

Check out Heiress, St. Petersburg's newest contemporary gallery

Heiress offers a different kind of contemporary experience.



ST. PETERSBURG — A new gallery in town offers a fresh experience.

Heiress opened at The Factory St. Pete in October and has already presented three very different exhibitions.

Co-directors Finn Schult and Erica Luedtke met 10 years ago while they were undergrads at the Savannah College of Art and Design.

Originally from Ohio, Luedtke's practice in school was installation-based. She moved to Los Angeles — where she is still based — after graduation and began working for startup galleries and artist studios. Her experience working for renowned gallery Hauser & Wirth and an art adviser informed the kind of gallery she wanted to curate.

"It's such a dream, combining everything I've learned and putting it together, with Finn," she said.



Heiress owners Finn Schult and Erica Luedtke are pictured during the St. Petersburg gallery's opening of "An Ouroboros of Looking" on Jan. 13, 2023. [LUIS SANTANA | Times]

Hailing from Naples, Florida, Schult (who uses they/them pronouns) concentrates on a combination of video and performance in their work. They also gained experience working at art fairs from the prestigious New Art Dealers Alliance, and hopes that Heiress will become a member of the organization.

Why did the pair choose St. Petersburg for their inaugural gallery? Schult, who was living in Detroit and couldn't bear another winter, decided to move back to Florida. On a visit to see the artwork they made for Fairgrounds St. Pete's "Floridarama" installation, Schult noticed the surrounding arts community.

Schult and Luedtke decided it was the right place to offer a different kind of contemporary gallery.

"We wanted to have a gallery that participates on a more global level," Schult said. "We hope to be able to have this space that exists for the community, that brings people in from outside of the community so that it's not just insular or existing in the vacuum of Tampa Bay."

So far, the exhibitions Heiress has held since opening at The Factory St. Pete have offered a balance of locals and internationals, with an eye on emerging and mid-career artists. The first show, "Running Through the Sawgrass," showcased Tampa Bay artists including Noelle Mason, Emiliano Setticasi and Libbi Ponce.

"Theurgic Impulses" was a solo exhibition by Vancouver-based artist Aurora, featuring totems, sculptures and films focusing on the grieving process in response to the Canadian opioid crisis. It was Aurora's first solo show in the U.S.

The current exhibition, "An Ouroboros of Looking," features seven artists whose work explores the "cyclical nature of observation and performativity." There are video-based works, including Paul Pfeiffer's incredible "Caryatid (Kirkland)," which depicts a real boxing match with James Kirkland in which the opponent has been edited out. It's a provocative look at the impact the landed hits make on Kirkland's body, and makes you reconsider what you're actually looking at when watching a fight.