

The Fabrication of Stars and of Family

Elizabeth Downey

March 13 - May 11, 2024

Opening Reception: Friday, March 15, 2024 @ 7:00 pm

Curated by: Tavis Lea

Assistant Curator: Michaela Lucio

Program Coordinator: Irene MacCreadie

Design: Donna Nolan

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List of works

Plug into me, 2022; mixed media on canvas; 24 in x 24 in

Plug without a socket, 2022; mixed media on canvas; 24 in x 24 in

Stars are hearts that beat soundlessly, 2022; mixed media on canvas; 24 in x 24 in

The Fabrication of Stars and Family, 2022; mixed media on canvas; 48 in x 72 in

There is a burning and there is you / I would rather burn, 2018; mixed media on canvas; 72 in x 60 in

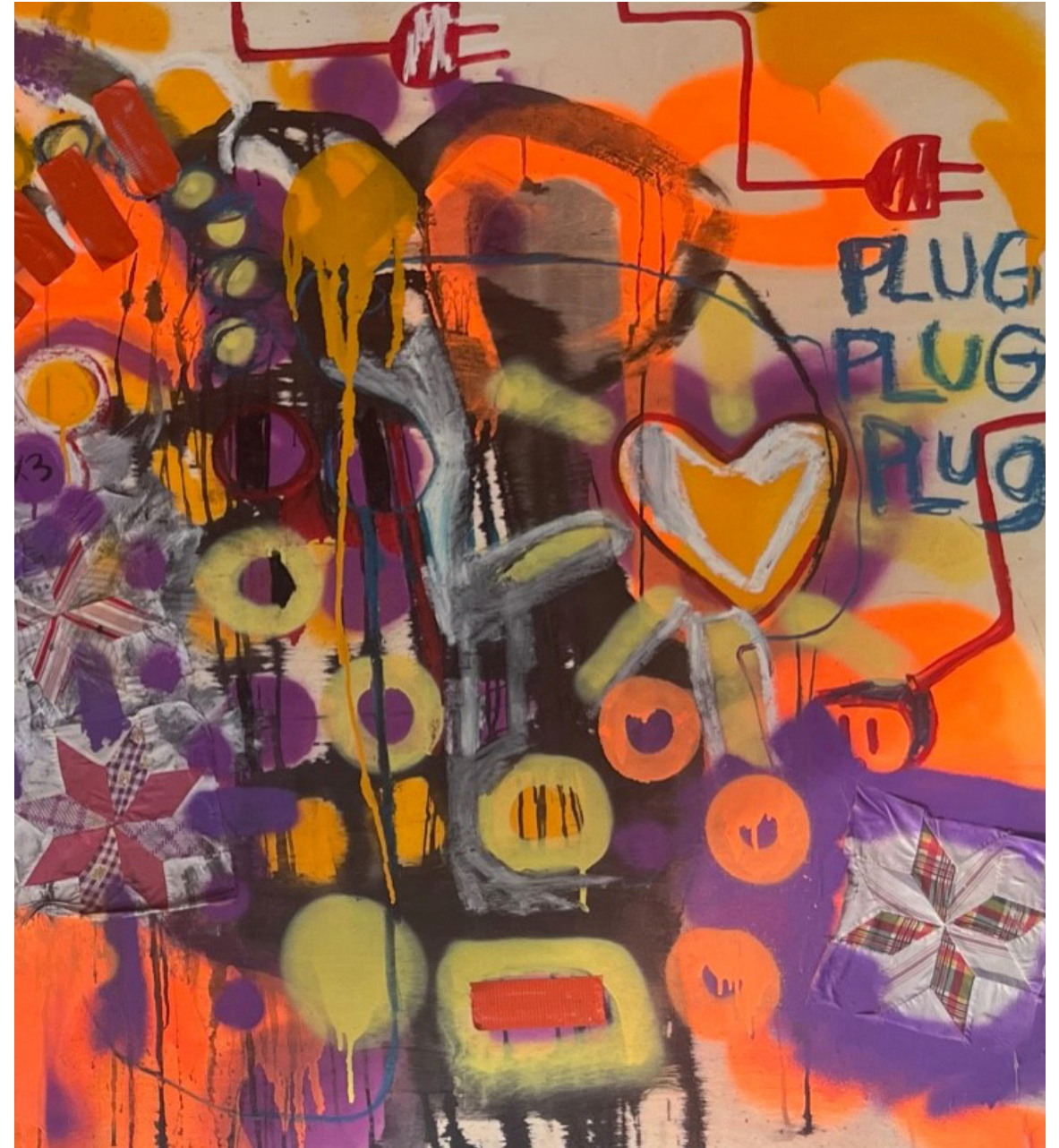
Whirr whirr whirr, 2022; mixed media on canvas; 24 in x 24 in

Cover Image: *The Fabrication of Stars and Family*, 2022; mixed media on canvas; 48 in x 72 in

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Elizabeth Downey
The Fabrication of Stars and of Family

Downey is always working with how people connect. These works span time and space through the inclusion of quilting squares salvaged from a dusty box in an attic, from the 1930's.

Connecting to someone is more than just being born into a family. It's more difficult than a simple plug/socket, especially when you include LGBTQ2S+ individuals, where love might be between two "plugs" or two "sockets" etc. Family is supposed to be a space of love, support and connection. But things like gender, sexuality and trauma can, unfortunately, undo stitches.

The quilt pattern made over and over is a star; stars are long-dead beacons of light in the night sky. Our ancestors are long-dead beacons of origin or light as well. Where did we come from? How can we feel connected to our ancestors and those who came before us?



Stars are hearts that beat soundlessly, 2022; mixed media on canvas



Whirr whirr whirr, 2022; mixed media on canvas

The juxtaposition of the stars with a bright, modern day colour palette weaves a story started nearly 100 years ago with our lives of today.

Each square is unique, and no pattern has been repeated, yet they are all part of what was intended to be a comforting quilt. Just like a family is stitched together through the inclusion and exclusion of people, the fact that this never did become a quilt reminds the viewer that blood cannot be the only thing that ties us together; there is sweat, there are tears, and there is hope that what is to come will be better than what has been.



There is a burning and there is you / I would rather burn, 2018; mixed media on canvas