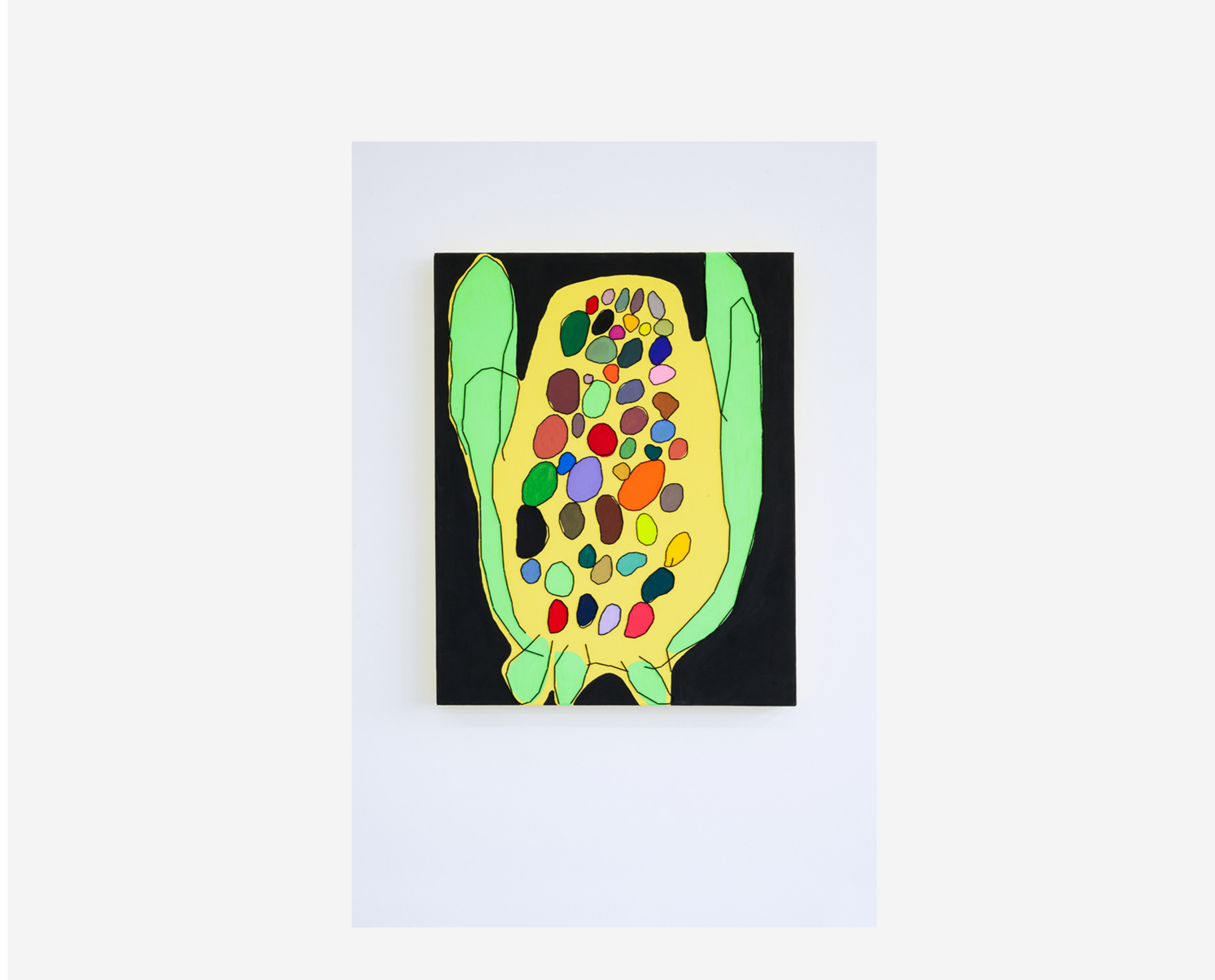


REVIEW: Tutti Frutti - A Solo Show by Caroline Wells Chandler @ Mrs. Gallery

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the world around them. That lack of inhibition and free-flowing creativity is incredibly alluring for artists and in an attempt to recreate, many artists are making space for enjoyable experimentation and exploration. In contemporary painting, naive figurative style is having a moment, artists like [Misaki Kawai](#) and [Austin Lee](#) and have found success in their respective styles and audiences and collectors alike are taking notice.



Queens-based artist [Caroline Wells Chandler](#) has decidedly created that space for himself in his new solo presentation of works at [Mrs. Gallery](#). The artist studied the drawings of young children and collaborated with his own students at Norwalk Community College, creating a new body of work that is collaborative, unconventional and incredibly playful. Known primarily for his genderless, crocheted forms, Chandler continues to make work that is free from gender constructs. Titled *Tutti Frutti*, the show is comprised of Chandler's new 'sewn-drawings' which incorporate fiber as well as paint. Each composition is outlined with fine pipe-cleaner material, from there, vivid colorful paint fills in the rest, resulting in graphic, simplified forms that resonate off the wall.



Tutti Frutti draws upon the imagery of the artist's own Rolodex of experiences and inspirations. Subjects vary from queer icon Gertrude Stein to jolly old Santa. In one piece, iconic 90's cartoon characters Beavis and Butthead share their love for one another. Moving along the wall, Chandler has rendered the infamous Mona Lisa with huge, caricatured eyes and an unsure smirk, recreating her in the artist's naive style. The artist states "I see these drawings as a way to build a lexicon of new and recurring symbols that I have and will continue to explore in my work."



In addition to his 'sewn-drawings,' Chandler has presented three new "cake fail" sculptures. The blob-ly, handmade 'cakes' are constructed from foam, paint, fruit magnets, resin, and polymer clay, giving them a realistic edible effect. According to the gallery, "Chandler's interest in cake fails stemmed from finding the perfect cake to wish his friends a happy birthday on social media. These trompe l'oeil reliefs feature *Snooki of Willendorf*, *Todd* a nod to *The Dude Abides* by [Todd Bienvenu](#), and *Midnight Snack* which suggests Bert presenting himself to Ernie, as the only cookie he is allowed to eat in bed."



Chandler also collaborated with his 2018 Drawing I class to create a series of drawings for the exhibit. According to the artist, "collaborative image making is the antidote to the toxicity of the singular heroic voice. I see it as being political, in that it takes a collective chance, that is inclusive," explains the artist. The collaborative drawings in this presentation were made with Brandi Twilley, Geoffrey Chadsey, Lizzie Bonaventura, David Humphrey, Nick Wilkinson, Indie Wilkinson, Maria Calandra, Bill Chandler (Father), Eloise Chandler (Mother), and Patsy Martin (Sister). "When you draw well with others, you learn how to harmonize, listen, give and compromise to work towards a common vision."



Tutti Frutti is a joyous, sincere view into a world free from heteronormativity, free from the binary and free from black and white. Chandler has, in my eyes, created a radical body of work that has clearly come from a place of creative innocence and unrestrained momentum. Check out *Tutti Frutti* at Mrs. before it closes June 1st

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