

Daniel Wiener: *Wide-Eyed and Open-Mouthed*
September 4 – October 20, 2019
Opening Reception: Wednesday, September 4, 6–8pm
Artist Talk: Saturday, October 12, 2:30pm

“While the faces I’ve made are far from traditional, they possess a directness that my previous, faceless work does not. They can be as monstrous as they can be beautiful. My hope is that they expose and obscure emotion; often at the very same time.”

Lesley Heller is pleased to present *Wide-Eyed and Open-Mouthed*, an exhibition of wall-mounted sculptural work by Daniel Wiener exploring the mask and face as motif. Widely recognized for his long career of abstract and often freestanding sculptures, Wiener has pivoted with this body of work to focus more on two-dimensional wall mounted Apoxie-Sculpt works using a process he developed while in the Workspace Program Residency at Dieu Donné in 2017. This will be Wiener’s fourth solo exhibition with the gallery.

Far from traditional representation, Daniel Wiener’s new work distorts and expands the mask/face to live on the edge of abstraction, preserving just enough to maintain a hint of recognition.

There is a configuration of shapes in a face that does not have to be figured out; the structure is intrinsically understood. Eyes, nose, mouth; so long as these combinations are somehow present, it will always be read as a face. This set structure allows Wiener to focus on invention within a set of parameters, a process in contrast to his previous body of entirely abstract sculptures.

Wiener pushes twisted pigmented strands of Apoxie-Sculpt, into rubber molds he takes from his initial sculpted clay bas-reliefs. This process also allows for Wiener to work with both the ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ sides of the mold, enabling him to reproduce his abstracted faces with almost endless variations—often resulting in pairings where the face in one work is directly mirrored (but flipped) in another.

Each work is ultimately a product entirely of Wiener’s imagination. His imagery is at times bizarre and outlandish, and dips into the psyche. Some of the faces are clearly faces, some are almost faces, and some are barely faces. But, all of them are not *really* faces—each element of the face is something else, not really a depiction but shapes pieced together in the making of a wonderful fiction.

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Daniel Wiener (b. 1954, Cambridge, MA) grew up in Los Angeles and studied at the University of California at Berkley before moving to New York in the early 1980s. He is a graduate of the Whitney Museum’s Independent Study Program. Awards and fellowship include a Guggenheim Fellowship (2012), Residence at Yaddo, an Alpert Award Ucross Residency, a Tree of Life Grant and he is a Dieu Donne Workspace Artist.

Wiener’s work has been exhibited nationally and internationally in both group and solo exhibitions, notably at Holly Solomon Gallery, New York; Angels Gallery, Los Angeles; Bravin Post Lee Gallery, New York; Acme Gallery, Los Angeles; Vadstrup & Bie, Copenhagen, Denmark; Barbara Farber, Amsterdam, Holland; The McKinney Avenue Contemporary, Dallas, Texas; and at the Stephen Wirtz Gallery in San Francisco. Recent exhibitions include at Studio 10 in Brooklyn, New York; Lesley Heller Gallery, New York; Pocket Utopia, New York. Wiener’s work has been reviewed in *Sculpture Magazine*, *Art in America* and by Roberta Smith in the *New York Times*. Daniel Wiener lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.