

LUHRING AUGUSTINE TRIBECA

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Olivia Erlanger

Spinoff

Luhring Augustine Tribeca

March 21 – April 19, 2025

Opening reception: Friday, March 21, 6-8pm

Luhring Augustine is pleased to announce *Spinoff*, a solo exhibition of new and recent works by **Olivia Erlanger**, on view at our Tribeca location from March 21 through April 19, 2025. In a world that is increasingly constructed, compartmentalized, and mediated, her sculptures appear at once familiar and alien. Utilizing the language of model-making and dioramas, the exhibition shifts between miniature and monstrous, challenging our understanding of what it means to call a planet home.

Before Noah Baumbach's 2005 film The Squid and the Whale ruined the American Museum of Natural History's Hall of Ocean Life display, Sperm Whale and Giant Squid, turning it into an allegory for bad sex and a worse marriage, this diorama was an uncanny locale, not unlike the tomb of two turgid gods. It was frightening to get too close. Extending one's hand toward the unlit figures grappling in their simulacrum of unholy depths revealed that no glass partition separated this world from that of the museum. Your hand might continue to travel, shaking, into the black-violet air. Too far. You could climb right in, if you wanted. Not that you would have. Climbing in there would have been like leaping into that eerie slot glittering between the threshold of an apartment building floor and its elevator, the slit through which, if we squint, we can see into a subterranean infinity we know is just another elevator shaft but looks so much like something else—maybe hell, maybe an alternate dimension. These are the sorts of spaces we either avoid or come close to only to jump back from again, chilled and giddy. Humans seem unable, simultaneously, to build anything without creating more of them.

An architect like Philip Johnson understood this and made a point of foregrounding, even worshipping, horror and danger in his glassy works. Not necessarily a good thing. Although the alternative, lovingly papering-over drops and voids with a floral print interspersed with walnuts and oranges, doesn't seem much better. Where should we store our terror?

Olivia Erlanger has a knack for identifying the way in which something as static as a split-level home or entire subdivision can serve as a mere tarp, a temporary covering that has shape at all only because it is disguising an endlessly capacious and ubiquitous hole. Bits of this hole get, paradoxically, into everything: our food, our cells, our capacities to form relationships. This means that you can have a spell of vertigo looking at an Advil tablet, a panic attack at the existence of your own skin. The miniature is haunted. So is the vast. And it isn't even death that brings about this possession; rather, it is something much harder to track and identify, our utter inability to let go of the idea that we could have been better children.

—Lucy Ives

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Olivia Erlanger (b. 1990, New York) works across sculpture, film, writing, and performance to examine American dreams and delusions. Mining the myth of suburbia affords the artist a focus on the semiotics of the periphery, analyzing its architecture, infrastructures, and ecosystems. Erlanger was awarded the 2024 International Sculpture Prize by Fondazione Henraux and the 2017 BMW Open Work Prize. Selected recent exhibitions include *Pollen* at CAPC – Musée d'art Contemporain de Bordeaux, France (2025); *If Today Were Tomorrow* at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (2024, solo); *Fan Fiction* at Soft Opening, London (2024, solo); *Humour in the Water Coolant* at ICA London (2024, performance); *Appliance* at Kunstverien Gartenhaus, Vienna (2022, solo); *Post Human* at Jeffery Deitch, Los Angeles (2024); *Nonmemory* at Hauser & Wirth, Los Angeles (2023); *Dream Journal* at Company Gallery, New York (2023); *On Failure* at Soft Opening, London (2023); and *Shell* at Del Vaz Projects, Los Angeles (2022). Erlanger is the author of *Appliance* (Wild Seeds, 2022) and the co-author, with architect Luis Ortega Govea, of *Garage* (MIT Press, 2018). Her writing has appeared in publications including *Tank Magazine*, *PIN UP*, *Flash Art*, and *Harvard Design Magazine*. Her work is in the collections of the Dallas Museum of Art; CAPC – Musée d'art Contemporain de Bordeaux, France; KADIST, San Francisco; and X Museum, Shanghai. Erlanger's films have premiered and been screened internationally at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, NW Aalst, ICA London, Kunsthall Charlottenborg, CPH:DOX, and through DIS.art platform.

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