

**Neighbors presents**  
***Dabblegänger***  
**a solo presentation of works by Michael Hambouz 10/6—10/29, 2023**  
**organized by Alexander Deschamps**

“Listening to author Naomi Klein’s latest book *Doppelgänger* in the studio—which I highly recommend (all of her books, actually)—I’ve thought about the brief moments in my past in which I’ve been mistaken for another person.

At age 16, while working the drive-through window at Wendy’s, a customer asked if I was “Rickie” from *My So-Called Life* (Afro-Puerto Rican actor Wilson Cruz). I was not. I was a mixed Arab teenager working at a fast-food chain in Michigan for \$4.25/hr (minimum wage in ‘93). Throughout the next month, I was approached by a dozen more strangers, asking me the same thing...and then like that, it never happened again.

Jump ahead to 2005—now 28 and a 5-year resident of NYC—a friend invited me downtown to play on her softball team. When I arrived at the field, I discovered that Adam Horovitz (Beastie Boys’ Ad-Rock) was the team captain. The Beastie’s *Licensed to Ill* was the first cassette I had ever purchased, so this was a bit of a surreal moment for me. As I stepped up to bat, pitcher Ad-Rock’s first words to me were “show us what you got, Blaine!” (as in Jewish-Puerto Rican-Italian illusionist David Blaine). Nope, still just me...working for slightly more money at a non-profit arts organization. A fucking magician, *really*? It was hard to tell if he was being a dick or really believed it, but I’ve never hit a softball so damn hard in my life. And then just like the previous phenomenon, for the next year I was approached by several strangers on the street, asking me to do tricks and sign autographs. Aggressive confrontation ensued when I refused...and then with the wave of a wand and a poof of smoke, never again.

I’ve hardly had the life-rattling experiences that author Klein has endured with her conspiracy theorist, propaganda-spewing fellow “Naomi” “doppelgänger (German for ‘double goer’)...but I’ve come to understand that my artistic practice often indeed consists of its own double goers: one hand and voice that expresses its deepest, personal emotional and political feelings, and another that mimics the other purely as a satisfyingly challenging tactile means for escapism, using alternate materials and dimensions to transform. Reworking the original composition until it essentially becomes something entirely different in meaning to me. And with that, reclaiming positive power and light from often crippling, negative headspace voids. Some work may look strikingly similar; however, they are not the same, but their coexistence is crucial. And if you look deeper into my compositions, you might just find other references to doppelgängers peering through allegorical windows.

A fucking magician?!...in a strange way, I suppose “\\_(ツ)\_/ ”

-Michael Hambouz

P.s. there’s so much more to discuss about my bouts of comfort and discomfort as a seemingly ethnically ambiguous chameleon...but that will be for another time.

**Michael Hambouz** (b. Niles, Michigan, 1977) is a multidisciplinary artist, multi-instrumentalist musician, and independent curator based in Brooklyn, NY. Hambouz creates chromaesthesia-influenced works – experiments in dimension and color made under the guidance of music – to process bouts of loss and reflections on life in the rural Midwest, New York City, and in the cybersphere as a first-generation Palestinian-American. Experimenting freely with mediums, he encourages unexpected results and mutations in compositional form to bloom in the studio, resulting in conceptually abstracted paintings and prints, intricate layered paper cut outs, sculpture, drawings and animations.

Solo/two-person exhibitions include Spring/Break Art Show (NYC), Neighbors (NYC), chashama (NYC), Kayrock (NYC), Troutbeck (Amenia, NY), The Krasl Art Center (St. Joseph, MI), 3S Artspace (Portsmouth, NH), Future Fairs with Talia Levitt (NYC), Brooklyn Academy of Music with Michael O'Shea (NYC), and a 20-year survey exhibition at Antioch College (Yellow Springs, OH) in 2018. Select group exhibitions include The National Arts Club (NYC), Andrew Edlin Gallery (NYC), IPCNY (NYC), GROWROOM//SHOWROOM (NYC), Wassaic Project (Wassaic, NY), Standard Space (Sharon, CT), Dominique Gallery (Los Angeles, CA), Northern-Southern (Austin, TX), Eve Leibe Gallery (London, UK), and The Centre for Contemporary Printmaking, (Bangor, N. Ireland). His art and curatorial work have been featured in Artnet News, Artsin Square Magazine, Create! Magazine, Design Milk, Hyperallergic, Two Coats of Paint, and Vice. His work can be seen in the collections of Antioch College, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, NYU Langone Medical Center, Niles History Center, and Fidelity Corporate Art Collection.

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