



Fire Trap, 2022. Stoneware, silk thread, long reach matches.

Tamar Ettun: How To Trap A Demon

October 5 - November 16, 2022

Curated by Meghana Karnik

Richard and Dolly Maass Gallery

Tamar Ettun: How to Trap A Demon is an exhibition conjuring the aerial spirit demon, Lilit (Lilith), whose story traces back to ancient Sumerian, Akkadian, and Judaic mythology. In medical-magical traditions from the 2nd-7th century, Lilit appeared on incantation bowls, a healing technology used to protect against demons, who were thought to cause illness, pain, and loss¹. Just as scientific treatment is accepted today, artist-healers of the time would create spells, drawings, and talismanic objects to bind demons (most often, Lilit). **Tamar Ettun** revives these rituals by creating demon traps of various scales and materials — clay, iron, textiles, in performance and video — but also proposes a conceptual shift, told from Lilit’s perspective as the healer. The exhibition parts with the historical gender binarism that associates Lilith’s archetype with unchecked violence and manipulation; here, Lilit mediates the inner demons and renegade instincts that are deliberately silenced.² Asking us to consider whose stories, memories, and experiences are occluded in the process of demonization, *How to Trap A*

¹ Geoffrey W. Dennis, *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Myth, Magic, & Mysticism*, 2nd ed. (Minnesota: Llewellyn, 2016). Lilith: 254.

² Dr. Barbara Black Koltuv, *The Book of Lilith* (Florida: Nicolas-Hays, Inc. 1986). Chapter 1: “The Talmud on Lilith.” 6.

Demon builds on the artist's research into the insidious side of empathy, empathy fatigue, trauma-healing modalities, and astrology as storytelling.

How To Trap A Demon expands on Ettun's performative practice, featuring sculpture and textile works made during the Spring 2022 WAIR Program.

Calendar

October 9 — Artist + Curator Tour, 12 - 2 PM

October 12 — Opening Reception, 6-8 PM

October 22 — Artist + Curator Tour, 12 - 2 PM

October 31 — Artist + Curator Tour, Collective Demon Summoning, 4-6 PM

November 6 — Artist + Curator Tour, 12 - 2 PM

November 16 — Artist + Curator Tour, Collective Demon Trapping, 12-2 PM

Artist Bio

[Tamar Ettun](#) (she/they) uses textile, sculpture, and performance to examine somatic empathy, trauma-healing modalities, and ritual. Ettun has had exhibitions and performances at The Chinati Foundation, Pioneer Works, Pace University Gallery, The Watermill Center, Art Omi Sculpture Garden, PERFORMA, The Barrick Museum, Fridman Gallery, Uppsala Museum of Art, Bryant Park, Sculpture Center, Madison Square Park, e-flux, Socrates Sculpture Park, Indianapolis Museum of Art, The Jewish Museum, among others. Ettun received awards and fellowships from The Pollock Krasner Foundation, Stoneleaf Retreat, BAX (Brooklyn Arts Exchange), The California Studio at UC Davis, Chinati Foundation, Moca Tucson, Marble House Project, Franklin Furnace, MacDowell Fellowship, Iaspis - Swedish Grant Council, The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Abrons Art Center, Triangle Arts Association, Art Production Fund, and RECESS. Ettun founded The Moving Company, an artists collective creating performances in public spaces and a social engagement project with Brooklyn teens hosted by The Brooklyn Museum. Ettun received her MFA from Yale University in 2010 where she was awarded the Alice English Kimball Fellowship. She studied at Cooper Union in 2007, while earning her BFA from Bezalel Academy, Jerusalem. Ettun teaches at Columbia University School of Arts, and was the Spring 2022 Windgate Artist-in-Residence at SUNY Purchase.

Curator Bio

[Meghana Karnik](#) (she/her) works across modalities as a curator, arts administrator, writer, and artist exploring paradoxes between art and social change, spirituality and technology, lived experience and institutional process. Currently, she is the

Process-As-Practice Curator-In-Residence at The Luminary (St. Louis), Artis's Curator-In-Residence at International Studio & Curatorial Program (New York), and Manager, Grants & Artist Initiatives with Art Matters Foundation (New York). She has organized research, exhibitions, and programs as Associate Curator of FRONT International 2022 (Cleveland, 2019-2020), Associate Director of EFA Project Space (New York, 2015-2019), and independently with The Cleveland Institute of Art's Reinberger Gallery (Cleveland), Critical Practices, Inc. (New York), Harlan Levey Projects (Brussels, BE), Penthouse Art Residency (Brussels, BE), Foundation and Center for Contemporary Arts (Prague, CR), and Zygote Press (Cleveland). Karnik has an M.A. in Arts Administration from Teachers College, Columbia University, a B.A. in Political Science and Art History from Case Western Reserve University, and completed a non-degree BFA Exhibition & Thesis in Drawing as a cross-registered student of The Cleveland Institute of Art.

Special Thanks

Many collaborators have supported the creation of work in *How To Trap A Demon*. Thank you to **Greg Wharmby, John O'Shea, Sara Crowe, Celeste Joyce, Nancy Bowen, Sky Blechner**, and **Jen Dawson** at SUNY Purchase; **Chinati Foundation**, for a residency filled with wildlife in the midst of the pandemic; **The California Studio at UC Davis** for a space to dye in the botanical garden; **BAX** (Brooklyn Arts Exchange) for a meditative parent-artist residency; **The Watermill Center** and **Artis** for ongoing support; **Pioneer Works** for the sails; **Helen Toomer** and **Stoneleaf Retreat** for a magical space filled with magical humans; **Marble House Project** for hosting the artist during the Pisces Full Moon; **Zac Ward** of **Salem Art** for the casting Lilit in iron at midnight; **Ayana Evans, Maia Karo, ESHÉ ALL DAY HUES, & Tonya Michelle** for contributing their voices to naming demons in *Wave Cave*; **Nicoline Franziska** for design and photography on *Texts from Lilit*; **Maya Pindyck** for the thoughtful feedback on *Texts from Lilit*; **Meghana Karnik** who looked Lilit in the eyes and cared for her with generosity and grace; **Jeff Rubin** who shot, edited, gave notes, and supported the artist in countless ways; and **Maxi**, who made it much harder to work but gave it all meaning.