



Watson Mere, *EDEN*, 2022. Microsoft Paint, Acrylic, Oil Stick on canvas

## The Letter H

September 15, 2022–December 1, 2022

Opening: Thursday, September 15, 6–8 pm

**Nazli Efe**

**Guido Garaycochea**

**Watson Mere**

**Carlos Motta**

**Bundith Phunsombatlert**

**Jia Sung**

*The Letter H* is an exhibition featuring six new members of the EFA Studio Program. The program awards jury-selected artists a two-year subsidized workspace in EFA's 90-studio building in Manhattan's Garment District. Memberships are renewable based on continued evidence of excellence. This year's cohort exemplifies EFA's mission to support accomplished and emerging artists of diverse backgrounds. From their wide range of interests and modalities, a common thread can be found in the artists' approach to personal history.

Each work can be viewed through the lens of private stories translated into compelling works for the public sphere. Works such as Watson Mere's that trace a diasporic lineage from African gods to comic books to present-day New York City emerge from a very personal journey to art

making. The letter H can stand for home, heartache, or history, and remains open to possibility and interpretation. H can stand for homecoming and hospitality; for the warm welcome we offer this group of talented artists joining our community on 39th Street. H can stand for hope: a wish that they stay a while and thrive.

**Watson Mere's** work invites viewers to engage with the joys, struggles, and triumphs of those who identify with the African diaspora. By weaving narratives between modern themes of black culture and ancient African symbolism, Mere creates opportunities for dialogue and deep self-expression.

**Carlos Motta** shares with us self-portraits that were taken in an earlier stage of his career and printed recently. These works evoke a utopian vision of queer freedom and avant-gardist ambition. The artist transforms himself through paint and poses into a self-determined actor in an untold story. Motta is known for his work addressing Latin American subjectivity as well as LGBTQI oppression. A major exhibition of his work is opening at the Wexner Center for the Arts on September 16, 2022.

Water is a ritualistic and meditative medium that allows **Nazli Efe** to access her subconscious and manifest the emotional presence of memory in her work. In her current study, she creates artifacts of personal history and emergent psychic objects by dropping molten wax into water. Efe blends symbolism, mysticism, and divination to explore themes of loss, fear, and memory.

**Guido Garaycochea's** work questions the dynamic of power and sex. His collages and paintings explore gender representation, nonconformity, and manhood. They also look at how the queer body has had to heal and survive aspects of the status quo, impacted by capitalism and global power dynamics. His large dollhouse painting imagines a queer stage where all are welcome to perform their vision of themselves under the banner of a frolicking Paul Cadmus scene.

**Bundith Phunsombatlert's** work takes a deep look at the meaning of home and homeland. A set of felt prints memorializes the footprint of the many shared apartments he has lived in while establishing himself as an artist in New York City. Another serial work documents the memories of Caribbean immigrants he met while teaching art in a Queens senior home. Two display cases of solar prints tell their stories using remembered plants from the islands of their birth.

**Jia Sung's** work overflows with anxiety and delight. Her paintings, prints, and tapestries are inspired by Asian folklore and scenes of everyday life. The fantastic and the mundane speak of her cross-cultural interpretation of Chinese culture, queer and feminist drives, and the difficulties negotiating an identity and position in the west. The pieces on view embody this dual approach of personal experience and epic storytelling.

**Save the Date:**

Screening Event: Carlos Motta  
November 10, 2022, 6-8 pm

CONTACT: Deric Carner [deric@efanyc.org](mailto:deric@efanyc.org)