

Anti-Alter Ego Brontez Purnell

June 8 - July 8, 2023

168 Suffolk St.
New York, NY 10002
www.trotterandsholer.com

Tuesday to Saturday: 12:00 - 6:00pm



Trotter&Sholer is pleased to present *Anti-Alter Ego*, a solo exhibition by **Brontez Purnell**.

Anti-Alter Ego is an exploration of the performance of self. Purnell's work prioritizes the para-fictional aspect of persona and artifice. As a writer, Purnell is constantly faced with questions about how much of his work is "actually true." Purnell's written work often explores themes of queerness and identity through fearless and uncensored language and provocative story-telling. That his audiences desire to equate him with the characters he writes is a symptom of our need to cast people in certain roles, and conversely our experiences of performing self.

Anti-Alter Ego presents a series of xerox artworks, photographs, and paintings that use text intervention to play with the idea of the truth. The text itself represents truth, but as words and phrases are strung together that truth becomes obscured. The content of text is always para fictional. Using dated xerox technology and contemporary photographs, Purnell is connecting our contemporary anxieties to our pasts. The construction of self is connected with the telling of our histories, and our performance of it is intimately tied to the para-fictions we tell ourselves about our life experiences.

We often think of the Other as the impositions placed on one from an outside source. Purnell's work also explores the ways in which we pre-emptively perform the identity we anticipate that others will foist upon us. Purnell's works question who are performances are for and tries to detangle the ways in which we strive to play the part that we believe we have been cast in.

Anti-Alter Ego celebrates Purnell's punk, anti-establishment ethos. Purnell knows what is expected, he is provocative, he is edgy, he is alternative, and he has a solo show in at New York City gallery. It is up to the viewer to discern where the truth lies in the work and in the presentation.

"I had begun this show in grad school as a way of examining the ways in which "persona" is both a way of navigating one's own reality with a certain armor- whilst also honoring the negative inverse of our own personas always very much being weaponized against us. I was a theater major and was taught (in a "theater marketing" class no less- lol) that "public image is NOT what one thinks of oneself but on the contrary what OTHERS think of you". Who (or WHAT) do we become, if our hard earned self-identity is demoted to fiction? In my life as a writer I am constantly met with the question "how much of this is true"- a question that is so unanswerable I sometimes pause at the gall of the inquiry- furthermore to what end does the answer aide us? If I call it memoir I am indicting myself (even though, stated bluntly all memoir is essentially, fiction - but that's another convo all together) OR if it is fiction then I am rendered a pathological liar who has no life experience and I just "make shit up". I wanted to define a place where the truth within fiction lives- I called it (for lack of a better term?) the "anti-alter ego"- this way in which we are always having to become something beyond ourselves or keeping things about ourselves shadowed- sometimes all at the same time. We are all rendered actors the second a camera is placed in front of us and the anti- alter ego is the showcasing of the negative stills of our image in reverse."

Anti-Alter Ego will be on view at 168 Suffolk Street through July 8th.

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