

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Mary Headrick (mheadrick@crafthouston.org)  
Houston Center for Contemporary Craft  
713.529.4848 x.107

## HANDMADE INFLATABLE SCULPTURES INVESTIGATE QUEER WORLDBUILDING IN “RIPSTOP”

On View September 30, 2023 – January 6, 2024, at Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

**Max Adrian: RIPSTOP**

**September 30, 2023 – January 6, 2024**

Main Gallery

Houston Center for Contemporary Craft

4848 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

**Exhibition Reception**

**Friday, September 29, 5:30 – 7:30 PM**

The evening will celebrate the fall exhibitions and feature open studios by current resident artists.

**Artist Talk**

**Saturday, September 30, 3:00 – 4:00 PM**

Join Max Adrian, the artist behind *RIPSTOP*, and the exhibition’s curator, Sarah Darro, for an intimate tour of Adrian’s patchworked, pneumatic sculptures.

**Exhibition web page**

<https://crafthouston.org/exhibition/ripstop/>

**Hours & Admission**

Open Tuesday - Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM. Closed major holidays. Admission is free.

**(HOUSTON, TX) August 4, 2023** — Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) is pleased to present *Max Adrian: RIPSTOP*, a solo exhibition of patchwork textiles and inflatable sculptures by the Ohio-based fiber artist. Adrian’s volumetric, pneumatic work transports viewers into a realm of artifice, desire, and worldbuilding. Drawing from rich legacies of queer fiber art and theory, including the AIDS memorial quilt and José Esteban Muñoz’s foundational text, *Cruising Utopia*, the exhibition features monumentally scaled works that physically respond to the presence of viewers by filling with air. “The sculptures’ constant state of performing, or becoming, reflects Adrian’s interests in queerness as an inherently utopian and future-oriented mode of being,” says Sarah Darro, Curator and Exhibitions Director at HCCC.

*RIPSTOP* features sculptures made from patchwork faux fur, satin, pleather, fringe, and *ripstop*—the show’s namesake—a woven nylon material that allows the pieces to inflate and hold air. Adrian’s use of alluring, sensual fabrics reflects the material culture of queer and kink communities, while the handwrought textile techniques and inflatable technology he employs are drawn from his background working in a commercial mascot shop. Though many of his works are built from the scraps of those high-profile commercial characters, they—unlike mascots—interrogate consumption and capitalist desire. Informed by the aesthetics of drag, puppetry, and camp horror films, works like *The Sensational Inflatable Furry Divines* (2017-2019) become subversive, representing violence, repression, and the hyperstimulation of late capitalism.

While in isolation during COVID-19, Adrian's work shifted to an investigation of desire and queerness at an infrastructural scale. His modernist bounce-house sculpture, *A Fallible Complex* (2021), continues the entangled history of inflatable architecture and utopian experimentation that sprang forth in the late 1960s through collectives like Ant Farm and Utopie. This monumental piece defies the expectations of a space designed for play and pleasure. It's alluring but its entrance is blocked. While its many portholes invite spectatorship and voyeurism, if one were to attempt to enter the colorful maze of interlocking levels, they would be met with a missing floor. The structure is promising but ultimately unstable. *RIPSTOP* suggests that the world Adrian desires, like queer utopia itself, is not here quite yet. It is on the horizon.

*RIPSTOP* is curated by HCCC Curator and Exhibitions Director, Sarah Darro.

### **About Max Adrian**

Max Adrian (he/they) is a textile artist interested in ideas about queerness, desire, and consumerism. His soft-sculptural practice finds inspiration in a variety of sewing-related crafts like quilting, bag making, inflatables, puppetry, drag, and fetish wear. Adrian employs an evocative aesthetic of bold colors and tactile materials that tease expectations of pleasure. His work envisions a postmodern playscape, where bodies and objects are blurred, asking how the things humans desire impact a sense of personal identity and community building.

Adrian holds a BFA in fiber and creative writing from the Kansas City Art Institute, as well as an MFA in fiber and material studies from the Tyler School of Art and Architecture. He has worked professionally as a puppeteer, a mascot costume stitcher, and a production artist at Otherworld, an immersive art experience. Adrian was a 2022 Career Advancement Fellow and a 2015 Windgate Fellow with the Center for Craft. His practice has been supported by a variety of residencies including Vermont Studio Center, Lighthouse Works, Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, and Millay Arts. He is based in Columbus, Ohio.

### **About Houston Center for Contemporary Craft**

Serving as a treasured resource in the Houston arts community for more than 20 years, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft (HCCC) is a nonprofit visual arts center dedicated to advancing education about the process, product, and history of craft. HCCC showcases emerging and acclaimed artists in exhibitions, introduces visitors of all ages to contemporary craft through hands-on and virtual programming, and supports the development of working artists through its artist residency program.

HCCC is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM – 5 PM. **Holiday hours for 2023: HCCC will be closed to the public November 23 – 25 for the Thanksgiving holiday weekend and December 26 – January 2 for winter holidays.** HCCC is also closed on Easter, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, July 4th, and Labor Day.

Admission is free. HCCC is located in the Museum District at 4848 Main Street, three blocks south of the Wheeler Ave. MetroRail station. Free parking is available directly behind the facility, off Rosedale and Travis Street.

HCCC is supported by individual donors and members and funded in part by The Brown Foundation; Houston Endowment, Inc.; the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance; Texas Commission on the Arts; the National Endowment for the Arts, the Kinder Foundation; the Morgan Foundation; Windgate Charitable Foundation; and the Wortham Foundation. HCCC is a member of the Houston Museum District and the Midtown Arts District.

For more information, call 713-529-4848 or visit [www.crafthouston.org](http://www.crafthouston.org). Find HCCC on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram @CraftHouston.

###