For Immediate Release

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VARIOUS FLOWERS

*September 14-October 6, 2023*

Hirschl & Adler Modern, in collaboration with Lighthouse Works, presents VARIOUS FLOWERS an exhibition of paintings, sculptures, mixed-media, and photography by sixteen recent alumni of the Lighthouse Works Fellowship Program whose work meditates on the enduring poetics of the flower as a means to access the complexities within the culture of our time. These artists make use of the persistent floral motif to take on a diverse array of forms, media, and meanings—delving into contemporary issues of representation, identity, the climate crisis, and the power of art and language to reshape our perception of the world.

The exhibition celebrates alumni of the Lighthouse Works Fellowship Program, founded in 2012 and based on Fishers Island, New York. It will present paintings by Joeun Kim Aatchim, Evan Halter, Gretta Johnson, Paul Wackers and David Whelan, photography, prints, and mixed-media work by Merik Goma, Rachel Granofsky, Erin Johnson, Antone Könst, Andrea McGinty, Helina Metaferia, and Arden Surdam, sculptures by Ryan Michael Flores and Leah Guadagnoli, and poems by Carlina Duan and Simone Kearney.

The title of the exhibition derives from a poem by Joeun Kim Aatchim, one of the featured artists, who is also a poet:

*giving various flowers*

*to various people*

*seeing them walk away*

*with various reasons*

- joeun kim aatchim

Following a heightened awareness of the human role in shaping our natural environment, there has been a resurgence of nature motifs in contemporary art practice. We are seeing a renewed interest in such traditions as plein-air painting, memento mori, and the production of still lifes. And yet, interest in the floral has always been there—first as background, then as symbols, then as subjects. Some of the earliest known flower paintings and sculptures date back to ancient Egyptian and Greek times, where they adorned tombs, frescoes, jewelry, and vases. The Middle Ages saw flowers depicted in religious art, symbolizing purity and devotion, or the unspoiled nature of a prelapsarian era. Flowers are frequently treated as stand-ins for more complex states—as metaphors for fertility, death, mental illness, rebirth—that we have come to take flowers in art and writing as representative of something more than a flower. The French symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé speculated that the poet’s “flower” is an invocation of the ideal form of the flower, rather than a specific one. The poet creates the flower by writing it, but it is not the flower you see. As such, a flower depicted in art becomes a stand-in for all flowers.

As Lighthouse Works Program Director, Dylan Gauthier, writes “drawing on an array of artists who have been supported by the Lighthouse Works fellowship program, the exhibition presents not an encyclopedic approach but rather a variety of approaches: a variety of flowers, made by a number of artists who have inspired us with their work since we first had the privilege of meeting them on Fishers Island where the fellowship program is based. Some of the pieces in the show directly reference Lighthouse Works’ gardens, or the wildflowers in the fields around Fishers, located in Long Island Sound.”

The exhibition is organized by Dylan Gauthier, an interdisciplinary artist and curator whose work is focused on the intersections between culture, nature, ecology, and the built environment. Lighthouse Works supports artists, writers, choreographers, and composers and provides them with a unique and supportive context within which to focus on their work. Lighthouse Works runs five fellowship sessions per year, supporting 25 fellows.

***Various Flowers*** opens at Hirschl & Adler Modern on Thursday, September 14 and runs through Friday, October 6, 2023. Located on the 9th floor of the Fuller Building, at the corner of 57th Street and Madison Avenue, Hirschl & Adler Modern is open Monday through Friday, from 9:30 am to 5:00 pm through September 25, after which we return to regular hours of 9:30 am to 5:30 pm.

For additional information or images, contact Tom Parker, Director, or Shelley Farmer, Director, at 212-535-8810 (phone) / 212-772-7237 (fax), or by email at [tomp@HirschlAndAdler.com](mailto:tomp@HirschlAndAdler.com) or shelleyf@HirschlAndAdler.com. Please visit our website at www.HirschlAndAdler.com for an online preview of the exhibition.