melodic, repetitive cadence - exquisite without being obsessive. The collision of Johnson and Stiver coalesces almost too well, as if premeditated - perfect, seamless, and perhaps a little unjust.

Johnson paints with an immediate, vibrant palate, yet her work feels soft, airy, as if it could be distorted with the slightest of movements - like an Etch A Sketch. In *Whisper, 2023*, her lines hover atop the surface of structured and saturated color, witnessing her precision as it forms the contour of a dissipating figure. Similarly, Stiver's sculptures, seemingly made of feathers- and titled as such, pose an ephemeral experience, staring into the physicality of an organic cone necessary for capturing resonance- listening. Just as water meanders, Johnson and Stiver are seductive in their own efforts to gather new ways of experiencing the details of our collective consciousness- one absorbing/recording, the other revealing. Artists Gary Hume, Hilma af Klint, Louise Bourgeois, and a tinge of Liz Glynn feel present.

Jeanette Winterson wrote in her quest to understand Art, *Art Objects*, "if all art is concerned with truth, then a society in denial will not have much use for it." Most glaringly of all the art forms, painting wrestles with itself its own innate fictitiousness. It is flat and doesn't move, so the story at hand is one of our own. Let's just say that lying is a bit too harsh an accusation, but the truth is all too predictable and uneventful in its most plausible occasions. Johnson and Stiver revel in the act of seeing, if done correctly, frees one's judgment, collapsing internalized doubt, and sheds light on our own found facts and learnings. Fortunately, Winterson loves seeing in all its fiction and faction, as our society yearns for self-affirming pleasure - including gossip.

Johnson and Stiver create with care and intention, transcending itself, making way for the responsibility of both object and experience to continue beyond the materiality or 'ephemerality' of one's own being. *Rumor Mill*, a title that drags around a bit of social baggage/guilt, is about seeing what you want to see - looking for yourself - contributing to the ever-evolving conversation and story building that makes art fully lived.

Gretta Johnson (b. 1985) graduated from Rhode Island School of Design in 2008 with a BFA in Film/Animation/Video. Traveling from animation, to sequential art and comics, ultimately to painting, her work exists in a comedic metaphysical realm enjoying both a graphic and painterly quality. Concurrent with this exhibition, she is also showing work in Brooklyn at Tappeto Volante Projects (solo exhibition *Tin Man's Dream*), and at Picture Theory Gallery in Chelsea, NY, in the inaugural group exhibition curated by Rebekah Kim. Her design work can be found on cans and bottles of Grimm Artisanal Ales and Physica Wines, wherever fine beverages are sold.

Christine Stiver (b. Indiana, PA) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Her paper-based sculptures are wallpapered with torn bits of neglected drawings, carefully prepared papers and other sundry fragments. Each hollow form is a mini architecture devoted to the aesthetics of a singular sound. Her sculptures have been featured in I Like Your Work's 2021 Winter exhibition and catalog, Peer Review's inaugural publication as well as various galleries in Brooklyn and beyond, including St Charles Projects (MD), Ortega y Gasset (BK), Good Naked (BK), Tappeto Volante (BK), and McBride Contemporain in Montreal.

Headstone is an artist-run, for-profit contemporary art gallery located in Kingston, New York, dedicated to showing two-person and solo exhibitions. The 1,100sq ft gallery space was created by artists Lauren Aitken and Chase Folsom. The gallery is deeply committed to our artists and their ideas, providing them with a beautiful contemporary space and the necessary support to help them foster and fulfill their artistic vision. It is with considerate curation and our vast love of the art world that we bring together and introduce emerging and established artists, some of whom have yet to benefit from wider critical and commercial attention. We believe the arts should be equitable and accessible to anyone who would like to engage. Through artist exhibitions, we hope that Headstone can collectively bring people together, create community, expand connections and become an engaging, diverse melting pot of artists, creatives, collectors, and community members.

Opening Reception: Saturday, December 2nd, 5pm-8pm

Gallery Hours:

Friday - Sunday, Noon to 5pm  
Or by appointment

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