

Welcome Back

Maggi Peyton Gallery

Hosted by the Manhattan Borough President's Office and President Gale Brewer

October 4th to December 6th, 2021

1 Centre St. South Entrance, 19th Floor

New York, NY 10007

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Welcome Back is a group exhibition featuring over thirty artists' responses to the unprecedented COVID-19 Pandemic. Curated by Jean Sonderand for Maggi Peyton Gallery, and hosted by the Manhattan Borough President's Office, the exhibition is an opportunity for artists and the public to come together and consider the variety of public and private experiences we have faced over the last two years. *Welcome Back* is a celebration of our resiliency as a city and culture, and an invitation for New Yorkers to consider how we will grow and adapt as we recover over the years to come.

Each artist in this exhibition had a unique response to the pandemic, but certain themes jump out as we look at the collection as a whole. Some ticked away the time reading the daily updates in the news, with headlines and crosswords marking the uncertain trajectory of an unfolding, global crisis. PPE, consisting of masks, gloves, and medical ephemera, littered our lives and our streets, accumulating physically as well as symbolically. With the world cut off, the familiar shape of our homes was radically transformed. Our bedrooms and offices became safe havens in which entire lives were carried out, while a view out of a window became a portal to an unfamiliar world of vacant streets. Meanwhile, our obsession with sanitation led others to re-investigate the meaning of touch and contact, especially when physical closeness could spell a death sentence for those we cherished. Scarcity, uncertainty, and boredom drove us nearly mad, but the same forces inspired many to re-envision our lives, our communities, and our aspirations.

Welcome Back is a reflection of how our sensibilities have changed and adapted to this 'new normal', and an invitation to embrace these experiences as they guide the trajectory of our recovery, in New York and beyond.

The opening reception for *Welcome Back* will be held on Monday, October 4th, 5-7pm, at Maggi Peyton Gallery inside the Manhattan Borough President's Office at 1 Centre St. South Entrance, 19th Floor, New York, NY. The gallery is open to the public weekdays from 10am to 5pm.