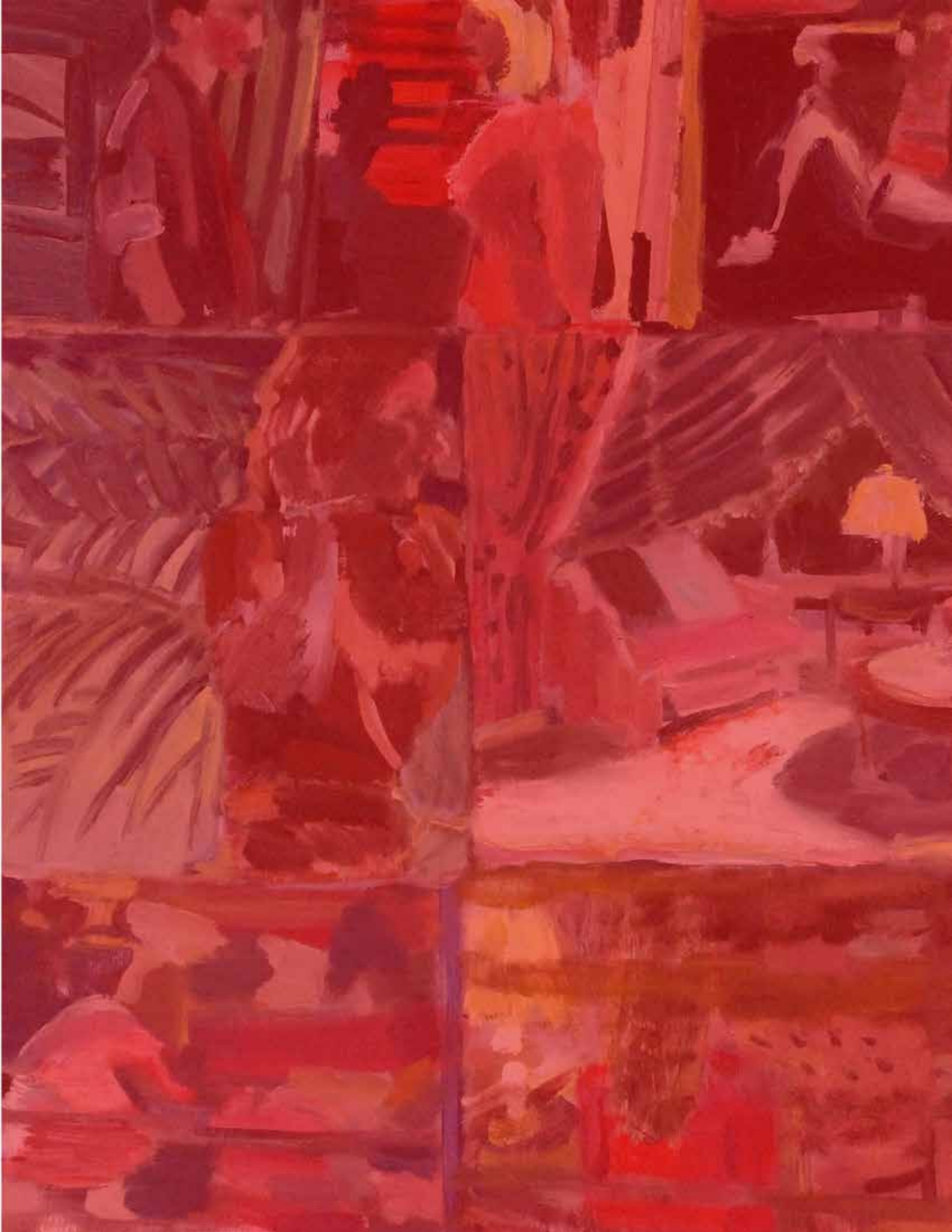


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REWS





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First edition

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**THIS MUST BE THE PLACE** is an artist-run independent curatorial project that provides an egalitarian platform for visionary artwork while fostering kinship between diverse artists. With a focus on working with artists with developmental disabilities in the Philadelphia area, our goal is to create an inclusive support system and accessible space for artists to show and work together.

**THE PLACE PRESS** publishes artist books and collaborative projects by, for, and with our artists.

[www.thismustbetheplace.org](http://www.thismustbetheplace.org)

# EVIL IS ME

DAVID SCHMUCKLER  
& MARYBETH CHEW







*"I do the paintings for Halloween. The best is monster blood, because monsters are killing people. I do monsters. I make paintings for Halloween. I am the director of the movie about Halloween. I do it myself. I have a lot of work to do."*



# DAVID SCHMUCKLER

David Schmuckler (b. 1989) works out of the studio at the Center for Creative Works, outside of Philadelphia. In 2017, he published his first book, entitled *Halloween Scary Monsters*, which debuted at the Philadelphia Art Book Fair. His work in painting, drawing, and sculpture has been exhibited throughout Philadelphia, including at The Philadelphia Foundation, Philly Eyeworks, Black Cat Tavern, and the Green Line Cafe. His work has also been shown at the Outsider Art Fair and Weird Days (now Summertime Gallery) in New York City.

Schmuckler lives in Newtown Square, PA with his family.



AMAZON.COM: Hyaline Dora SCARY Halloween MASKS Animal  
Skeleton with Bloody Brain and Cat Eyes Horror Halloween Costume

Amazon.com hyaline Dora scary Halloween Masks Animal  
Skeleton with Bloody Brain and Cat Eyes Horror  
Halloween Costume

12 x 9 inches, acrylic paint marker & ballpoint on paper

2019



Bloody Clown Mask

Bloody Clown Mask  
12 x 9 inches, marker & ballpoint on paper  
2017



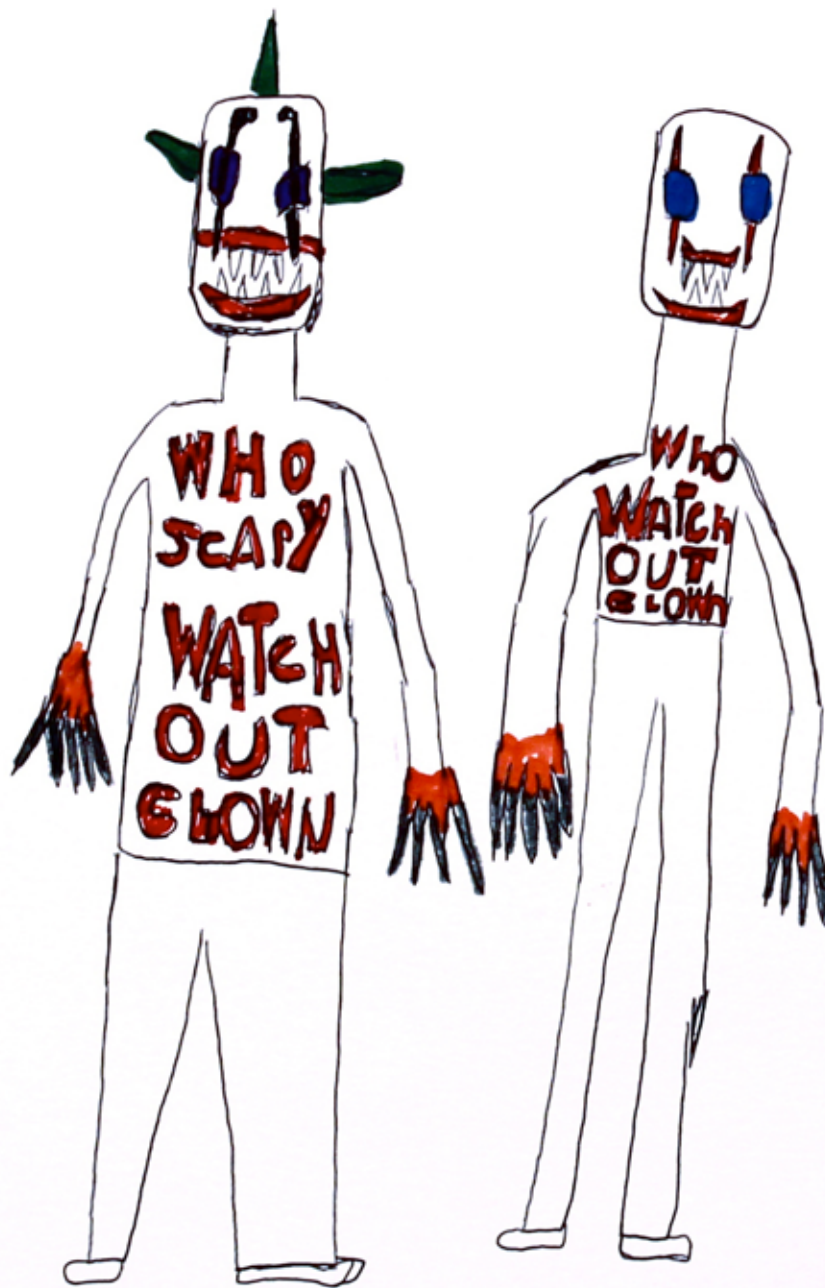
Cafele La Llorona Mask Horror Scary  
Zombie Grimace Ghost Mask with Hair  
for Halloween Party

Cafele La Llorona Mask Horror Scary Zombie Grimace  
Ghost Mask with Hair for Halloween Party  
12 x 9 inches, acrylic paint marker & marker on paper  
2020



Clown Horror Latex Halloween Scary Head Face Mask 3D  
Effect Zombie face for Adult Halloween Gift

Clown Horror Latex Halloween Scary Head Face Mask 3D  
Effect Zombie face for Adult Halloween Gift  
12 x 9 inches, marker, acrylic paint & ballpoint on paper  
2018



Halloween haunted House  
dress UP live room to esca

Morbid Enterprises Snake  
Tongue EVIL Clown Mask

Halloween haunted House dress up live room to esca /  
Morbid Enterprises Snake Tongue Evil Clown Mask  
12 x 9 inches, ballpoint & marker on paper  
2018



Rubies Child's MUTANT 3/4 Vinyl Mask

Rubies Child's Mutant 3/4 Vinyl Mask  
12 x 9 inches, marker & ballpoint on paper  
2019



RobZOMBIEThe DEVIL'S REJECTS VICTIM Halloween

Rob Zombie The Devil's Rejects Victim Halloween  
12 x 9 inches, marker & ballpoint on paper  
2017





SMiffys Men's Prowler WOLF Mask

**Smiffys Men's Prowler Wolf Mask**  
12 x 9 inches, acrylic paint marker & ballpoint on paper  
2018



Old Clown Mask

Old Clown Mask  
12 x 9 inches, ballpoint & marker on paper  
2019



Halloween scary Ghost Mask Zombie Tomb Horror  
Keeper Party Mask Latex Full Face Nausea Evil Spirits  
Ghost Cosplay Dress 2018

Halloween Scary Ghost Mask Zombie Tomb Horror Keeper Party  
Mask Latex Full Face Nausea Evil Spirits Ghost Cosplay Dress 2018  
12 x 9 inches, marker & ballpoint on paper  
2018



Fancy Dress costumes Accessories for Adults Children

Fancy Dress Costumes Accessories for Adults Children  
12 x 9 inches, ballpoint & marker on paper  
2019

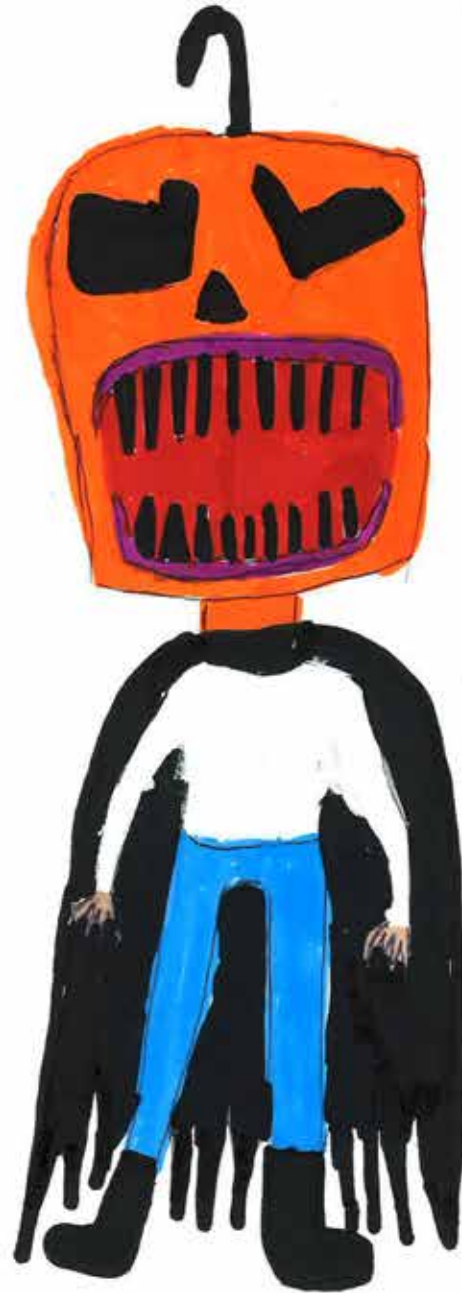


Go To Sleep Mask

Go To Sleep Mask

12 x 9 inches, marker & ballpoint on paper

2018



Pixnor Halloween Horror ZOMBIE MASK COSPLAY

**Pixnor Halloween Horror Zombie Mask Cosplay**  
12 x 9 inches, acrylic paint marker & ballpoint on paper  
2019



MASCARA de Payaso Diabolico Para Adultos

Mascara de Payaso Diabolico Para Adulto  
12 x 9 inches, ballpoint & acrylic paint marker on paper  
2019



EXCELLENT Size Toy Halloween Scary Mask ZOMBIE Mask With  
Black

**EXCELLENT Size Toy Halloween Scary Mask Zombie Mask  
With Black**  
12 x 9 inches, marker & ballpoint on paper  
2019





Hooded Faceless Mask Hands Halloween Costume

**Hooded Faceless Mask Hands Halloween Costume**  
12 x 9 inches, marker & ballpoint on paper  
2018



Werewolf child Halloween costume

Werewolf Child Halloween Costume  
12 x 9 inches, ballpoint & acrylic paint marker on paper  
2018



Nemesis Deluxe Latex Mask Resident Evil  
Zombie Halloween Mask One Size/as Pictured

**Nemesis Deluxe Latex Mask Resident Evil Zombie  
Halloween Mask One Size/as Pictured  
12 x 9 inches, marker & ballpoint on paper  
2018**



Halloween Fancy Dress costume rotting skeleton with Popping  
Eyes Face Mask

Halloween Fancy Dress Costume Rotting Skeleton with  
Popping Eyes Face Mask  
12 x 9 inches, marker & ballpoint on paper  
2019



AMAZON.com: Molagogo The Flash Mask See

Amazon.com: malagogo The Flash Mask see  
12 x 9 inches, marker & ballpoint on paper  
2017

A Halloween-Mask.com Exclusive...

This Clown | EyeScream  
Clown



A Halloween-Mask.com Exclusive... This Clown  
EyeScream Clown

12 x 9 inches, acrylic paint marker & ballpoint on paper  
2017

## PAINTED MONSTERS: THE WORK OF DAVID SCHMUCKLER & MARYBETH CHEW

By Samantha Mitchell and Virginia Fleming

“My kind of horror is not horror anymore. No one’s afraid of a painted monster.” – Boris Karloff, *Targets*

Horror and morbidity have long exercised an uncanny hold on the human mind. From the fever behind the Salem Witch Trials to the cult-like following of Edgar Allen Poe, there have not only been audiences but true enthusiasts for the experience of feeling terrified. Among horror-lovers, it is widely accepted that artworks that can muster the most unexpectedly bone-chilling fear are the more satisfying. As productions of cinematic horror became more sophisticated over the 20th century, horror gradually evolved through a focus on the supernatural to the more psychological horror genre that transformed cinema in the 70’s, taking us away from the camp of *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) and towards the realist gore of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974).

Artists David Schmuckler and Marybeth Chew both investigate the horror genre in their work in a way that celebrates the traditional “painted monster,” even as it appears in more contemporary, psychologically terrorizing iterations. In their work, gruesomeness is presented as stylized, formalized compositional elements. Rife with macabre elements of blood, dismemberment, and ghoulish creatures, Schmuckler and Chew maintain an awareness of the fantastical, even as it appears in more realistic representations of gore.

Chew works with still images pulled from film, pausing the screen at just the right moment and capturing a single frame. Providing a voyeuristic perspective on her subjects, it is a process that echoes the 1960 film *Peeping Tom*, which involves a man who uses a camera as a murder weapon with a blade attached to the end of his tripod. The film opens through the perspective of his camera lens, watching his victim. Like Chew’s process, we as the viewer are presented with a screen within a screen. The protagonist is a voyeur obsessed with capturing the moment of terror on his victim’s face. Diving into a range of classic and contemporary movies like *Blood Diner* (1987), *Black Narcissus* (1947), and *Body Melt* (1993), Chew can stop time in the moment when someone is experiencing extreme terror or pain, or passing from living to dead, exerting

Godlike power over the B movie actors being murdered on screen. An undercurrent of excess is always present in her portraits, the melodramatic expression of emotion just as active as the presence of gore or fear. In Chew’s work you can see the adoration and respect for her subject matter and because of this, it is difficult to forget that we are looking at an actress embodying a role or a feat of costume makeup magic. Using an old tube television set to display her reference imagery as she works, Chew’s pieces express a nostalgic bent for cathode ray imagery, and the presence of a linear patch of static or a hazy tracking halo feel poignant, as if the moments in these films are from a collective memory that we all share.



Most of Schmuckler's work is inspired by Google image searches for Halloween masks, and his current full-figure practice evolved from drawing masks exclusively. Drawn in ballpoint pen with marker and/ or acrylic paint marker, his pieces evoke powerful expressive moments that are delightfully grotesque. While his interpretations of the faces of his figures are based on visual reference imagery, their bodies are largely invented from his imagination. He has indicated that his figurative works are portraits of himself in various costumes, which is consistent with his passion for acting and dancing through characters. The drawings embody not just his own playful interpretation of source imagery, but erect an identity for himself within that edifice, always occupying a villainous space. He portrays characters from both contemporary and classic horror reimagined as Halloween masks, including Nemesis (a pursuer in *Resident Evil*, a survival horror game and movie franchise), *Dracula*, Pennywise the Clown (Stephen King's *It*), and various werewolves. Schmuckler's process of stylization emphasizes the basic compositional elements of the masks, like the negative space created by an empty eye socket, or the rhythmic pattern of serrated teeth. In his hand, the strip mall Halloween store aesthetic becomes a compelling, sophisticated visual exploration of the poetry of gore.



Beyond their fascination with horror, both artists seem deeply amused by the subject as well. There is an appreciation for the absurd present in both of their work, from Chew's tenderly rendered disembodied head with green tentacles from *The Brain* (1988) to Schmuckler's representation of a grungy long-haired killer from Rob Zombie's *The Devil's Rejects* (2005) wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with *STAY BACK / KEEP OUT / WHO SCARY*. This carries through the artists' more gruesome representations as well. The truth of what they convey – someone peeling their face back to reveal their true identity as a lizard, a person with a face so mangled it appears as hunks of flesh and holes – is too horrifying to actually take in. This representational divide makes us more aware of the distancing, dissociative mechanisms that are active within us at all times in navigating contemporary visual culture.

The shift in cinematic horror over the decades is embodied in Peter Bogdanovich's *Targets* (1968), in which Boris Karloff plays an aging monster movie star in a world where current events begin to occupy a more horrific place in our psyches than fantasy, articulating the fundamental shift from scary-creature horror films to the mental anguish and fear of *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991). While Bogdanovich may have felt the shift from monsters to serial killers signified a move away from pure fantasy, both Schmuckler and Chew are clearly still able to delight in the fantastical elements of the genre, even as it becomes more realistically grotesque. Both have a deeply felt understanding of horror as an outlet, a subliminal, alternative space within the screen. Whether probing its abstraction (like Chew through her monitor) or inviting it into their physical reality (like Schmuckler in costume), they use horror fantasy as a vessel to capture something essential about their worldview, and ask the viewer to contemplate their own reality through this darkly humorous lens.



*"I think it's funny that we can transfer things that are really scary into an escapism about monsters, you know? It's also something that's really fun that I can't really put my finger on. I'm not feeling bad as I watch horror films, it's celebratory. Sometimes it's like "life is so good let's watch a horror movie."*

# MARYBETH CHEW

Marybeth Chew was born in Chester Pa in 1979, and grew up in Wilmington, Delaware. She studied painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts from 2001 to 2005, and recieved her MFA from the Leroy E. Hoffberger School of Painting at MICA in 2016. Her work has been exhibited at the ICA Baltimore, Practice Gallery in Philadelphia, Dubrovnik Contemporary in Croatia, and Fx Collaborative in New York.

She currently lives in Baltimore, MD with her partner and her cat Benny, and works as an adjunct instructor of Drawing and Painting.



Untitled  
oil on canvas, 22 x 22 inches  
2020



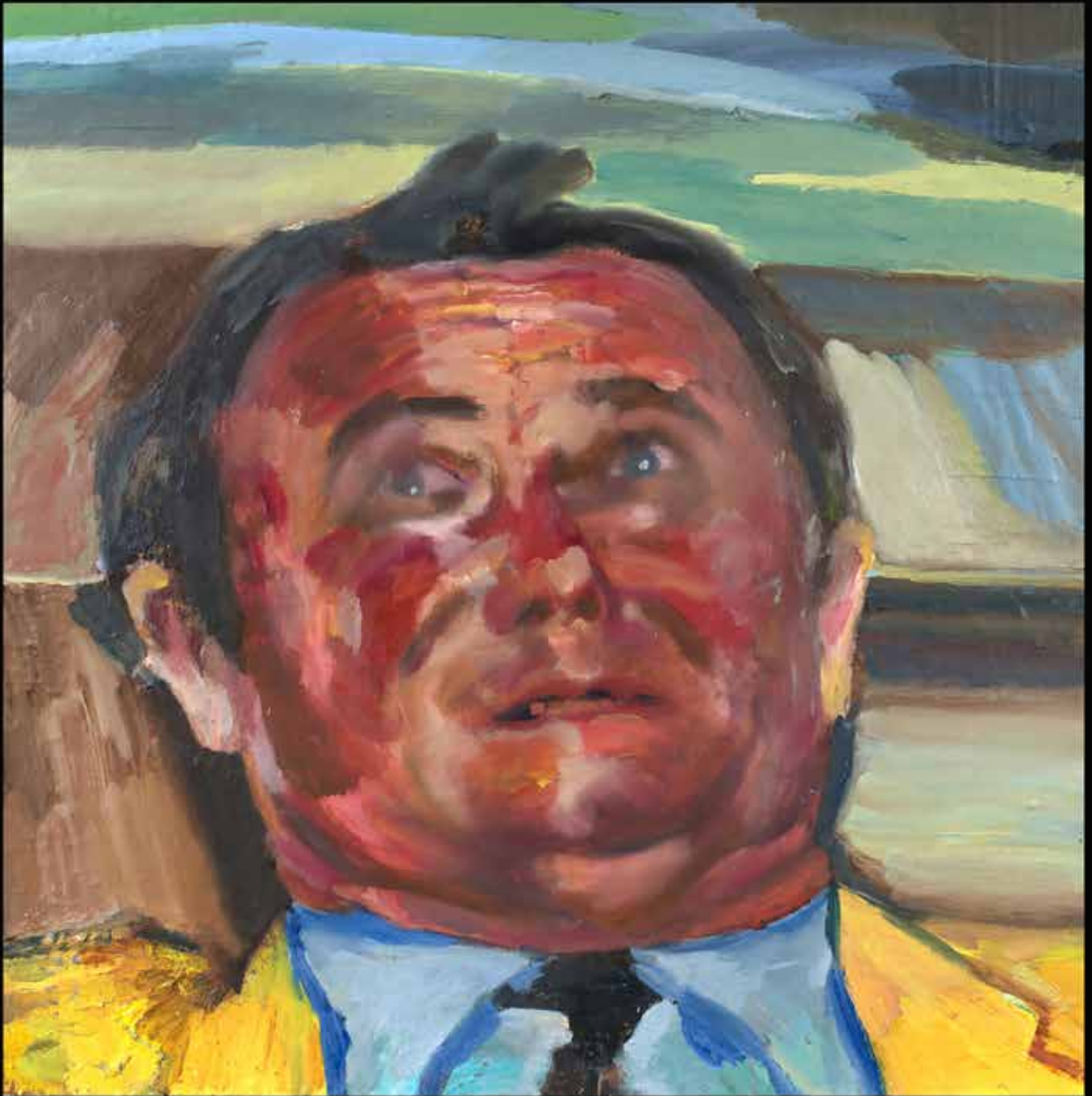
**Blood Feast**  
oil on canvas, 22 x 18 inches  
2019



**Night of the Demons (Ladies Room)**  
oil on canvas, 20 x 16 inches  
2016



Alligator  
marker on paper, 8.5 x 11 inches  
2019



Boiling  
oil on panel, 24 x 24 inches  
2019



**Dark Planet**  
oil on canvas, 24 x 30 inches  
2017





**Black Narcissus**  
oil on canvas, 22 x 22 inches  
2020



Deadwood  
soft pastel on paper, 18 x 14 inches  
2017



**Murder Mystery**  
oil on canvas, 10 x 10 inches  
2019



**Columbo Reenactment**  
oil on canvas, 18 x 24 inches  
2020



The Being  
marker on paper, 8.5 x 12 inches  
2017



**From a Whisper to a Scream**  
soft pastel on paper, 11 x 11 inches  
2017



Blood Diner  
oil on canvas, 24 x 18 inches  
2019



'Def by Temptation' 2019

Def by Temptation  
marker on paper, 11 x 14 inches  
2019





They're Lizards from V The Miniseries  
oil on canvas, 24 x 24 inches  
2018



'Body Melt' Mingqi Chen  
2017

**Body Melt**  
marker on paper, 17 x 11 inches  
2017



'V' *Margaret Green 2017*

V The Miniseries  
marker on paper, 11 x 8 inches  
2017



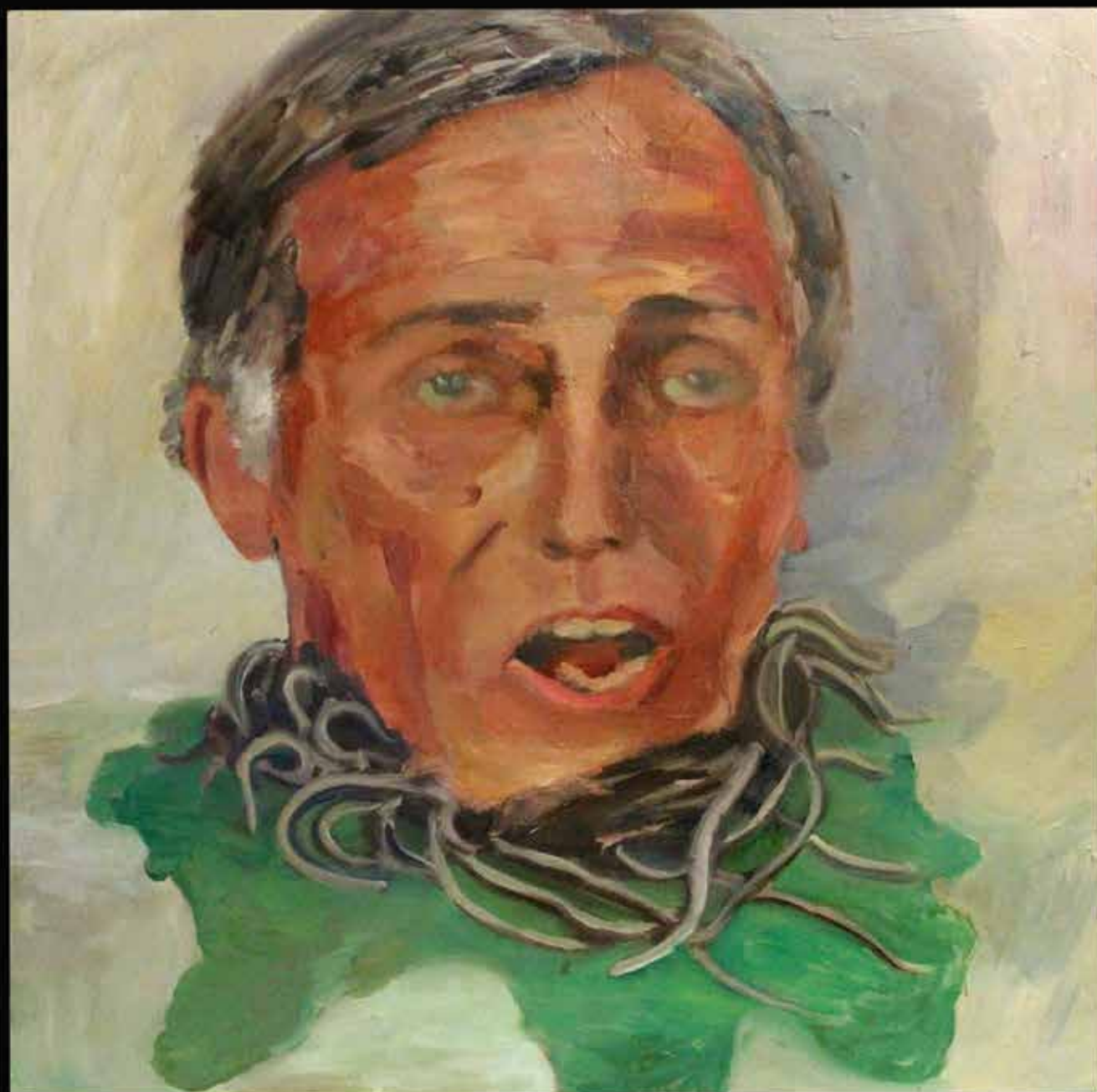
Invasion UFO  
oil on canvas, 10 x 10 inches  
2017



From Beyond  
marker on paper, 17 x 11 inches  
2017



**Blood Feast**  
oil on canvas, 10 x 10 inches  
2019



The Brain  
oil on canvas, 24 x 24 inches  
2019



**Polyester**  
oil on canvas, 20 x 24 inches  
2015







# EVIL IS ME

DAVID SCHMUCKLER  
& MARYBETH CHEW



To hear an audio version of this book, scan the QR code below:



This *Must Be the Place* extends its gratitude to Center for Creative Works, Livia Charman, Ryan Betley, Clifford Ward, Stephen Macready, Elliot Schmuckler, Samuel Newhouse, Margaret Mitchell, Bryan Jabs and Fireball Printing for making this project possible.





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