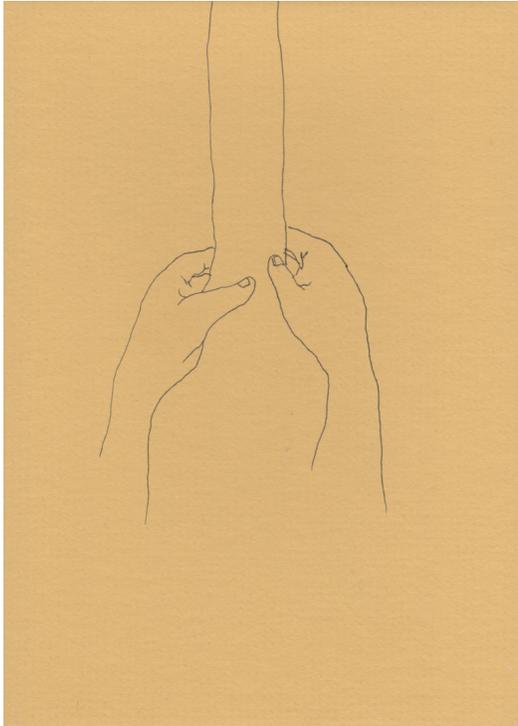


PRESS RELEASE

MICHAEL BEITZ
GUARANTEED PAINKILLER
June 21st – August 4th, 2018

OPENING RECEPTION:
Thursday, June 21st 6-9pm



Untitled, 2018, ink on cardstock, 7 x 5 in

Anna Kaplan Contemporary (formerly BT&C Gallery) announces ***Guaranteed Painkiller***, a solo show of drawings and sculpture by Michael Beitz. ***Guaranteed Painkiller*** opens on Thursday, June 21st with a reception 6-9pm and will remain on view through August 4th. Gallery hours are Saturdays 12-4pm and anytime by appointment (716-604-6183).

Beitz is best known for his large-scale sculptural work that confuses the line between functional furniture and sculpture. The focus of ***Guaranteed Painkiller*** is Beitz's lesser-known, drawing-based work, an essential part of his creative practice that is rarely publicly shown. The artist considers the images in his drawings as seamlessly connected to the sculptural part of his practice; much of the imagery in Beitz's drawing is directly connected to his sculptural work. He explains, "it doesn't matter to me whether it is an object, or a drawn design for a future project, to me it's all the same, it's all about how it feels."

There is an honesty and immediacy to these works, which come from a highly emotional place for Beitz. The title of the show is a reference to

how he treats the process of drawing—it's not only a way to think through larger ideas on paper, but a way to deal with life's challenges, both mental and physical. Drawing is the artist's best distraction. The drawings, mostly ink on paper, both pristine and found paper, such as lottery tickets and receipts, contain imagery of furniture, disembodied body parts, underwear, faces, figures, text, and forms which at first appear to be abstractions, but relieve themselves to be shapes interconnected to the twisting and turning of bent wood, once you are more familiar with the artist's complete body of work. Beitz's references to the figure recall Matisse's ink drawings in their minimalist approach, but with a dose of Barry McGee's peculiarity.

Also a part of the show are several small-scale sculptural pieces including a series of porcelain undergarments. Both women's and men's underwear as well as child-sized undershirts (aka wife beaters), a dingy white with numerous creases and folds, these wall-hung sculptures are the epitome of physical fragility. The physicality of these works

is wonderful—they beg to be touched, and it’s a surreal experience to have what appears to be a mundane pair of white briefs be frozen in a state of constant disheveledness. These works, like Beitz’s drawings, are at once humorous and depressing, light-hearted and serious, universal and incredibly personal.

Guaranteed Painkiller is meant to be a sort of cross section of the artist’s brain—how he thinks, feels, and reacts. There is a palpable sense of vulnerability, fear, anxiety, and fragility in these works, which are also beautiful in their simplicity.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Michael Beitz received a BFA from Alfred University and a MFA from the University at Buffalo. He worked for several years as a fine woodworker with world-renowned furniture artist Wendell Castle (1932-2018), who has been called “the most important postwar American furniture designer, by a long shot.”¹ His work has been exhibited throughout the United States and internationally including the notorious ***Dismaland*** exhibition in 2015— a massive temporary installation facilitated and organized by street artist Banksy in Weston-super-Mare, UK. Awarded artist grants and residencies include Sculpture Space in Utica, NY, the Roswell Artist in Residence Program in New Mexico, the Morris Arts Fellowship at the University at Buffalo, and the Bemis Artist Residency in Omaha, Nebraska. Beitz is currently based in Boulder, Colorado where he is on the faculty of The University of Colorado at Boulder. In 2015, there was a fire in Beitz’s studio at the time in Oshkosh, WI (while he was in Boulder) that destroyed nearly all of his written and drawn thoughts and plans. He was able to salvage a very small amount of his notebooks after the fire, a small selection of which will be on view as part of this exhibition.

ABOUT ANNA KAPLAN CONTEMPORARY

Anna Kaplan Contemporary is formerly BT&C Gallery (Body of Trade & Commerce Gallery), founded in 2013 and on Niagara Street in Buffalo since June of 2014. www.annakaplancontemporary.art for more information. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram (@annakaplancontemporary @annarkaplan). Anna Kaplan Contemporary is also a part of the art consultancy Resource:Art, (www.resourceartny.com). Resource:Art is a unique collaboration with two other WNY gallerists, Elisabeth Samuels ([Indigo Art](#)) and Emily Tucker ([Benjamen Gallery Group](#)). Browse Anna Kaplan Contemporary and Resource:Art exhibitions at Artsy.net (through Resource:Art): <https://www.artsy.net/resource-art>.

1 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/26/obituaries/wendell-castle-dies.html>