

CRISTINE BRACHE - *BERMUDA TRIANGLE*

Dates February 24 - April 2, 2022
Opening February 24, 6-8 pm
Location 136 Baxter Street New York, NY 10013

At around the age of ten, artist Cristine Brache devoutly wanted to become a nun, until she learned that her parents were getting divorced. This news came as a shock to her, having been raised so strictly Catholic. It was her first crisis of faith as, in Catholicism, marriage is defined as a sacrament. It is indissoluble, it signifies the indivisible union of Christ and the church. Brache writes, "I thought divorce defied the laws of physics, like unbreaking glass. I went down a spiral questioning whether anything was real. I even tried to summon satan, to prove god existed. But satan never came and my walls of perception collapsed along with my belief in a Christian god."

Throughout the first year of the pandemic, Brache experienced another profound crisis of faith, not of religion but of love and humanity. Leading her to reflect on the loss of meaning, the nature of existence, longing, love, and god. Much of such considerations comprise her exhibition at the gallery, *Bermuda Triangle*.

Bermuda Triangle, echoes a critical moment in which Brache was first required to question reality and confront the realization that things aren't always what they seem. Working in her usual way, the artist relates on a diaristic level and reflects relevant feelings to broader shared experiences, creating a stratified system of symbols. The exhibition obsessively explores her loss of innocence, in correlation with her hope and credence.

The installation includes a hauntingly beautiful video shot on Super 8 wherein she films a partially submerged couple kissing in a pool. The compositions, location, and couple were chosen in an attempt to recreate an old photograph of her parents—also kissing in a pool, and taken when they were most in love. She then contrasts the sweet scene by setting it against a more desperate moment of intimacy, featuring one partner giving the other mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Derived from a selection of the film's stills, Brache then creates paintings on various silks and printed matter. The paintings function as photo negatives of the film but they are washed out, dispossessed. A figurative and literal loss of meaning expressed through the physical loss and repetition of an image. She balances fond consciousness with the violence and panic associated with love on life support, and the metaphorical possibility to breathe life back into someone. Simultaneously asking and answering some of life's most exhilarating questions.

The exhibition name is taken from the well-known mythical section of the Atlantic Ocean roughly bounded by both Miami and Puerto Rico—the artist's place of birth and family origin, respectively—and Bermuda. The location, also known as The Devil's Triangle, is notable for its unexplained circumstances surrounding many accidents and disappearances throughout history. Brache thinks of the Bermuda Triangle as a "mysterious place of cloudy chaos, where time is said to loop and doors to heaven open and close." She writes, "It makes me think of birth, and the love it takes to produce it. Love being maybe the purest form of faith we could have in one another and possibly the apex of human feeling."

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Cristine Brache often takes her personal and family history as a starting point to explore shared histories and trauma, womanhood, and the inevitable power dynamics that accompany these themes. Predominantly working in installation, sculpture, text, and film, the artist, filmmaker, and poet is interested in how people codify their behaviors and appearances for survival and adaptation in oppressive environments. Brache received her MFA in Fine Art Media from the Slade School of Fine Art, London, with recent solo exhibitions including those held at ICA Miami, Miami, FL; Fierman Gallery, New York; Miami's Locust Projects, and Anat Ebgi in Los Angeles, CA. Brache is represented by Fierman in New York and her work has been featured in festivals and group exhibitions internationally.