

JANE LOMBARD GALLERY

say the dream was real and the wall imaginary

Curated by Joseph R. Wolin

March 11 – April 23, 2022



Tom Molloy, *Boat* (detail), 2017, Thirty-five color photographs, Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist.

*make it happen
finish the thought
say the dream was real and the wall imaginary
because we need you to build more road
for all of us to walk on
because participation
because witness
because history*

— —Richard Siken, “Why,” 2013

Jane Lombard Gallery is pleased to present *say the dream was real and the wall imaginary*, a group exhibition curated by Joseph R. Wolin, that brings together eight artists who investigate walls, borders, and boundaries—both physical and ideological—and ways to think beyond them. The exhibition, featuring work by Margarita Cabrera, Anita Groener, Tom Molloy, Ambreen Butt, Becci Davis, Spandita Malik, Azita Moradkhani, and Kanishka Raja, opens on March 11th from 5–7 PM, and will be on view through April 23rd, 2022.

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Walls—whether delimiting rooms, dwellings, cells, properties, territories, nations or lines of jurisdiction—are designed to separate. Walls divide us; they confine us within and fence others out. But, as walls were created by us, we can imagine a world where they don't exist. As Richard Siken's poem suggests, we can dream past walls, because we must.

Each artist featured in *say the dream was real and the wall imaginary* is in some way confronted with the blunt facts of enforced division. As such, their work not only considers the presence of walls, but how to transcend them, dreaming of futures that lack borders.

Margarita Cabrera (Mexico/U.S.) and Anita Groener (Netherlands/Ireland) create works that look at borders between countries, focusing on the individuals who left their home countries in search of refuge and opportunity. Cabrera's ongoing series, *Space in Between*, explores the politics of the national border between the United States and Mexico, collaborating with recent immigrants to create soft sculptures representative of their own experiences with crossing borders. Groener's sculpture and video works explore symbolic deconstructions and reconstructions of home, through both personal narratives and those of communities facing displacement due to violence.

Tom Molloy's (Ireland/France) *Borderline* plays with the signs and implications of demarcations and boundaries. Ambreen Butt's (Pakistan/U.S.) series *Say My Name*, abstract compositions made from the names of children and teenagers killed by U.S. drone strikes on either side of the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, constitute acts of remembering individual young lives snuffed out as "collateral damage" in the never-ending War on Terror. Becci Davis's (U.S.) three-channel video *Isaiah's Inventory/Searching for Junior*, foregrounds a gesture of un-writing history as she transcribes the estate inventory of a nineteenth-century Southern slave owner, her fifth great-grandfather, whose property includes her fourth great-grandmother and her children, and runs the footage backwards.

Spandita Malik (India/U.S.) shoots portraits of Indian women restricted to their homes in small villages, collaborating with the subjects through regional styles of stitching and embroidery, which they deploy according to their own desires and ideas about self-presentation. Azita Moradkhani (Iran/U.S.) considers the distortions of patriarchal structures, focused on her native Iran, in delicate drawings that merge fancy lingerie with scenes of cultural archetypes and political protest. Painter Kanishka Raja (India/U.S.) merges airports, shopping malls, corporate lobbies, tony domestic interiors, computer hubs, shantytowns, refugee camps, and flooded cities with frenetic abstraction, predicting an unpeopled world, half dystopia, half fever dream, that eerily parallels the actual condition in which we live today.

Collectively, the artists in *say the dream was real and the wall imaginary* not only ask viewers to examine the effects and meanings of walls as tools of division, but also to imagine ways to dismantle them. Through their work we can dream new prospects for a future without borders.

About Joseph R. Wolin

Joseph R. Wolin is an independent curator and critic and the Consulting Curator and Editor at the Museum of Art and Design at Miami Dade College. He is a contributor to *Border Crossings*, *Frieze*, *Glasstire*, *Time Out New York*, and other publications, and was the

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co-curator of MOAD's *Living Together*, a yearlong series of exhibitions, performance art, concerts, and other events held at venues across Miami during 2017–18. He teaches in the MFA Photography programs at Parsons School of Design and Lesley University.

About Jane Lombard Gallery

Jane Lombard Gallery, although (re)opened in 2015, has a 25 year history and an established reputation for bringing to the forefront artists who work within a global perspective/aesthetic relevant to the social and political climate of today. The gallery seeks to promote both emerging and mid career artists in a variety of media - painting, sculpture, installation and film - in the US, Europe and Asia. Formerly Lombard Freid Projects, founded in 1995 in Soho, the gallery later moved to Chelsea, first to 26th Street and later to 19th Street in 2010. The gallery is now located in Tribeca at 58 White St.

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