

**NEWS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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**Ferrin Contemporary to present “Canary Syndrome”,  
on view Sept. 27 to Nov. 4**

The exhibition features recent works by Elizabeth Alexander, Evan Hauser,  
Elliot Kayser, Steven Young Lee, Beth Lipman, Livia Marin, Paul Scott,  
Bouke de Vries and Jason Walker

North Adams, Mass. (Sept. 7, 2018) — Ferrin Contemporary is pleased to present “Canary Syndrome”, a group show featuring recent works by U.S. and U.K.-based artists including Elizabeth Alexander, Evan Hauser, Elliot Kayser, Steven Young Lee, Beth Lipman, Livia Marin, Paul Scott, Bouke de Vries and Jason Walker, on view Sept. 27 to Nov. 4. An opening reception will be held at Ferrin Contemporary, located at 1315 MASS MoCA Way, on Sept. 27, from 5 to 7 p.m., in conjunction with DownStreet Art, a program of Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts’ Berkshire Cultural Resources Center. The reception is free and open to the public.

The exhibition, inspired by the saying “canary in the coal mine”, suggests that artists, much like the caged canaries once used by coal miners as early indicators of dangerous gases in tunnels, are hypersensitive to the adverse conditions and forces that jeopardize human existence. Through their artwork, the artists in “Canary Syndrome” employ visual means to accentuate threats to the health of the environment, culture, and ethics — really, the condition of civilization in general, and to warn of worse things to come.

The now discontinued practice of carrying canaries deep into coal mines to detect carbon monoxide and other toxic gases dates back to 1911. The phrase “canary in the coal mine” is widely used as an allusion by whistle blowers sounding an early alert for broken systems and dangerous conditions. Al Gore used the phrase in reference to indicators of global warming in his book and film, “An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What

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We Can Do About It". The planet's "canaries", Gore said, are the melting polar icecaps, a result of increasing levels of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere.

"Ferrin Contemporary is presenting "Canary Syndrome" as both an opportunity to reflect upon fragile beauty as well as provide inspiration to fellow travelers who are facing an overwhelming sense of antipathy and futility in our world today," said Gallery Director Leslie Ferrin. "It's our hope that art and artists will motivate others and help to fuel a societal call to action."

The diverse and thought provoking artworks in the exhibition invoke ominous portents and herald a call for change on a global level. The works of Elizabeth Alexander, Elliot Kayser, Steven Young Lee, Beth Lipman, Livia Marin, Paul Scott, and Bouke de Vries explore the concept of the flaw, the crack, the mistake and the resulting debris, within the delicate world of ceramics and fragile glass.

De Vries's glass cloud is an assemblage of shards of glass from recognizable broken objects, forming a 21-inch-high mushroom cloud. Kayser uses glaze "blisters" on black cow figurines and Scott repurposes a 19<sup>th</sup> century platter with the addition of a photo collage of Houston that memorializes Hurricane Harvey's rising waters. Alexander, Lee, Lipman, and Marin work with processes that exploit melting, etching, breakage and erasing to produce metaphoric imagery that is often a harbinger of doom. The artists reference forms and history associated with familiar domestic objects such as plates and figurines, along with pottery shards, to reveal something new, carrying a foreboding warning.

Artists in the exhibition who use imagery to deliver their message include Evan Hauser, whose use of ceramic decal prints of Hudson River School paintings applied to Styrofoam cooler lids, cast in porcelain, reexamines historic and cultural scenes in a contemporary context. Jason Walker explores the consequences of manifest destiny, referencing the inherent conflict between man and nature, with meticulous illustrations painted on porcelain sculptures of birds and fish, which he has combined with cast porcelain machine parts made from gears, conduit and aerators, and used as formal elements.

"The very act of creating provides these artist with an outlet for the anxiety caused by relentless exposure to contemporary conflicts," said Ferrin. "They are compelled to address environmental and societal issues through their practice and are sounding the alarm in the form of beautiful and compelling pieces of art."

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For more information about the exhibition and individual artists, see [ferrincontemporary.com](http://ferrincontemporary.com)

## About Ferrin Contemporary

Ferrin Contemporary specializes in ceramic art circa 1950 to the present. For more than 30 years, private collectors, institutions, and the media have made it their preferred source for artwork by established and emerging artists whose primary medium is clay. Based in the Berkshires of Western Massachusetts, Ferrin Contemporary exhibits curated projects and solo shows in their year-round gallery space and through innovative partnerships with leading museums and galleries throughout the U.S. and abroad.

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## Photo captions and credits:

Elliot Kayser, "Black Milk 2", 2018. Terra cotta, underglaze, feldspathic chips, 10 x 20 x 8".

Steven Young Lee, "Gourd Vases with Dodos", 2018. Porcelain, cobalt pigment, glaze. 10 x 19 x 18".

Images courtesy Ferrin Contemporary.

## Calendar Listings

### ART

#### Sept. 27

**Ferrin Contemporary:** Opening reception for the group exhibition "Canary Syndrome", held in conjunction with DownStreet Art. 5 to 7 p.m. 1315 MASS MoCA Way, North Adams, Mass. Free. [ferrincontemporary.com](http://ferrincontemporary.com). 413-446-0614.

#### Sept. 27 to Nov. 4

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