



frosch&portmann is pleased to present *Cosmicomics*, a group exhibition curated by Vicki Sher.

*“Naturally, we were all there, - old Qfwfq said, - where else could we have been? Nobody knew then that there could be space. Or time either: what use did we have for time, packed in there like sardines?”*

— Italo Calvino, *Cosmicomics*

In Italo Calvino’s collection of short stories, *Cosmicomics*, interstellar particles meet, fall in love, part ways, reunite, argue, pine for one another, and search for meaning, all while travelling through space and years of galactic evolution.

Characters navigate the changing universe, moving through primordial gases and celestial ooze, clinging to rock formations that hurtle through the atmosphere at the speed of light. Calvino’s creatures contemplate their morphing world, lament their own insignificance, and rank love among the galaxy’s finest treasures.

The artists in this show are not particularly interested in science, science fiction, or astronomy—or maybe they are, it was never discussed, but they have been chosen for a common sensibility. Their work shares an interest in human emotion, otherworldly beauty, and a sense of humor. Calvino’s voice, candid and humble, sentimental and romantic, playful and funny, is alive in these drawings, paintings and sculpture that use concrete experience as a jumping-off point for amused imaginative play.

**Katherine Bradford** likes Superman because he can fly, wears bright colors and comes from the realm of the supernatural. Her Superman is earnest yet goofy, pointing towards the transcendent. Here, Bradford’s *Pink and Black Superhero* fills in to do his best.

In **David Finn**’s *Weight*, on Tyvek, smaller shapes pull at the larger central forms bringing a family of bodies into focus. Even as it is clearly figurative, it is more alien than human, playfully suggesting that the pull of family connections is universal.

**Grant Huang**’s unpretentious marker drawings tell stories- of companionship, sentimentality, death, astronomical phenomena, and the dispassionate cruelty of nature. They are both serious and sophomoric as they simultaneously exalt and poke fun at the cosmos.

**Jay Henderson's** *Moon* hovers over the show with an amusing awareness of its own fakery. The large flat disc, oozing metallic paint and spinning is both like and unlike any actual moon. His *Roof* sculpture has landed improbably in the middle of the gallery, an emissary from an unimaginable world.

**Sasha Pichushkin's** work is abstract, but it nudges us gently into a private world of natural forces, cryptic language and universal beauty.

**Ellen Siebers'** quiet paintings take the visible world and turn it inside out, strip it bare, mine it for meaning. The choices are strange and perfect, and while recognizably of this world, they offer a parallel narrative, placing us in the role of newcomers in an unusual, alternate world.

In **Vicki Sher's** drawings, shapes and lines float in airy space, relying on balance and gravity to hold them together.

**Daniel Wiener's** *Faces* are at once monstrous and beautiful, foreign and familiar. They evoke aliens and weird extraterrestrial terrains whose grotesque, oozy swirly shapes in whimsical color invite exploration.

**Ye Qin Zhu's** small wax sculptures demonstrate a constant delight in the ordinary. Every herb, fruit fly, and piece of studio dust can be dipped in wax and/or rolled into orbs of recorded experience, displayed in the gallery like objects gathered on extraordinary journeys.