

J. Parker Valentine and Jay Heikes
Salvador Dalí's Birthday Party
March 6 – April 26, 2026

The two-person exhibition with J. Parker Valentine and Jay Heikes borrows its title from a series of experimental photograms by the legendary, San Francisco-based artist, Jay DeFeo. May 11, 1973, on what was Dalí's 69th birthday, DeFeo created ten black and white images on 8x10 inch silver gelatin paper without the use of a camera by painting and manipulating chemicals, such as developer and fixer, or placing common objects or body parts, directly onto the paper's photosensitive surface, and exposing the union of materials to various amounts of light. There is nothing concretely connecting DeFeo's ethereal and unpredictable works to Dalí, other than the day of their making, although that was surely no coincidence. The images' imagery of dancing, shadowy inks, hints of handprints reaching out from a nightmare, and tubers sprouting from a blackened landscape into a melting sky leave no doubt to their allusions to surrealism and subjective impressions. DeFeo was exploring alchemically, playing with poetry's visual abilities, and - to paraphrase a line from writer John Yau - using the material form of the body to envision immaterial states.

While it may be difficult to put one's finger on Valentine and Heikes's exhibition and its relationship to Dalí or DeFeo, or see the constellation of its points of departure as anything more than points, *Salvador Dalí's Birthday Party* is not a free for all. The connections that it would like to conjure specifically include the disembodied journey, perhaps to the afterlife, or another time, or how to represent the leap across the uncrossable; deviations from official narratives to reveal something hidden, or unrecognized, maybe something even embarrassing, but pulled from somewhere deeper, in this case, from the artists' practice; and a circular, or cyclical process of making across media, its documentation, and coming back around through various creations as renewal or births, that somehow the artwork itself may be a side effect of something more lived. These may be intuitive thoughts and sketchy gestures, maybe in the way early humans marked a cave wall with the charred end of a stick, the wonder in moving one material onto or into another. This exhibition might ask if we are looking at an artist's work in the right way, or is it a backdrop to something else, more fluid, more accumulative. It is searching as an end in and of itself, particularly in a fundamental activity such as drawing, and its connections to painting, sculpting and the hybrids they can create that, as de Feo would say, "transcend the definition of the objects from which they are derived."

Exhibiting in Minneapolis for the first time, J. Parker Valentine has created solo exhibitions at Misako and Rosen, Tokyo; Sydney Sydney, Sydney; Galerie Max Meyer, Dusseldorf; Wschód, Warsaw; KRIEG, Hasselt; Paul Soto, Los Angeles; Vergez Collection, Buenos Aires; Langen Foundation, Neuss; and Artpace, San Antonio (2013); Supportico Lopez, Berlin; Taka Ishii, Kyoto; Lisa Cooley, New York. She lives and works in Los Angeles where her work is included in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Jay Heikes's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, NE; the Berkeley Art Museum & Pacific Film Archive, CA; the Aspen Art Museum, CO; and the Institute of Contemporary Art Philadelphia, PA. He was also featured in the 2006 Whitney Biennial, curated by Chrissie Iles and Philippe Vergne, at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY. Most recently, Heikes was commissioned to create a site-specific installation of bronze stars at the Obama Presidential Center, which will open in July 2026. He lives in St. Paul and works in Minneapolis.

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