

## MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Exhibition:** DANA LOK  
*Part and Parse*

**Location:** 88 Eldridge Street, New York, NY 10002

**Dates:** March 17 – May 7, 2022

**Reception:** Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup>

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening, on Thursday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, of Dana Lok's *Part and Parse*, her first one-person exhibition at the gallery. The show will be held at our 88 Eldridge Street location.

In *Part and Parse*, thirteen works spanning from large, vertical canvases to Lok's well known small-scale paintings come together in a tightly threaded meshwork of intriguing motifs and curious speculations. To encounter her work is to undergo a unique but recurrent experience: every act of looking compels a second, more lingering gaze; every thought provoked by an image gives way just as quickly to second guesses. What captivates us in Lok's paintings is their subtle ability to question the clarity of our perceptions, casting doubt that invites wonder rather than suspicion.

Throughout the exhibition, visual cues appear both whole and fragmented, parceled out like a game of signs or flashcards that if flipped over would reveal an unexpected word—an empty glowing plate with a pristine knife might cipher *absence*, a wink toward similar, earlier works that centered a stick of butter. Or in a nearby, almost identical work in which the plate has receded out of focus, transformed into a blurry edged spotlight beam, the same knife appearing now partially in the shadows. Turn this painting over and you might find the word *concept*. Carved out of space, out of the world, the contours of a concept are drawn, incised and peeled back by the mind. In this way, Lok structures her exhibitions in precisely wound webs of logic: an image conjures a name like a clue or secret passageway mapping innumerable paths to travel between artworks.

If the sly gesture of the magician's reveal has characterized many of Lok's previous series, in *Part and Parse* she turns her attention to the action of the surgeon's cut. Central to this show is the artist's fascination with Thomas Eakins's 1875 surgical theater portrait *The Gross Clinic*. Across two paintings that match the dimensions of Eakins's original, *Recursive Surgeon* and *Bone Surgery*, Lok appropriates figures, scenes, and orientations from *The Gross Clinic*, reproducing them while submitting them to various regimens of optical manipulation. Lok draws out an investigation of knowledge production embedded within Eakins's pedagogical scene. Knowledge, she seems to suggest, is a practice of attention, a frame of activity within which we come to recognize ourselves and others. As such, knowing involves boundaries, cropped patches of coherence liable to change at any moment. Truth is in what we do, she assures us, not some hidden away source. We are like Dr. Gross's surgeons, infinitely operating on the world around us and in turn rediscovering ourselves in the process.

While at times playfully disorienting, images in Lok's paintings function like tools for devising explanations in a reality unruly with questions. To do so, she might examine an object by breaking it into smaller and smaller parts, at once searching out answers in the details while funneling further into vertigo. Modulations of scale become a way to attune us to the integral components of any appearance. An idea, as such, fluctuates in and out of view. Teasing this logic of looking and depicting thought's tendency to 'take up space', in one painting, *Parsing Parsimony*, a mysterious series of sentences rises up from a vibrant picnic blanket, beginning: *You have to know how it's made to know what it is*. Folded into the corner of another painting, its obverse: *You don't have to know how it's made*

*to know what it is.* Lok lets thinking seep into an image like water exacerbating a crevice, propagating rifts between paintings as though one work testing and pressuring another.

Across the smaller paintings that punctuate the exhibition, Lok braids an intricate sequence of couplings: two place settings, a pair of plums held by two resting hands, one hand leading another to trace a line, a many-armed effort to draw forth a mark from a luminescent ground. Where previous works of this size offered solitary or stereoscopic views, here there is a curious doubling of both figure and ground—surfaces that suggest a backlit screen, trick mirror or two-way glass. It's a doubling that underscores the delicate sociality of any form of knowing. One finely drawn line distinguishes cooperative trust from coercive persuasion while a balance between the two finds us either on certain or unreliable ground. *Part and Parse* asks us to notice time and time again that our everyday feats of looking, sensing, and knowing blend clarity and confusion, that an image held in focus from one angle will distort from another, allure us again with the unfamiliar.

*Dana Lok (b. 1988, Berwyn, PA) received an MFA from Columbia University in 2015 and attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2016. Solo exhibitions of her work include One Second Per Second at PAGE, New York (2020); Words Without Skin at Clima, Milan (2019); Mind's Mouth at Bianca D'Allessandro, Copenhagen (2018); Soft Fact at Clima, Milan (2017); and The Set of All Sets at Chewday's, London (2016). In 2021, Lok's work was included in Jahresgaben at Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany; Regroup Show at Miguel Abreu Gallery; Fifteen Painters at Andrew Kreps Gallery; and PAGE (NYC) at Petzel Gallery, all in New York. In 2016, she participated in In Place Of, curated by Leah Pires, at Miguel Abreu Gallery.*

For more information or for visuals, please contact the gallery:

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**Hours:** Tuesday – Saturday, 10AM to 6PM or by appointment  
**Subway:** F to East Broadway; B, D to Grand Street; J, M, Z to Delancey / Essex Street