

Matt Siren's First Solo Exhibition at Woodward Gallery Explores His Creative Evolution

Exhibition Reviews



October 3, 2022

Eli Anapur

Piercing, high-contrast artworks have been the staple of Matt Siren's practice, who has been bringing his artworks from the streets of New York City to the walls of Woodward Gallery for over a decade. This October, for the first time in the artist's career, a solo exhibition of his **urban works** has been staged at the gallery, showing the collection of his widely famous characters and charting his creative evolution.

Under the title *Matt Siren: Thriller*, the exhibition brings together some of his most iconic works, including Siren's famous *Ghost Girl*.



Left: Matt Siren - 5 Cent Boogie Man, 2022 / Right: Matt Siren - Death Mask, I Am Riding You, 2008

Artworks that Thrill

Thriller, as the name suggests, focuses on the artist's famous and widely recognized works that stir up the imagination, seduce, and thrill, including vintage screenprints on metal signs and hand-painted wood-block assemblages. The show sends the viewers on an exciting ride to the past, present, and the future of storytelling unique to Siren, transcending divisions between **the street and fine art**.

Ghost Girl is a work from 2008 that has been widely present on urban walls and which the artist turned into a set of vinyl toy collectibles. The hard-edge female icon with dark hair pulled to the side by a flower aesthetically reflects Siren's penchant for gaming and his nostalgia for the arcade game *Ms. Pac-Man*.

The figure is set in a variety of colors and, with its direct gaze, hypnotizes the viewers to follow her. Although her facial features are distinct, she could be anyone, regardless of background, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or race. It encapsulates a strong and striking spirit that encompasses all women.



Left: Matt Siren - Mistress, 2010 / Right: Matt Siren - Burlesque Striptease, 2008

Siren's Characters

Among other characters Matt Siren developed over the years are also *Death Face*, *Pin-ups*, and *Skull*. *Death Face* has evolved from a character called Quintesson from 1980s *The Transformers* cartoon, which appears in a particularly dark season of the show.

Vintage *Pin-ups* reflect the artist's appreciation of the female form. They are not intended to objectify the female form but to emphasize women's power through sexuality. For example, in the series *Burlesque in the Living Room*, Siren teases viewers to engage with the representations, inverting the commercial dialogue so that the female characters may utilize their sexuality to regain control over the male gaze.

The *Skull* image embodies a belligerent spirit that goes into a battle. It also represents a sense of condemnation and warns of impending death. However, instead of being a prefiguration of existential doom, Skulls are comical and ironic manifestations of grave caution, where death could also be understood as the end of an era.



Matt Siren - Wasabassco presents Burlesque in the Living Room, 2008

Thriller at Woodward Gallery

The exhibition *Matt Siren: Thriller* will be on view at [Woodward Gallery](#) in New York City throughout October. The works are exhibited on the gallery's street-level windows 24/7 and can also be seen via an [online exhibition on Artsy](#).

A full-color digital catalog is available on the gallery's website. The *Ghost Girl* and *Burlesque in the Living Room* limited edition prints are available at Woodward Gallery, on a first-come-first-serve basis, for the duration of the exhibition.

Featured image: Matt Siren - Burlesque Striptease, 2008, detail

Follow These Artists

Matt Siren

FOLLOW

Follow These Galleries

Woodward Gallery

New York City, United States Of America

FOLLOW