

For Immediate Release

# Dress Up

October 25th–November 9th

Opening Reception October 25th, 6–8 p.m. at 61 Greenpoint Ave, Brooklyn, NY



Center: Scott Walker, *Self Portrait in Drag as Bjork*, 2024, Embroidery on doily, 12.5 x 10.5 inches  
Left: Isaí Soto, *Employee of the Month - Isaí*, 2024, Serigraph on panel, 18 x 12 inches  
Right: Helena Calfors, *Midsummer*, 2024, Archival print face-mounted on plexi, 30 x 24 inches

**New York, New York** – Harsh Collective and Brooke Finegold are pleased to present *Dress Up*, an open-call group exhibition featuring fifteen artists at Harsh Collective’s new Greenpoint location, 61 Greenpoint Ave, Brooklyn, NY. The show will open on Friday, October 25th with an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m.

*Dress Up* explores how costumes, clothes, tattoos, and makeup act as a tool for self-exploration and acceptance in queer communities. The featured artists include Helena Calmfors, Amy Chase, Jade Ellis, Ava Kirby, August Park, Madison Paloski, Clara Jeanne Reed, Wynter Rhoads, Jenna Rothstein, Mary Royall Wilgis, Emma Schwartz, Isaí Soto, Josie Tolliver Shaw, Scott Walker, and Cecilia Winters. Through a diverse array of mediums, these artists depict queer journeys of selfhood and community and how the use of play and performance concerning aesthetics functions to drive personal identity.

“Dress up is a form of self-expression and play that is often reserved for young girls and gets lost along the journey to adulthood. Queer people rediscover this concept of dress up as we come of age in our second adolescence. While this time frame changes depending on the person, the clothes, makeup, hair, piercings, tattoos, jewelry are all ways to explore identity and the message we send to the world about who we are, who we want to be, how we feel.” – Brooke Finegold, Co-Curator, *Dress Up*

The opening reception will include an appearance by drag performer Spike Einbinder, further celebrating the role of dress in queer identity and art forms.

## About the Artists

### Helena Calmfors

Helena Calmfors is a queer artist, performer and BDSM professional based in Brooklyn. Originally from Sweden, she has worked and performed in New York since 2014. The act of creating intimate scenes and experiences is present in all aspects of her work, ranging from watercolor paintings and digital work to performance and photography. Helena's work is centered around taking control of the male gaze through the practice of femdom. She addresses issues around reclaiming ownership of body and identity through the hierarchical power play present in BDSM.

### Amy Chasse

Amy Chasse is a multimedia artist based in Brooklyn, NY. Born in 1997 and raised in a small farm town in South Eastern Connecticut, Chasse draws inspiration from her rural upbringing, unnerving thrift store items and stills from old movies. Chasse's works depict emotionally and physically drained looking characters while using bright colors and humor to animate the mundane. Amy is currently pursuing her MFA in the Painting/Printmaking Program at Yale University.

<https://www.instagram.com/amychasse/>

### Jade Ellis

Jade Ellis graduated with a BA in Art Practices from the University of Colorado Boulder, with a minor in Art History. Jade has a diverse portfolio that includes oil painting, sculpture, film, graphic design, and a combination of literary arts with textile and sculptural work.

<https://www.instagram.com/jadeellisart/>

### Ava Kirby

Ava Kirby is an artist primarily working with oil paint. Kirby's paintings are an attempt to redefine personal habits as a study more akin to landscape, like the wrinkles of a comforter being redefined by its valleys. The recognizable and often generic imagery allows the viewer to engage in a personal dialog with the work. She communicates themes of obsession, routine, and queerness through monochrome palettes. Kirby is currently studying painting at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York.

<https://www.instagram.com/av3art/>

### August Park

August Park is a multidisciplinary artist based in Brooklyn, New York, whose painted practice explores the intersections of race and trans identity by depicting the bodies of trans people of color as sites of beauty and liberation. They view the trans experience as one rooted in creation that they aim to honor with their work.

<https://www.augustparkart.com/reel>

### Madison Paloski

Madison Paloski is a New York-based photographer who encourages viewers to step into her idealistic dreamscape inspired by her love of all things vintage, high fashion, and her earliest childhood fantasies. With her work being described as ethereal and

emotional, Paloski has been known to pivot the naked eye and capture the true essence of an individual through color, mood, and clothes.

<https://www.instagram.com/madisonpaloski/>

### Clara Jeanne Reed

Clara Jeanne Reed is an artist, historian, and performer based in Manhattan. Her work revolves around self-portraiture, where she uses photography to abstract her own body. As someone who has often had a dissociative relationship with the body, it is through self-portraiture that she attempts to soothe the disconnect between body and mind. She implements an experimental approach to photography, incorporating mixed media and a direct manipulation of the image as an investigation into self-representation, an exercise in autonomy, and an inquiry into dysmorphia.

<https://www.instagram.com/clarajeannereed/>

### Wynter Rhoads

Wynter Rhoads is a mixed media non-binary artist based in Queens, New York. Originally from Syracuse, Indiana they received their BFA in painting and printmaking from the Herron School of Art + Design. Rhoads employs self-portraiture, caricature, and contemporary kitsch to problematize social constructs through an exploration of topics including poverty, religion, and sexuality.

[https://www.instagram.com/\\_wybterart/](https://www.instagram.com/_wybterart/)

### Jenna Rothstein

Jenna Rothstein (b. 1993, Detroit, MI) is largely concerned with the decorative and sentimental. Her work contains its own dense language rooted in western ideas of normative behavior, exploring images of failure, spectacle, performance, soft power and tragic comedy.

<https://www.instagram.com/ihaveacooldog/>

### Mary Royall Wilgis

Mary Royall Wilgis is a contemporary artist, light chaser, and color enthusiast based in Brooklyn, NY. Her work invites her audience to stop and notice the light: how it shapes space, measures time, and defines color.

<https://www.instagram.com/maryroyallstudio/>

### Emma Schwartz

Emma Schwartz holds a BFA in Drawing and Illustration from Herron School of Art + Design. Currently, she is an MFA Studio Art Candidate at Syracuse University. Her work initiates uneasy, but necessary, conversations surrounding the ways we manifest, hunt, and experience desire and community. Featuring people from her life, art historical imagery, religious symbology, lingerie, and decorative motifs, she addresses the push and pull of belonging as people operating outside of the binaries born from religious and secular cultures.

<https://www.instagram.com/emmaschwartzart/>

### Isaí Soto

Isaí Soto received a BA in Anthropology from Columbia University and currently works and resides in New York City. Isaí is a Mexican-American multimedia artist. In

his work, Isaí projects Mexicaness onto quotidian objects and his wider community in an attempt to explore what makes something or someone Mexican. Isaí's work is unmistakably queer: the distortions of figurations create a quasi-drag experience, and the subject matter often interrogates iconographic interpretations of gender.

<https://www.instagram.com/germprint/>

### Josie Tolliver Shaw

Josie Tolliver Shaw is a collector and painter based in New York City. She pieces together photos of friends, road trip souvenirs, and bedroom windowsill altars to construct her idealized matriarchal world. She paints scenes of a definitively homosocial space, as free from the male gaze as a space can be. Her work also explores the sacred practice of collecting and how selection saturates objects with sentimentality.

<https://www.josietollivershaw.com/>

### Scott Walker

Scott Walker is a New York City-based artist working mostly in embroidery. Walker graduated from Parsons School of Design in 2018 with a BFA in Fine Art. Using embroidery, he creates images of himself and his friends in moments of queer self-expression—gathering on a queer beach, dancing at a nightclub, putting on eyeshadow. He intricately stitches these images onto antique doilies, relics of an undervalued femininity of a past era, which are imbued with Walker's story of embracing stigmatized effeminate self-expression.

<https://www.scottwalkerfineart.com/>

### Cecilia Winters

Cecilia Winters is an American artist based in New York City. Winters' work taps into the playful, nostalgic side of their identity by painting figurines and toys. By depicting these animated subjects, their work examines how these figurines—whether played with or collected—serve as tools of personal expression. The toys become more than mere objects; but act as decorative elements and extensions of our identities, reflecting how we see and understand ourselves in the world.

[https://www.instagram.com/cecilia.w\\_artist/](https://www.instagram.com/cecilia.w_artist/)

### **About Brooke Finegold**

Brooke Finegold is a Brooklyn-based comedian, poet, and collage artist. She hosts the poetry salon Poetry is Gay (PIG), the stand up show Comedy is Gay (CIG) at The Standard, Highline, as well as the queer art pop up Art is Gay at various Manhattan locations. She has had her essays and poetry published in Defunct Mag, Pinky Mag, Splashland, Hot People Read Poetry, and more. She busks with her typewriter doing poetry in Washington Square Park and at various events.

<https://www.brookefinegold.com/>

### **About Harsh Collective**

Harsh Collective is an artist-first gallery that amplifies emerging contemporary artists' voices and offers a bespoke platform where collectors, artists, and guests are welcome and encouraged to build community. Harsh Collective demystifies the art

market's inner workings, allowing the artist to be at the forefront—bringing attention to their process, inspiration, and story.

<https://www.harshcollective.com/>