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## Franklin Street Works Group Exhibition Investigates the Continuum of Paranoia as Subject Matter, Philosophical Position, and Psychological State.

“False Flag: The Space Between Paranoia and Reason”  
is on view through January 6, 2019

Free Public Reception: November 3 from 5-8pm

**Stamford, CT** -- Franklin Street Works, a not-for-profit contemporary art space in Downtown Stamford, presents “False Flag: The Space Between Paranoia and Reason,” a group exhibition that investigates the continuum of paranoia, as subject matter, philosophical position, and psychological state.

The exhibition opens with a free public reception and curator walkthrough on Saturday Nov. 3, 5-8 p.m. and is on view through January 6, 2019.

Curated by New Haven artist Jeff Ostergren, “False Flag” features videos, sculptures, paintings, and photographs that utilize paranoia as a visual representation and a means of production. The works and the way they are installed produce a kind of looping paranoid state of multiple voices, perspectives, and possibilities, leaving the viewer to establish their own position within this continuum.

“False Flag” opens at a time when conspiracy theories -- Deep State cover-ups, denials of the Holocaust, 9/11, or the Sandy Hook shooting -- have taken an increasingly stronger hold on the popular consciousness.

In contemporary contexts, the term “false flag” is used to describe a situation where a segment of the population believes that the government, seeking to increase their power or to push through specific agendas, has staged a traumatic event – such as a mass shooting or terrorist attack – and pinned the blame on an individual or terrorist cell.

“The obsession with the False Flag allows the paranoid to always think they are correct, no matter the response,” Ostergren says “If there is a secret conspiracy and it happens to be revealed, they would be right, and the paranoia becomes an understanding of hidden methods of control (for instance, the NSA spying on Americans). But when such allegations are denied, it is seen as a cover-up act.”

The works in “False Flag” are in conversation with one another, creating what Ostergren describes a “murky” tone.

“What is hopefully apparent from assembling these works together, it’s that the gap between paranoia and reason is both smaller and more ambiguous than one might imagine,” he adds. “And in some cases, it doesn’t exist at all.”

Exhibiting artists are Darja Bajagić, James Benning, Theodore Darst, Violet Dennison, Harry Dodge and Stanya Kahn, Mark Flood, Michael Green, Juliana Huxtable, Daniel Keller, Son Kit, Tim Trantenroth, and Melvin Way.

## More on the Works

The thirteen artists in False Flag use a variety of tactics and materials to explore the topic.

In **Darja Bajagić’s** *Vixit ft. Black Widow Zarema Muzhikhoyeva and Karen Howell* the artist mashes up two powerful female figures, a suicide bomber and a murderer, evoking darkness and violence.

In **James Benning’s** two-channel video installation “Two Cabins,” projected replicas of American writer Henry David Thoreau’s cabin at Walden Pond and of “Unabomber,” Theodore Kaczynski’s cabin in Lincoln, Montana speak to two very different expressions and legacies born of isolated contemplation and eccentricity.

In **Theodore Darst’s** work, *The Tourist: This Machine Makes Fascists*, Darst explores digital spaces as a breeding ground for paranoia and conspiracy.

**Violet Dennison’s** site-specific commission reveal invisible qualities of the Franklin Street Works’ space, using a radio-wave detector to map out radiation in the upstairs gallery.

In **Harry Dodge and Stanya Kahn's** eerie video *All Together Now* post-apocalyptic is humanized and humorized.

Like ruins in a future museum, **Mark Flood's** collages and paintings of distorted, obliterated, or degraded logos, celebrities, and screen captures suggest a love/hate relationship with omnipresent corporate culture.

In *r/Pizzagate I-V*, digitally produced images by Internet artist **Michael Green** highlight "Pizzagate" for what it was, a remarkable overlapping of paranoia, social media, and violence.

**Juliana Huxtable's** work *War on Proof* touches on how the left and the right are mobilizing the same facts for their own purposes and with varying degrees of success.

In **Son Kit's** *Anthropiscine War Machine 2: North American Front*, the mixed media sculpture hangs at table height from the ceiling and contains a system that makes kimchi, which, because of its richness in probiotics and lengthy shelf-life, is very popular in doomsday focused "prepper" stockpiling.

In **Daniel Keller's** single channel video *Basilisk*, we learn about the "Streisand Effect," in which Barbra Streisand's litigious attempts to have the public image of her estate removed from the Internet had the opposite effect, resulting in a huge amount of public interest.

Three of **Tim Trantenroth's** small, austere paintings of surveillance devices are placed throughout the galleries, including security cameras and drones.

The small, detailed works of self-taught artist **Melvin Way** contain chemical formulas, mathematical equations, and mechanical diagrams as a kind of formal language that suggests an alternative worldview.

#### **ABOUT FRANKLIN STREET WORKS**

Franklin Street Works is a not-for-profit contemporary art space and café whose mission is to manifest contemporary art in a professional and welcoming setting. Franklin Street Works aims to broaden community participation in the arts, contribute to a larger arts dialogue, and cultivate emerging artists. To date, the organization has exhibited the work of more than 300 artists, curated 30 original exhibitions, and organized approximately 150 programs, including talks, tours, and performances. Their work has received national and regional support, including two multi-year grants from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts as well as regional grants from Fairfield County's Community Foundation, Connecticut Office of the Arts, New Canaan

Community Foundation, among others. Exhibitions have been recognized with positive reviews in major publications such as *Artforum* online, *Art in America* (online), *Art Papers*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Huffington Post*, *Hyperallergic*, *Art New England*, and *Modern Painters*.

**GETTING THERE:**

Franklin Street Works is located at 41 Franklin Street in downtown Stamford, Connecticut, near the UCONN campus and less than one hour from New York City via Metro North. Franklin Street Works is approximately one mile (a 15 minute walk) from the Stamford train station. On street parking is available on Franklin Street (metered until 7 pm except on Sunday), and paid parking is available nearby in a lot on Franklin Street and in the Summer Street Garage (100 Summer Street), behind Target. **Hours: Café: Tues-Fri, 10am – 5pm; Sat/Sun, 9am – 5pm. Gallery: Tues – Sun, 12pm – 5pm.**

**ACCESSIBILITY:**

By October 15, 2018, Franklin Street Works will have an ADA compliant ramp that can be accessed from Franklin Street. Once inside there is an elevator and bathrooms are large and clear but do not have access bars. The ramp is currently under construction.

**SPONSORS:**

This exhibition is sponsored in part by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.