

# KATE WERBLE GALLERY

83 VANDAM STREET NEW YORK, NY 10013

**CHRISTOPHER CHIAPPA**  
**LIVESTRONG**

**NOVEMBER 14, 2015 – JANUARY 9, 2016**

**OPENING SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14 FROM 6–8 PM**



Christopher Chiappa, *LIVESTRONG*, 2015

For his third solo show at Kate Werble Gallery, *LIVESTRONG*, Chiappa presents a new body of work in its entirety, a series of 7,000 handmade fried egg sculptures exhibited as a growing infestation that invades its surroundings.

Over the past 5 years, Christopher Chiappa's studio has been filling up with fried eggs. They surfaced initially in drawings and then as actual fried eggs, draped casually on studio surfaces, candid photos snapped. The eggs multiplied and mutated as he eventually adopted their form for hyper-realistic sculptures constructed through a carefully calibrated process of casting, pouring, sanding and painting plaster. As he refined his method, they evolved into uncannily illusionistic "sunny side up" versions of their former selves. They aggregate in his studio in various stages of completion along a series of folding tables, their plaster bases gaining yolks, contours, lightly toasted edges, and a glossy sheen as they graduate from one station to the next. Finished eggs rest – yolks shining expectantly, like so many eyes – on racks stretching from floor to ceiling, bakery-style, as their ranks methodically approach the decided goal of 7,000.

The eggs are exhibited creeping down the walls and spreading across the gallery floors. This demands an immediate confrontation between individual viewer and anthropomorphized swarm. The humble contours of each egg are enveloped by the cumulative and unnerving energy of the group. The group mentality here is, as in many large gatherings, difficult to define. Is it a friendly crowd, a humorous displacement of the everyday? Or, is it an infestation – an angry mob, mold, or cancer, metastasizing? The robust symbolic function of the egg adds further complication. Eggs are traditionally coded positively, embodying perfection, purity, resurrection, and unbounded potential. The *fried* egg, on the other hand, occupies a more dubious position. It is broken, defunct, dead, more suburban than divine, and suggestive of the materiality of sex rather than the purity of rebirth. It is, as the notorious PSA announcement tells us, "your brain on drugs" – the domain of the slacker and a symbolic *loss* of potential, but also the pleasure that might be found therein.

Chiappa's fried eggs operate squarely within the uncomfortable intersection of these two symbolic legacies, mining the darkly humorous vein where perfection and failure meet. The title of his show, *LIVESTRONG*, confronts this duality, using a well-known cultural symbol as a metaphor for belief. There are no heroes; there never were. This is familiar territory for the artist, whose visual lexicon frequently revisits figures from his suburban childhood – such as Weber grills, basketballs, and Volvos – to plumb the psychological depths of these gestalt images of mundane but wholesome American exceptionalism.

*Christopher Chiappa, (USA, b.1970 in West Chester, PA), received his undergraduate degree from Middlebury College, VT and later attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. He has held solo exhibitions at MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2014-2015); Kate Werble Gallery, NY, NY (2010, 2012); Fredericks & Freiser, NY, NY (2000, 2003) and Jessica Fredericks, NY, NY (1998). His work has been exhibited at venues including Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA; Museums of Bat Yam, Bat Yam, IL; Western Bridge, Seattle, WA; Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, Santa Barbara, CA. He lives and works in Long Island City, NY.*

Gallery hours are Tuesday - Saturday, from 11 until 6 PM.  
For further information and images please email [info@katewerblegallery.com](mailto:info@katewerblegallery.com).