Untitled Art Miami Beach November 29 - December 3, 2022

MARISA NEWMAN PROJECTS

Booth A51

UTA BEKAIA

Uta Bekaia is a Tbilisi-born multimedia artist. His work is a speculative recreation of his ancestral rituals restaged for Queer utopian future. With the fascination with traditional crafts, Bekaia creates richly adorned wearable sculptures, ceramics, tapestries, and objects, bringing them together as immersive installations, films, and live performances. Bekaia studied Industrial Design at Tbilisi Mtsire Academy. He has been awarded the residences at ART OMI, Museum of Art and Design MAD, NY; Garikula, Georgia; His work has been shown at Kimball Art Center, Park City; Marisa Newman Projects, NY; Window Project, Tbilisi; SchauFenster, Berlin; Museum of Modern Art, Tbilisi; Kyiv Biennial in Istanbul and Kyiv; ERTI Gallery, Tbilisi; Silk Museum, Tbilisi; The Lodge Gallery, NY; Center for Contemporary Art, Batumi; among others. He has staged parades for the Tbilisi City Hall Tbilisoba Festival, Book Capital of the World Opening Ceremony, TurnPark, and ArtPark, among others. Bekaia is a founding member of the Tbilisi-based queer creative collective

Fungus.





Uta Bekaia

Ruby Star Children

2022

Velvet, embroidery, rhinestones, stuffing, steel armature, gold plated and glazed ceramic.

Three parts, clockwise from left:

13 x 10.5 x 11 inches, 15 x 15.5 x 12 inches,

4 x 13.5 x 11.5 inches

\$5,000



Ruby Star Children (detail).



Ruby Star Children (detail).



Ruby Star Children (detail).



Uta Bekaia

Sapphire Star Children

2022

Velvet, embroidery, rhinestones, stuffing, steel armature, gold plated and glazed ceramic.

Three parts, clockwise from left:

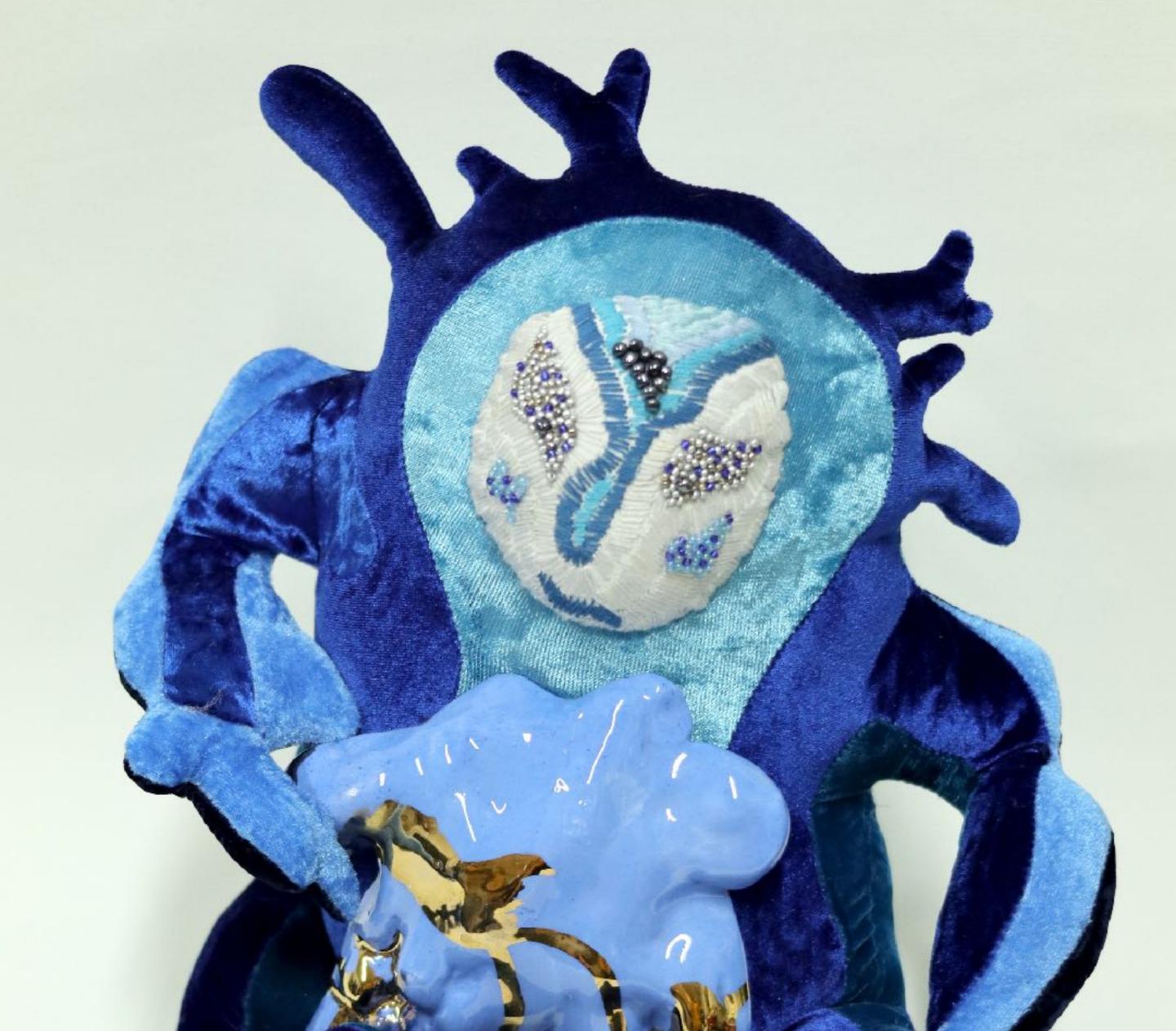
13 x 10.5 x 11 inches, 15 x 15.5 x 12 inches,

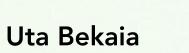
4 x 13.5 x 11.5 inches

\$5,000



Sapphire Star Children (detail).





Sapphire Star Children (detail).



Uta Bekaia

Sapphire Star Children 2022

(Detail)



Uta Bekaia

Great Creatures from Safe Spaces, No.1

2021

Faux fur, velvet, embroidery, rhinestones, stuffing, steel armature

22 x 21 x 15 inches

\$4,500









Uta Bekaia

Great Creatures from Safe Spaces, No.2

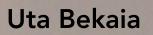
2021

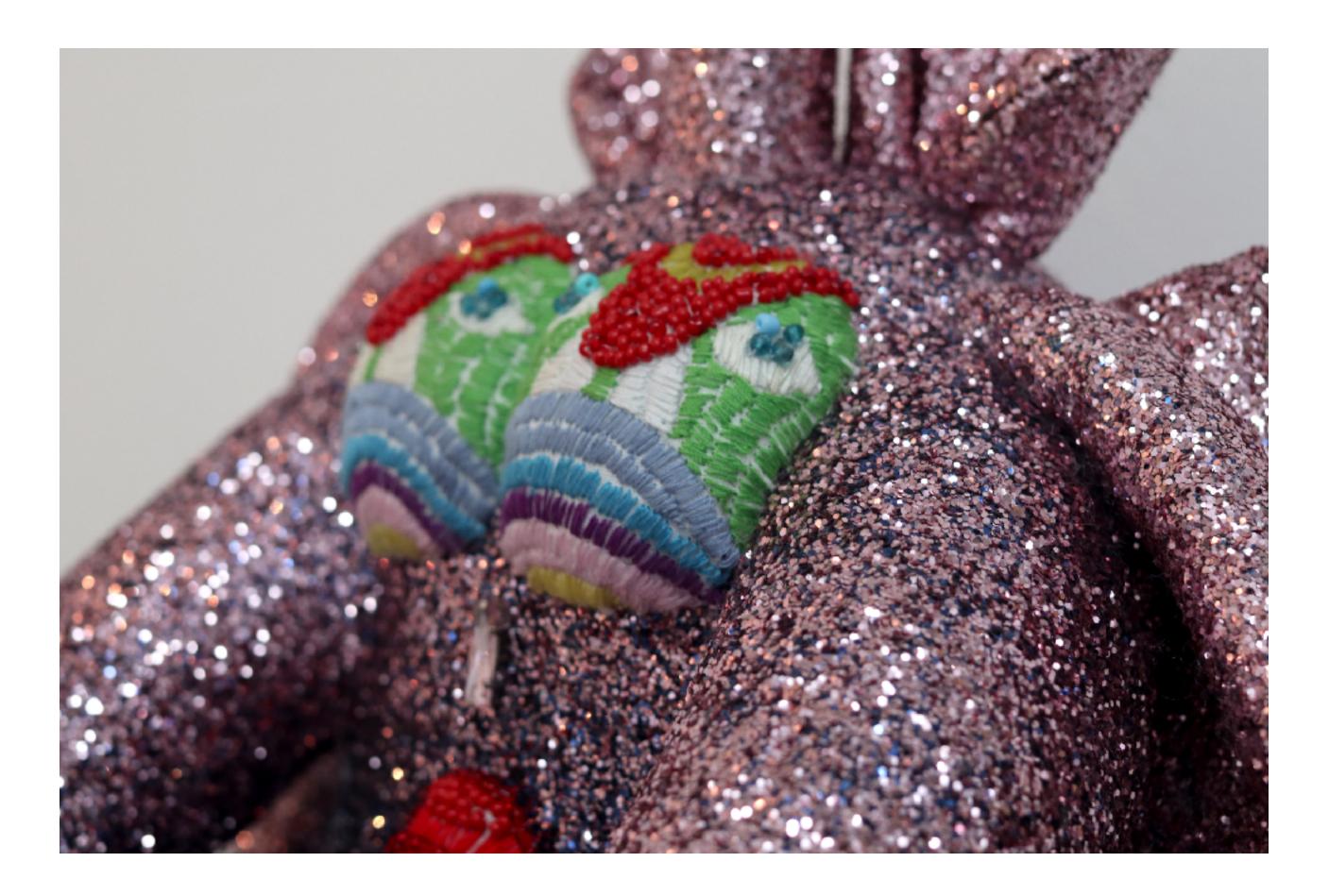
Faux fur, velvet, embroidery, rhinestones, stuffing, steel armature

22 x 21 x 15 inches

\$4,500







Uta Bekaia

Great Creatures from Safe Spaces, No.2 (detail) 2021 Faux fur, velvet, embroidery, rhinestones, stuffing, steel armature 19 x 17 x 17 inches \$4,500



Uta Bekaia The Moon and The Stars (My Fragile Little Rabbit) 2022 Embroidery and beading on linen, filler, felt

Three parts: 10 x 7 x 1 inches (Moon), 8 1/2 x 7 1/2 x 1 1/2 inches (Star), 3 x 3 1/2 x 1/2 inches (Star)



Uta Bekaia Green Stars (My Fragile Little Rabbit) 2022 Embroidery and beading on linen, filler, felt Two parts: 10 x 11 ¼ x 2 inches, 3 ¼ x 3 ½ x ¾ inches



Uta Bekaia Blue Stars (My Fragile Little Rabbit) 2022 Embroidery and beading on linen, filler, felt Two parts 8 ³⁄₄ x 7 x 1 ¹⁄₂ inches 3 x 3 x ¹⁄₂ inches Overall dimensions variable



Uta Bekaia Comet and House on Fire (My Fragile Little Rabbit) 2022 Embroidery and beading on linen, filler, felt Two parts: 13 x 5 x 1 ½ inches (Comet), 9 ½ x 6 ½ x 1 ½ inches (House) \$1,000





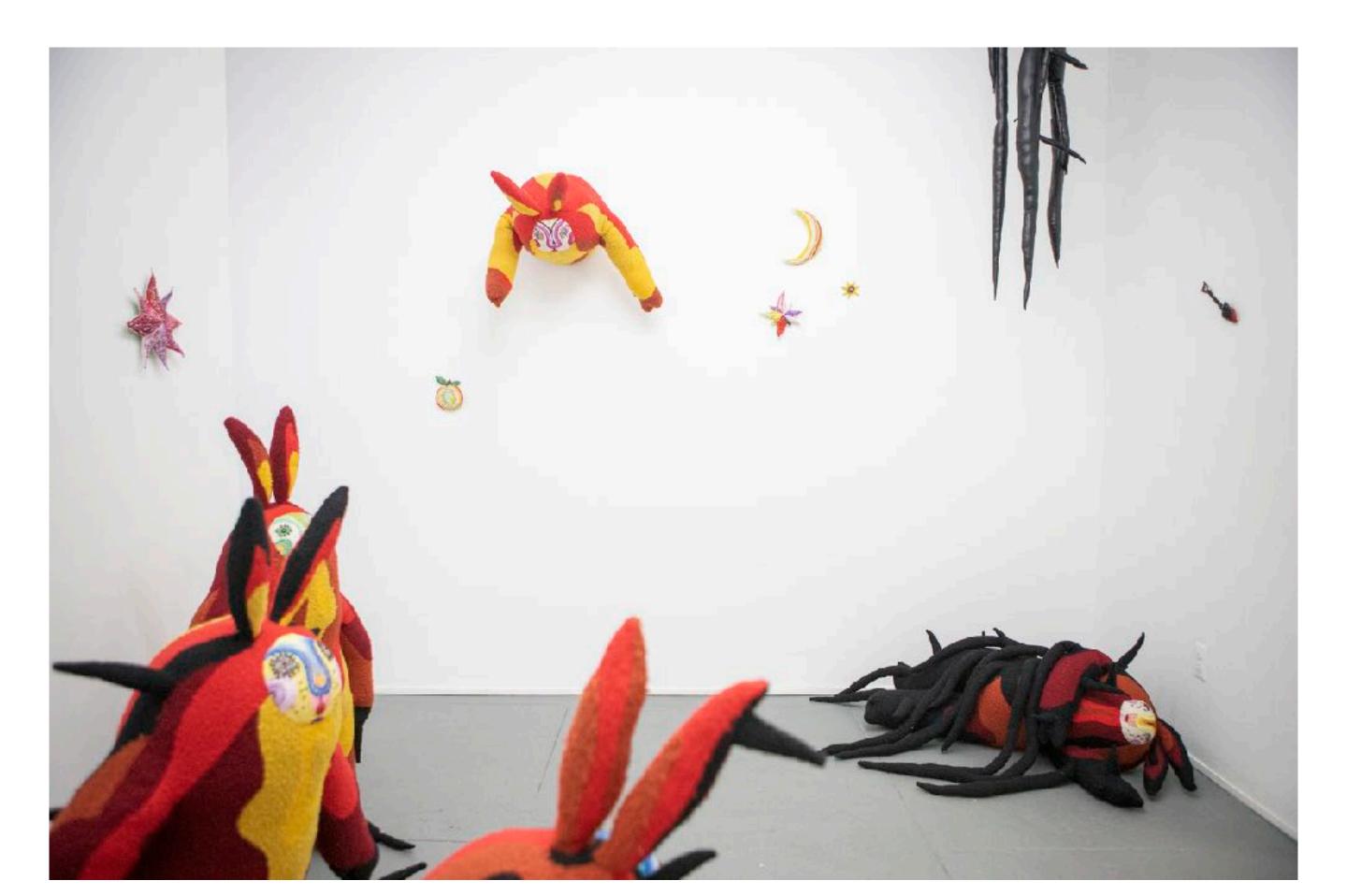
Uta Bekaia Tank (My Fragile Little Rabbit) 2022 Embroidery and beading on linen, filler, felt 6 x 12 x 1 ½ inches \$500



Uta Bekaia My Fragile Little Rabbit 2022 Installation view at Marisa Newman Projects, NY Seven taffed fabric sculptures on armature with embroidery and beading, embroideries on linen and felt Overall dimensions variable \$35,000



Uta Bekaia My Fragile Little Rabbit 2022 Installation view at Marisa Newman Projects, NY Seven taffed fabric sculptures on armature with embroidery and beading, embroideries on linen and felt Overall dimensions variable \$35,000



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Uta Bekaia My Fragile Little Rabbit, #1 2022 Staffed fabric sculpture on armature with embroidery and beading 29 x 28.5 x 21 inches \$5,000



Uta Bekaia My Fragile Little Rabbit, #2 2022 Staffed fabric sculpture on armature with embroidery and beading 50.5 x 23 x 14 inches \$5,000



Uta Bekaia My Fragile Little Rabbit, #3 2022 Staffed fabric sculpture on armature with embroidery and beading 46 x 51 x 28 inches \$5,000



Uta Bekaia My Fragile Little Rabbit, #4 2022

Staffed fabric sculpture on armature with embroidery and beading 43 x 56 x 27 inches \$5,000



Uta Bekaia My Fragile Little Rabbit, #5 2022 Staffed fabric sculpture on armature with embroidery and beading 35 x 52 x 46 inches \$5,000



Uta Bekaia My Fragile Little Rabbit, #6 2022 Staffed fabric sculpture on armature with embroidery and beading 18 x 60 x 51 inches \$5,000

A Toy Story: Uta Bekaia's My Fragile Little Rabbit by Glenn Adamson

It was exactly a century ago, in 1922, that Margery Williams published her immortal children's book The Velveteen Rabbit. It tells the story of a forlorn stuffed animal, which has been overlooked in favor of newer, shinier playthings. The rabbit becomes fixated on the idea that "when a child loves you for a long, long time... then you become real," and eventually sees that dream come true, hopping off into the forest to live happily ever after.

Williams' spare and beautiful book has inspired generations of readers (not to mention the blockbuster Toy Story film franchise). Unfortunately though, narratives don't always come so neatly wrapped. In Uta Bekaia's installation, mordantly titled My Fragile Little Rabbit, the rest of life comes roaring in. The show is centered on a procession of friendly-faced bunnies, their pelts rather gorgeously decked out in topologies of red and black faux fur. But all is not necessarily well, here in the nursery of the mind. As they make their way across the floor, the rabbits seem to gradually sink into it. One is half-embedded in the wall, trapped. A preponderance of soft, tentacle-like roots hang down like stalactites from the gallery ceiling, and append themselves to Bekaia's leporine protagonists. Watercolors, hung in a tight two-by-three arrangement on one wall, depict these proceedings as if documenting them for some future inquiry. And a video, hung low in one corner, whispers:

To my fluffy little rabbit, hiding within. Always so frightened. So fragile, so frail, so easy to break. Thank you for the shelter. Thank you for the care. Stay with me...

What are we to make of this scene, evenly balanced between sweet dream and dark nightmare? Clues come in the embroidered emblems that adorn the walls – a striated moon, stars (or are they explosions?), a battle tank. The iconography has a certain universality to it; anyone who's ever been a child, or still is one, can relate. For Bekaia, it comes from a very particular set of experiences. Born in the country of Georgia, for some years he has divided his time between its capital, Tbilisi, and New York City. His practice, meanwhile, has unfolded across many disciplines, incorporating aspects of fashion, sculpture, performance, and video. He weaves them all into a single fabric, rich with the texture of fable and mythology.

In this newest work, Bekaia has adopted the rabbit as a sort of avatar. It's a self-representation and self-multiplication (that's what rabbits do, after all), which speaks to a certain feeling of vulnerability. As a gay man, he has had turbulent times in Tbilisi, sometimes joyful, sometimes harrowing. He has seen the city come alive with liberating energy; in fact, it has a thriving (though underground) queer art scene. Yet it has also been the scene of ugliness, and violence, directed toward the LGTBQ+ community.

It's all too easy to internalize this hostility, to be made to feel worthless and afraid. This is how oppression works. Hence the rabbit: a creature with few defenses. "Just like little rabbits," he has written, "we needed to hide and learn to run fast. To survive. Not to get devoured by wolves." Hence, too, the black tentacles of doubt, which could be alternately construed as attacking from outside, or sprouting from within.

Yet Bekaia's installation is not without hope, and humor. His works touch a nerve, to be sure, but they also stir the heart. Their hand-craftedness is key to this emotional affect. The artist has put in every stitch in those embroidered faces, lavishing them care. Just the kind of care that a child might devote to a stuffed animal, in the fond hope that it might one day come to life. In a way, that is just what Bekaia has achieved in this exhibition. He has dared to give embodiment to images – and feelings – that most of us would keep buried, way down inside.

They say that everyone has an inner child. Bekaia's breathes free.

Untitled Art Miami Beach

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UTA BEKAIA KHATIA ESARTIA ADLER GUERRIER LEVANI (Levan Mindiashvili) SUSANA WALD CHARLOTTA WESTERGREN

> Poetry Reading/Performance by Lucas de Lima

917.330.9393 marisa@marisanewman.com www.marisanewman.com

VIP Preview

Monday, November 28 1pm - 8pm

Fair Dates

Tuesday, November 29 - Saturday, December 3 11am - 7pm