

## **PAPERWORK: IFS DOCUMENTS, Rachael London**

Babayaga Gallery. 5821 NY-9G, Hudson NY 12534

June 10th - June 25th 2023

Closing reception June 25th 5-9PM.

Additional hours by appointment only. Email: [rlondon.mail@gmail.com](mailto:rlondon.mail@gmail.com)



*“Help yourself to a folder. Be gentle. Each has a spirit.”*

Clockwise. Top: *If Felix Gonzales Torres Lovers Was All Of Us, As One. Or, Communal Molly And IFS*; Right: *Big Data Energy*; Center: *Raw and Redacted*

Rachael London’s *PAPERWORK: IFS DOCUMENTS* is an interactive installation of kinetic sculptural works and paintings now on view at *Babayaga Gallery*. Viewers are invited to carefully sift through the installations filing cabinets, select and examine folders that are sorted as “parts” of the artist. “Parts” refers to a contemporary theory revolutionizing psychology called Internal Family Systems (IFS) or “parts work”. The show uses personal documents to explore the IFS theory and modality as well as other related theories that are outside of psychology, such as the concept in ecological theory of “thing power” by theorist and environmentalist Jane Bennett.

Works in *PAPERWORK* play with the imagery of documents, offering arrangements considering their status in our culture as sites of power, violence and, alternatively, the life inherent in them as objects. The documents act as objects that can be used as weapons of the state, religion or academy. These pieces and their references act as a metaphor and medium for other systems of power and of self, life of materiality and approaches to documents (amongst them policing/abolition, theories of abuse and relationships) and their limits.

Viewers walk into a cold, eerie office environment: large askew filing cabinets, dozens of clocks, fans, shuffling paper. Upon closer viewing, the works contain raw writings and paintings with colorful tender underbellies that demand viewers sit in the clean black leather office chairs and examine the contents of one of the hundreds of manila folders of works.

On display for viewers to analyze, the show plays with the power dynamics and the inherent shortcomings of attempting to define living changing “parts” in static objects. IFS and the therapy office aesthetic of the show seeks to be a medium to explore our collective choices in confronting our highly polarized punishing culture, our current reach for “healing” through therapy as popularized in social media and pop culture and the inherent conflict of these in the frameworks we face.

London’s use of objects to hold her vulnerable, flawed and personal writings and paintings, almost like a therapists offices notes but much more raw, cradles humble personal truths in objects of authority and cold containment: flying cabinets, bible stands and other authoritative staged office furniture. Redacted documents and utterly vulnerable works amongst the white noise of the fans and clean lines of the filing cabinets, the show points to a contrast of conflicting realities.



*Jane Bennetts Thing Power Shows Us, Our Parts Cannot Be Confined*

The works also point to another hidden aliveness by embodying not just the absurdities, but by whispering about it’s objects inherent, largely unseen power: the paper and objects themselves have a material life, much like our parts that are weaponized for pathologies. The quiet shuffle of legal papers in a corner of the kinetic piece *Jane Bennetts Thing Power Shows Us, Our Parts Cannot Be Confined*, the sound of the metal filing cabinets opening and closing in *Raw and Redacted* and *Big Data Energy*.

Leaked NSA documents, classified documents, police reports, legal documents, therapy offices notes, social work assessments, diaries, documents defining someone’s mental status: documents precede truth.

Culturally speaking, documents have been a form of enacting or justifying violence going back centuries of power over people from more orally based cultures. The show contrasts such elusions of darker subjects relating to documents thought ominous installations with playful human parts of London’s raw wonderment in her notes, leaving viewers in the position as an observer of these conflicts without any answers.

Kinetic works allude to various contemporary related theories, usually outright by title. Some of the work that references the therapeutic method of IFS plays with the woo-woo core idea of IFS that “parts” of us are individual spirits. Additionally, the kinetic works reference a concept that environmentalist and ecological theorist Jane Bennett calls “thing power” in her book “Vibrant Matter.” “Thing power” asks us to consider inanimate objects as in fact powerful. Documents justify legal action, police activity, often ending someone’s life or liberty, wars, someone’s value, who we worship, entire narratives of seeing ourselves or the world etc. The power of objects, here paper and documents, is beyond what are our carceral or religious document centric powered culture is a way to humble our systems of power and empowered objects. Literally the paper itself, the living object and material matter’s aliveness is being poser to help us see beyond its weaponized form.

The show is as much about London’s personal “parts”, hidden in the filing cabinets for intimate viewings by bold visitors - as it is about the larger concepts in the sculptural installations and less personal, cold objects. The viewer is placed in a position of power, getting to act as judge and

voyuer of Longon's parts, sitting in shiny leather chairs. Much like a therapeutic relationship, there is a meta dynamic in the show: the material itself seems to speak to the danger of these power imbalances through uncannily almost creepy kinetic works. The clocks in *If Felix Gonzales Torres Lovers Was All Of Us, As One. Or, Communal Molly And IFS* point to a collective alternative. And the paper itself in *Jane Bennetts Thing Power Shows Us, Our Parts Cannot Be Confined* seem to almost rebel in an eerie shuffle.



*Pathologizing Pathogens*

The show will evolve over the two weeks it is open, with new documents altered, added and the artist present. Viewers are invited back for the closing on June 25th, 5-9pm.



*If Felix Gonzales Torres Lovers Was All Of Us, As One. Or, Communal Molly And IFS*

Rachael London is from Baltimore, MD and splits her time between New York and Baltimore. Her work has recently been shown: *NEW WORKS BALTIMORE* at 2640 Gallery in Baltimore 2023, SIM residency in Reykjavik, 2022. Her 2023 and 2024 upcoming projects include partners: The Lakkos Artists Gallery in Greece, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and The Neighborhood Design Center in Baltimore.

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