

In Stitches

Peter Frederiksen

November 7 - December 26, 2020

Galleri Urbane is pleased to introduce Chicago-based artist Peter Frederiksen in his first solo exhibition in Dallas, featuring new embroidered works on linen. With more than a decade of working in the medium, the artist's current compositions are embedded with imagery from the golden age of American cartoon animation. Alluring in their warm familiarity, the works maintain darker notes that point toward an underlying sense of fear.

The popularization of sound animation in the early 20th century ushered in an era of now-classic cartoons that includes Warner Bros.' *Looney Tunes*. Frederiksen's embroideries reference the iconic post-war period of these animations, instantly recognizable for its stylized characters, stunning spectrum of colors, and hand-painted backgrounds. His compositions are configured following hours of research and image collecting, ultimately landing on cropped still frames that invoke cartoons experiencing impending doom or the consequences of actions poorly-considered. In *Never saw it coming* (2020), a shadow depicts the silhouette of a clawed paw reaching for a caged bird; in another work a pair of cartoon hands unfolds a letter that simply reads "What have I done?" Frederiksen leaves viewers to speculate what came before the scene and what will happen after, reinforcing the latent fears and anxieties that are woven in each image.

In contrast to these scenes of despair, each work is vividly crafted to capture the era's unmistakable aesthetic qualities. Pen and brush are traded for needle and thread in Frederiksen's works, rendering each image through precise stitch work on a specially configured sewing machine. The works draw viewers in through their familiar forms, expertly rendered through a skilled use of color. The artist stays true to the cartoons' mid-century palate and aptly captures gradients that resonate with this classic form of animation. The humor associated with these colors and forms ultimately imbue a duality in the work between its light-hearted facade and more ominous subject matter. In *It's exactly as bad as you think* (2020), for example, viewers confront both comedy and tragedy in the aftermath of a character that has been forcefully ejected from view, leaving behind a cartoon-shaped void in the tattered wall it burst through.

Shakespeare coined the term *in stitches* in the early 17th century to describe an uncontrollable laughter to the point of pain. The work in this exhibition takes on a similar paradox by portraying a range of unfortunate events in a manner that still manages to provoke gratifying pleasure.

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Peter Frederiksen lives and works in Chicago. Born in 1987, he attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, focusing studies on painting, drawing, and fibers. His work has been exhibited extensively in Chicago, in group exhibitions with Galleri Urbane, and most recently in London.