Julia Thompson
leftovers
July 10 - August 14, 2021
Opening Reception: July 10, 4 - 8 pm

Lyles & King is pleased to announce *leftovers*, an exhibition by Julia Thompson curated by Geena Brown. *leftovers* is a cumulative body of work that began in 2018 in which Thompson hand-writes letters to absent friends, family, and lovers—people no longer in her life. The letters, alongside mundane iPhone photos, have been embedded in pillow-like moulds cast in soap, resin, and wax which preserve, change and obscure their contents.

Dear Abra,

We've spoken a lot about both our work in the past, as separately and very much related - self-preservation being key. With this body of work: leftovers, I think about the notion of an archive, the slips in communication, the impossibility of reaching memory, and the way materials can function beyond what we expect from them. The collection of letters hidden in my sculptures are hard to catch. Not that the letters have ever been sent or read by anyone beyond me… I can't even remember what some of the addressees look like.

Do things ever really touch, or do we forever host a gap?

Dealing with loss is a kind of mapping - an archive that's impossible to measure, constantly overflowing, deteriorating and ultimately falling flat. I'm interested in the memories and materials that confront us as fixed, stable, sturdy, only to spill out everywhere. A cast is at once a synthetic support system and a cavity. I'm into filling these kinds of cavities with pools of wax, soaps and letters, like shimmering cesspools holding onto the detritus of my life. I feel these kinds of in-between states make up the foreground of our relationships.

I think it's nice that things can exist, hold form while losing it at the same time - like a body. It's been years since I wrote these letters… it feels like I'm getting closer to this place that's inevitably impossible to reach. It's funny that we're so publicly writing these letters to one another when I've been writing in privacy for so long. I'm curious how you think about writing letters… Not sending them..what does it do to have these letters recycled and repeated in the larger sense?

-Julia

Julia,

It is funny that we're writing so publicly, but at the same time - are we ever really writing in private? Ever since my first diary, my motivation to write always came from a bubbling up of the exhaustion of carrying what could not be expressed to anyone but myself and at the same time, there is this haunting feeling that as honest as I would like to be, I always left a gap between the pure truth in case my writing was seen. No matter how hard I tried, the ghosts of the inexpressible always hovered over my shoulder - haunting me. I wrote for myself, but I still felt too seen to be completely honest. Ironically, that is also the reason I had to write letters I would never send - these are the people who can't, won't or don't hear me - because I wasn't being seen. Even letters to myself would quickly degrade because there will always be latency between who I was and who I am. There has always been that gap. Does that make sense?

Often, I insulate my vulnerability and pour my emotional overflow in deep bass, dance music, and metaphors as a way to move through the world. Sometimes I feel that through my work is the only time I'm truly ever fully honest when it comes to expressing how I feel.

It intrigues me that everything that exists has that quality- the need to be seen. From our conversations, we both seem to process what we don't know by expelling it into the sensual world - the world outside of us. So we can see it and it can be seen. It isn't intellectual. For me, It's an overwhelm. Attempting to name ghosts we aren't even certain exist in the hope that we can "solve the mystery". But some things are too precious, too heavy, too traumatic, too long ago to shine a light on. Memories deteriorate and that only adds to the need to make sense of what we can't forget, but still feel plagued by.

When words fail we become the haunted houses, and from them we can only send... letters.

-Abra