



5-50 51st Ave

Long Island City, NY 11101

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Showroom Dynasty

Exhibition Reception:

September 6, 5 - 8 pm

Exhibition:

September 6, 2025 – October 12, 2025



5-50 Gallery presents *Showroom Dynasty*, a solo exhibition presenting ten new multi-media works from Brooklyn-based artist, **Kat Ryals'** *Rugs* series. Curated by **Lauren Hirshfield**, the show invites viewers to engage with Ryals' probing exploration of value, desire, materiality, and cultural hierarchy. She transforms labor-intensive collages of discarded, cheap, artificial and dead objects into sleek textile editions. Each hand-built wall collage is digitally photographed, lightly retouched and reproduced at life-size scale velvet rugs using a commercial dye sublimation print process.

Ryals' artistic practice sits at the intersection of natural and artificial, trash and treasure, sacred and profane, luxury and kitsch. In the past, *horror vacui*, or the fear of emptiness, was often employed in art and was considered sacred and highly regarded. Today, minimalism represents refinement and luxury while maximalism is unrefined and cheap. Ryals' *Rugs* series highlights the casino floor, the detrital glory of belongings lost, and gambling paraphernalia hidden. The selection of collage materials is informed by the classic iconography of Las Vegas, such as spas, pools, steakhouses, buffets, hotel lobbies, casino floors, and wedding chapels. Ryals incorporates poker chips, playing cards, bra straps, peacock feathers and much more into the shape of a seventeenth century Savonnerie French rug pattern. The resulting image is photographed with a high-resolution camera and printed mechanically onto a velvet rug. What many would consider trash, is transformed to create the illusion of luxury. The rugs reference what is, in today's fast fashion world, considered unattainable, the opulence of a hand-crafted, hand-woven textile wall hanging or rug.

What has arisen out of American post-capitalism is an aesthetic most notably manifest along the neon streets of Las Vegas. There, as Dave Hickey writes in his work, *Air Guitar*, is where culture resides - places designed to keep consumers hopelessly spending under the illusion of attaining or becoming something more. Inspired by the gold filigree and ornate environments of a bygone era when luxury was a privilege reserved for a select few, Vegas is mimicry of opulence. In Norman Klein's *The Vatican to Vegas*, she puts into conversation these ideas of Baroque ornate aesthetic and the kitsch of Vegas interiors. Both spaces are environments designed to manipulate perception and create a specific emotional response, whether in grand Baroque palaces or the modern casino floor. Caesar's Palace, for example, is a refuge for those hard-working Americans who put their lives in the hands of the American Dream in the hopes of one day 'making it big'. For a meager sum, the same American can live like a king for a day, if only he doesn't look too closely.



Kat Ryals (b. 1988 in Jonesboro, AR) is a mixed media artist based in Brooklyn, NY. Her mixed media artworks blend photography, craft & sculpture processes, textile materials, and found object assemblage. Ryals received a BFA in Photography from Savannah College of Art and Design and an MFA in Visual Art & an Adv. Certificate in Museum Education from Brooklyn College. She has shown her work nationally, including recent two-person shows at Elijah Wheat Showroom (2024) and Ortega Y Gasset Projects (2022), in group exhibitions with NADA Curated (2024), The Every Woman Biennial (2024), ChaShaMa (2020, 2021), Ortega Y Gasset Projects (2019), and The Wassaic Project (2018, 2019, 2023), and in solo booths at SPRING/BREAK Art Show (2020, 2022). Her first solo exhibition will take place at 550 Gallery in 2025. Ryals has also attended residencies and fellowships at the Studios of Key West (2025), Museum of Arts and Design (2024), The Wassaic Project (2017, 2019, 2022), ChaNorth (2019), The Peter Bullough Foundation (2021), and the Vermont Studio Center (2018). She is a 2022 Joseph Robert Foundation grant recipient, and has been featured in The New York Times, The Financial Times, White Hot Magazine, Artnet, Forbes, and Hyperallergic.

Ryals is also the co-founder of the arts organization PARADICE PALASE, which currently hosts an online community and professional development network for emerging artists. As a curator, she has organized a 2025 solo exhibition of work by Caitlin McCormack (featured in BOMB Magazine) at All Street Gallery in NYC, 3 solo and multi-artist presentations at SPRING/BREAK Art Show, and has curated more than 20 in person and online exhibitions through PARADICE PALASE. Recently, she served as Curator of Art for famed nightlife and culture venues House of X at PUBLIC and House of Yes from 2021-2022.