

pearl press



# ISSUE NO. 14: SELF-PORTRAIT 1

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This issue of Pearl Press features work from:

Victor Isaac Alvarez

Daniel Terna

Patrick Carew

Ellie Musgrave

Jan Watten

Chitose Kuroishi

Ildikó Kó pé

Chris Maliga

Isabelle Baldwin

Julia Sara Noëlle

Elida Silvey

Alborz Kamalizad

Kellen Parham

Javier E. Piñero

Delilah Twersky

Darius Phelps

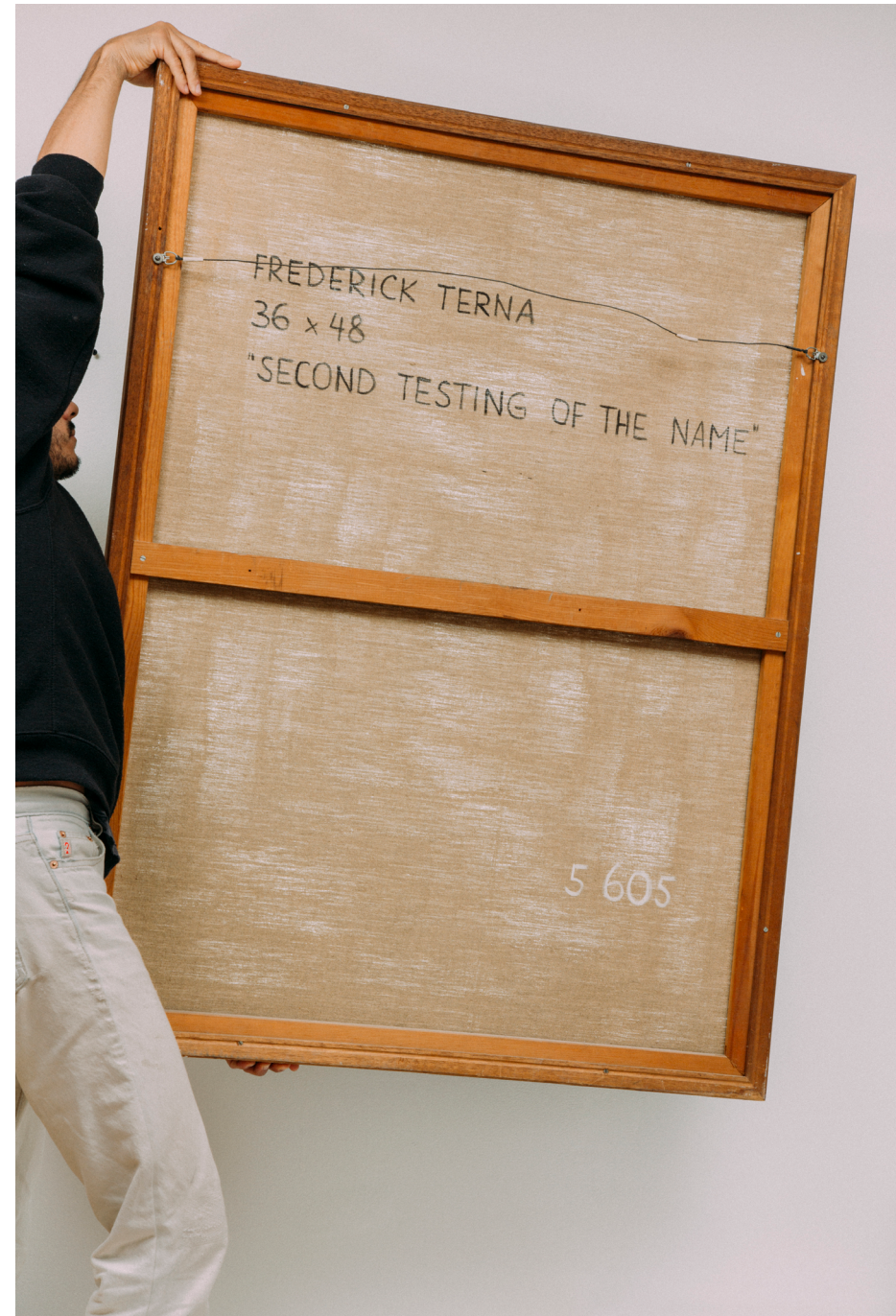
Taj Reed

Cover image: Delilah Twersky

Curated by: Delilah Twersky



Bloody Nose, 2017: Victor Isaac Alvarez



Isaac & Abraham, 2022: Daniel Terna



Isaac & Abraham, 2022: Daniel Terna



Self Baptism: Patrick Carew

## POUGHKEEPSIE

beyond the pastel  
smoothlooming sky

you appear incan-  
descent along

the furthest trees  
as a slice of gold

I am barreling at  
a predetermined

speed and you are  
tomorrow the scythe

Ellie Musgrave

## A LONG WAY (TO THE TOP)

easier to hold

the specter of a red

sugar maple

set aflame than to

forgetting myself, admit I have been

voice I can return to forgoing the one

weakly, I bring up

what the prophets

used to say in

regard to rock music

kidding. my guy at the

but who am I

I got rid of my tattoo

hardware store thinks

maybe that is the ask:

yourself be under the

who would you let

stark martian stars?

Ellie Musgrave



Self Portrait, Ford Street 1983: Jan Watten



Self Portrait at 22: Jan Watten







My Phantom: Chitose Kuroishi



Cacoon: Ildikó Kópé



Butterfly: Ildikó Kópé



Imago: Ildikó Kópé



Clutch: Chris Maliga

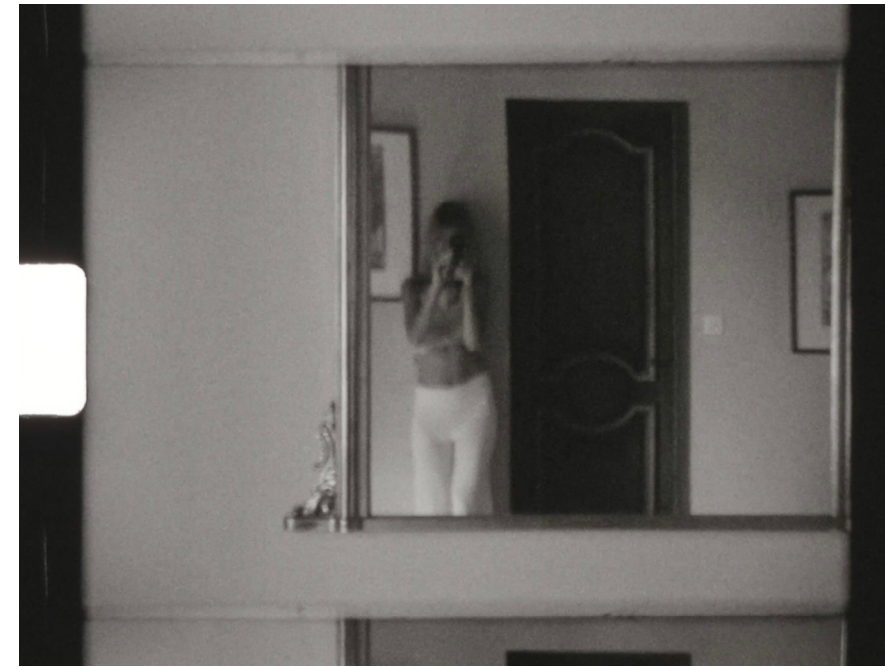
## I KEEP HEARING (4/8)

that which others find sad and heart-breaking are the things I feel the most love in  
Say Yes and Romeo and Juliet are sad songs  
and they line this bachelorette catacomb  
once I figure out what, among all the old  
books, is making my room smell like an  
old bookstore, it's over for us bitches

I keep hearing “you got out with your life”  
what I got out with was a few pots of  
Target-shelf luxuries and a bag of chips  
a stack of library books that mock me  
from the shelf at the end of my bed  
and, blessedly, a glimpse at the wide sky  
on my skipstop commute back home

Ellie Musgrave





Self portraits in France, 2022: Julia Sara Noëlle

# PARTY ON, GARTH!

The beginning of my renaissance  
is paved with pebbles, pickpocket stones

PARTY on!  
perpetual immigrant-kid--

I tell myself in the mirror  
that they're all in on the joke

as they laugh out loud  
corn husks, stripping  
in front of  
my eyes

leaving stringy bits on the ground  
like the remains of  
a GOOD haircut.

i smile, pretending to know  
how one thing blossoms into another

roses blooming in recession  
transforming right before my eyes  
into the tight coiled curls, of lavender  
sprigs

somehow  
IN someway, strung together  
by an invisible thread

Is my shirt the wrong shade of red?  
i tug on it at least ten times before  
walking out the door, completely  
UNSURE  
of the recipe

My shoes, are they too worn down?  
not enough?  
blindfolded, i tiptoe on this tightrope  
searching for THAT quintessential cool

or is it,  
my smile?  
too open? or my eyes, too honest?  
what gives me away?

I wipe the hazy fog from the medicine cabinet, in an attempt  
to erase--

as a way to be seen.

Elida Silvey



Self portraits in France, 2022: Julia Sara Noëlle





I Wish I Could Take You With Me: Alborz Kamalizad



Narcissus: Chris Maliga



Drowned Man II: Patrick Carew



Self Portrait with Mom: Patrick Carew

# MAJESTIC

Beard the color of charcoal  
That has been under fire  
For too long  
And not long enough

A monochromatic quilt  
Of scruff nestled youthfulness  
Blanketing a smile  
Buoyant by 38 years of laughter  
Because every thought is humorous  
Even when they shouldn't be

Born endangered  
He's an eagle's single eye  
Soaring high  
Squinting to get its focus  
After seeing something funny  
Off in the sunny distance  
Of his stretch of the woods -- the ghetto

Where only the most brutal hunters compete  
Over colored feathers -- the gangs  
Clashing against the palette's authority -- the police

Yet he remains majestic  
Tranquil, regal  
And resolved  
For all the world  
To see

Kellen Parham



Me, Bedroom, 2020: Isabelle Baldwin



La Jaula: Javier E. Piñero



La Jaula: Javier E. Piñero



La Jaula: Javier E. Piñero



# SUITS AND SCREWDRIERS

I put my best suit on,  
the one with the lapels that stick out like YSL  
suits in the 70s used to

pretend to be Willie Dynamite, if  
he were Mexican that is  
float down the steps with my fur  
coat

bellowing like a bull.

I order a martini, hold the olive  
or a vodka screwdriver  
in morning

pretend to enjoy it  
as it drips down, like the taste of a night  
gone-on for too long

I let it puncture a hole  
in my stomach  
like a hole-punch indicating  
where something should go

I let viper-venom words stain my teeth  
yellow

forget to brush my hair  
forget to take out the trash  
forget to call  
my mom

Most importantly, I pretend that somehow -  
suits and screwdrivers  
fix those little niggling things

inside.

Elida Silvey



Self-Portrait with Greenwood Lake: Delilah Twersky

# REBUILDING MY TEMPLE

Empower my body, yet shatter my soul  
For the soil holding my entangled roots are rotten to the fucking core.  
I feel..that always this skin that we've bathed in sin, must be peeled away  
to see what is left of my pores.  
You look at me with pure pleasure, one that man can ever truly measure.  
But...they whisper in my ear, stay with this pain.  
You'll never have anything else worthy of your time,  
the pinnacle of this everlasting pain for in the end, we are all the same.  
Empower my body, yet shatter my soul

With these trembling hands, I cannot turn back time.  
Just pour this refilling glass of wine, wishing this body wasn't mine.  
What is a self portrait that you can't stand?  
What is a body that no longer belongs to man?  
Depression has a hold of my veins,  
pulling my body by the reins.  
All I know is pain.  
Empower my body, yet shatter my soul

Even out of ruins, beauty can be reborn.  
Too long have I spent time searching for a place to call my own, a place to home.  
When in reality, it resided inside of me.  
I know there is something bigger and better out there for me.  
The world at my head, the sky at my feet.  
I no longer walk with my soul in defeat.  
Self love as my self portrait, this is what truly makes me whole.  
Empower my body, yet shatter my soul

My insecurities ring loud, but I am proud.  
Proud of where I am, for here I stand.  
Rebuilding my temple, in return, wasn't that simple  
But I want to spend the rest of my life learning...  
how to properly worship this gift in stride,  
Rebuilding my temple, brick by brick.  
It's time I empower my body, and restore my soul.  
Self love as my self portrait.  
This is what truly makes me whole.



10 years since, or a portrait of Pop and me: Taj Reed

Thank you for reading.  
For more updates check @pearl.press on Instagram.

[www.pearl-press.com](http://www.pearl-press.com)

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Pearl Press  
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