

M23 Projects NY

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Jonathan Mildenberg *I.N.C.H* opens 02 March 2018

I think I had a dream once where I woke up inside of a big box store- you know, like a Target or something. As I sat alone in the darkness- utterly confused, I imagined that I must have fallen asleep somewhere and the employees and security guards didn't see me before they left for the night. As I walked around the empty, cavernous space looking for a way out, I realized there were no exits. Just entrances to other rooms of the same store- or maybe they were different stores... like a mall or something.

I'm not sure how long I was there for but it felt like years. I never got hungry, so I never ate and since I never ate, I never had to use the bathroom- which was good cause I don't remember ever seeing one. I just spent those endless hours walking up and down the aisles. For whatever reason, I never once thought about changing a thing in this place. I just accepted the world as I found it.

Then suddenly, I had an urge to build a private space of my own. I built it from objects that I found useful or appealing in someway. I wasn't sure what any of it was or what any of it meant, but it all seemed so familiar. I imagined that in some base reality, I knew what it all was but here, I was without the syntax to put it all together. Or maybe some great personal trauma wiped me clear. They suggested intricate mythologies- systems within systems that somehow all functioned independently but knew they were connected and working towards the same goal. Eventually I was somehow able to harness and direct energy, creating light- which was both terrifying and wonderful. It changed everything. At first I would waste what must of been days just staring at these illuminations. I could feel it burning after-images into my eyes, which was fine because I appreciated any tangible change in myself or my environment. I was beginning to feel, not quite whole but a kind of balance. Though maybe that was an illusion willed by boredom and routine. Regardless, it was something.

Anyways, I say all of that to say this; I eventually built a life there- a home. I wouldn't say that it was comfortable or even fulfilling, but it felt right. Like, I had always been there and always would be somehow. This brought me great comfort in times when I felt an overwhelming sense of emptiness. It was this nascent absence of something corporal, a loss of some kind. Like the dull ache of a phantom limb. I was there for so long that I think I forgot that I was even dreaming- if that was what this even was. Hard to say now.

And then suddenly one day- or night, I began to get tired. A heavy fatigue set in that I hadn't felt before. I went to lay down in my makeshift nest, and began hearing music. I wasn't sure if it was coming from inside the building or my head- though as I say this, I realize they're the same thing. And as I listened, slowly drifting off, I had a vision...

A stout and sturdy being suddenly appeared, possibly the manager or maybe God itself. Either way it seemed in charge- or at least, in the know. It looked around at the life I had built, meticulously inspecting it. It had no air of skepticism, as you would expect. It was with this sense of great empathy and love and it gave me this flush feeling of pride- which then immediately turned to embarrassment. It told me it was the most beautiful thing it had ever seen but then said that it wasn't going to matter soon because everything was about to change. That what I'd built wasn't meant to last because I wasn't meant to last (as it spoke, I thought of sand castles and high tides and children rebuilding they're kingdoms with each mini apocalypse). And before I could thank it for the kind words and ask it if there was really no bathrooms, it was gone. I found myself still laying down, warm and on the verge. Content, I turned over and fell asleep.

Jonathan Mildenberg

I.N.C.H.

The title of the exhibition comes from the acronym *I'm Never Coming Home*, taken from the prepper community. It refers to the most extreme version of a bug-out bag (a portable kit of survival gear made for quick evacuation in worst case scenarios).

The two new multimedia installations that make up *I.N.C.H.* exist within a collapse. A breakdown that begins to warp, reassign and/or obliterate the meanings embedded within the objects, imagery and general visual glut that has come to embody the look of our late capitalism. Mildenberg situates his examples within two fictionalized commercial/retail spaces inspired by several stores that occupy the Atlantic Center in downtown Brooklyn, NY- a destination he frequents both as a eager patron and an skeptical observer.

Jonathan Mildenberg (b. 1981) is an American multidisciplinary artist from Brooklyn, NY. He holds a BFA from Massachusetts College of Art and an MFA from Yale University School of Art. He was the 2015 nominee for sculpture from Yale University for the Toby Devan Lewis Fellowship and was awarded a fellowship in 2016 in the category of Architecture/Design/Environmental Structures from the New York Foundation for the Arts. Solo shows include *Here*, *Tyrant Death / Look Backwards*, *Idiot* at Treasure Town, Brooklyn and *The Transition of Power* at Meyohas, New York. Recent group shows include *True Love* at Dread Lounge, Los Angeles, *YM21* at Yeah Maybe, Minneapolis, MN and *Wet Eyes* at Meyohas. This is his first show with M23.

Jonathan Mildenberg *I.N.C.H.*

02 March – 08 April 2018

Opening – Friday, 02 March 2018, 7-9 pm

M23/Project Room
209 Morgan Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11237

For additional information please call +1 (212) 206-7839 or email m@m23.co