

**Baige K. B.**  
**"laugh(RIOT)"**

January 6–31, 2022

At the heart of this project is the reworking of an adhesive digital print on vinyl—itself an iteration of an earlier, site-specific installation on Canal Street at Elizabeth Street in March 2020, and subsequently installed from January 6 to the 14th last year on a street-facing window of the Canal Street Research Association's first space on Canal between Greene and Mercer Streets—titled *13-0647 Illuminating Free Fall Savings and Loans (re)Build Edition*. Here, it is winged by two drawings made over the course of last year for something of a triptych. Along with a fröggie, swimming in its own...well, who's to say? Another component of both the aforementioned CSRA and 2020 installations, a flock of eagles flying to the left, is currently on view as part of the CSRA installation in "Greater New York" at MoMA PS1, following an invitation to contribute from the poetic research and archival unit Shanzhai Lyric. All the works in this show upstairs are titled after and/or incorporate some variation on the Pantone colors of the year for 2021, namely their swatch code 13-0647 "Illuminating" yellow. Such a color was, coincidentally, not far off from the hue of the Gadsden flag, commonly referred to as the "Don't Tread on Me" flag, which could be spotted in the crowd at the January 6, 2021 riots at the capitol in Washington, D.C.

The phrase I was initially drawn to titling this work after was "Free Fall Savings and Loans." We turn now to this breaking story...Free Fall Savings and Loans has suffered a calamitous fire, but what is the source of it, and why does it, what's the word, burn? The heat is so strong that its skin, not unlike a snake's, is starting to turn into crinkled sheets. Reminds me of a gecko trying to pull off its own hide, or a shaggy dog chasing its own tale...wait, stop, I'm off track here. Let me start again, with some facts: The crane is being developed as we speak by the U.S. Department of Defense division D.A.R.P.A. for its next military plane model, and I am just fabricating my own model with a different level of means, decoupageing in intense anticipation of the crane that was meant to carry souls to heaven becoming the fighter that might bomb one out of existence. Do I project? America, German kindergartens, an association of East Asian tradition—I aim for three in one. And I remember thinking, "Let's

have the cherry blossoms, more than a hundred, bloom for that." Does it matter if they're real but look dead, or fake and yet so lively? And the eagle cries, quoth, "Evermore." (re)Build Back Better, and let me in your window—it's me, Kath(erine). Footfalls echo in the memory. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

Think of how ancient artifacts usually carry some damage—that's, like, how you know they're authentic. Or, disrepair reads as accurate, if not totally honest about how it got that way. A tradition spanning Egyptian hieroglyphs to distressed denim. In an excerpt from the late Italian writer and philosopher Umberto Eco's *On the Shoulders of Giants*, translated into English in 2019, he noted that a work "becomes a cult object because it is fundamentally, radically ramshackle...It should show not one central idea, but many. It should not reveal a coherent 'philosophy of composition,' but it should live on, and by virtue of, its magnificent instability." Many stories in one? Or maybe it will be facts way overpackaged in fantastical illusions and allusions, like a conspiracy—oral history's unstable, unloveable sibling. In conclusion, the leftist Italian collective Wu Ming, a pseudonym translating to "anonymous" or "no name," was formed in 2000 as an outgrowth of Luther Blissett, a pen name for the same circle of coauthors. For a December 2002 essay available on its website, Wu Ming declared, "We are interested in \*mythopoesis\*, i.e. the social process of constructing myths, by which we do not mean 'false stories,' we mean stories that are told and shared, re-told and manipulated, by a vast and multifarious community, stories that may give shape to some kind of ritual, some sense of continuity between what we do and what other people did in the past. A tradition."

Paige K. B. (b. 1988, Los Angeles) is an artist, writer, and editor who lives and works in New York. Recent exhibitions include an installation at Canal Street Research Association and a subsequent collaboration with Shanzhai Lyric at MoMA PS1 for Greater New York (2021); The Corner at Whitman-Walker, Washington, D.C. (2020); Kimberly-Klark, Queens (2019); and a group show opening this month at Theta. Her writing has appeared in numerous publications—including *Artforum*, *Frieze*, and *Viscose*—and her first book is now available from Matthew Marks.