

REVIEW: *Massachusetts*

SARAH MEYERS BRENT: OUT GROWTH

Art Complex Museum • Duxbury, MA • artcomplex.org • Through November 27, 2022

Walking into the Art Complex Museum, one is presented with the wide arc of an intriguing and thought provoking exhibit by Sarah Meyers Brent. Brent's work with found materials entices the viewer's eye and interest, and takes us on a multi-layered journey.

A major painting, *Beyond the Rainbow II*, is a key to the sculptural work. Lyrical shapes of flowers merge and spread across the canvas with appendages reaching out from the core. Brent is a painter who began collaging onto canvas, and eventually moved into sculptural installations, using the same compositional mode.

Curious Cultivations, a ten-foot high assemblage, flowing from atop a protruding wall conceived by curator Craig Bloodgood, incorporates shoes, a paintbrush, toy turtle, nerf football, a wrench, and a fanciful lace bra. *Out Growth* sports a black top hat and Mardi-gras mask, along with assorted objects that extend its edges. The empty eyes of the mask seem to ask what are we looking at, who is looking?

It is easy to be fascinated by Brent's surreal combinations with titles like *Hot Mama II* and *Birdsong II*, before understanding the underlying import of the constant balancing act of being a mother of two boys (during COVID), wife, artist, and environmental activist. Many of the objects come from her own household, others from the swap shop in her town where she volunteers, as an effort to keep objects out of landfill.

In *White Horse 22*, Brent paints everything white, combining a toy machine gun with a teddy bear, megaphone, deer antlers, and an old sneaker—evoking the tragedy of school shoot-



Sarah Meyers Brent, *Out Growth*, 2022, repurposed items and mixed media on wood, 55 x 68". Courtesy of Chase Young Gallery.

ings. An empty jar acts as an open eye into the interior, asking us to look deeper.

Brent is courageous in her willingness to look at motherhood, sexuality, media barrage, chaotic environmental issues, and transforms these concerns into passionate, poetic pieces in an attempt to find balance in an overwhelming world. She is not will-

ing to give up anything that truly matters to her, and the resultant work is evocative, and seductive in its collection of the bits of our lives that we often mindlessly cast aside. She is an artist to watch and learn from.

— **B. Amore**