

SPANTZO

FRIENDS OF DOROTHY, a group exhibition curated by Nathaniel Garcia

March 20 - April 11, 2021

138 Eldridge Street

New York, New York 10002

Gallery Hours: Tuesday-Sunday, 12-6 pm.

The euphemism “Friend of Dorothy” was a coded way of referring to an LGBTQ person in an antiquated and hostile time. The term is thought to come from the character of Dorothy from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) who, along with the actress who played her, have long been resonant icons for the queer community. Perhaps this stems from the character's resistance to conform to the world around her, as well as the way she, and her cadre of outcasts, find the support they need to actualize their diverse aspirations. It follows that the tale of *The Wizard of Oz* can be seen as a queer journey in which Dorothy is transported from her rigid small town to a Technicolor dreamland where her norms are shattered and the illusory nature of authority is revealed.

The organizing theme of *Friends of Dorothy*, SPANTZO's inaugural exhibition, is the use of collage to construct desire. The juxtaposition of unlikely elements and materials (popular culture, pornographic magazines, anime, found materials, show tunes, digital prints, and other ephemera) cathartically transforms the intangibility of joy and desire into tangible objects to be encountered and enjoyed.

The nine artists in this show (*Logan Benedict, Jose-Paul Perez-Condor, Kristen Heritage, Judy Giera, Mohamed Khalil, Elizabeth Riley, Liberty Antonia Sadler, Derick Decario Ladale Whitson, Zyra West*) present expressions of sexuality, fantasy, reverie, and desire by constructing and opposing norms. In *Friends of Dorothy*, desire is created by revisiting, altering, or perverting icons and elements of the past and infusing them with flamboyance, curiosity and joy.

Friends of Dorothy seeks to answer what it means to honor desire as these nine artists explore strategies of existing in a hostile world. SPANTZO hopes to present these works as celebratory gestures that recognize the importance of frivolity and play in a reemerging New York City.