

Rainbow Body Problem

May 20th to June 19th, 2022

No Gallery - 105 Henry Street Store #4 NYC NY 10002

Opening reception May 20th, 6 to 9pm

Artists exhibiting:

Milo Carney, Lea Cetera, Phillip John Velasco Gabriel, Whitney Hubbs, Devin Kenny, Sven Loven, Bob Mizer, Kevin Tobin & Alan Vega

“The Rainbow Body Problem” is a phrase coined for this exhibition, a portmanteau of two concepts: the “rainbow body” of Tantric tradition, and the “mind-body problem” a term referring to conflicting ideas of human consciousness. In various schools of tantric thought, an especially enlightened practitioner is said to possess an etheric rainbow body; when they die their physical attributes quickly dissipate and rainbows are seen near the time and place of their death. Within philosophical thought, the mind-body problem alludes to the debate over whether human consciousness is dualist or monist in nature — Is the mind separate from the body or are both things one?

Using these ideas as inspiration, the Rainbow Body Problem explores how embrace of beauty can be a vehicle for freedom or conversely an escapist trap. A general conceit of the show is the rainbow palette, explicitly present in the idealized horizon of Phillip John Velasco Gabriel’s untitled meditative composition, the abstract cacophony of converging flags in Sven Loven’s painting, the dizzying whirl of commodities in Milo Carney’s frenetic collages. In contrast, many of the other works take on a muted, spectral tone, but have transcendent currents in form and content: Lea Cetera’s endearingly decrepit prayer hands cast in wax and plastic bodega bags, Whitney Hubbs’ intimately ritualized B&W photo of her painted body taken during youth, Devin Kenny’s video installation of ascension and detached longing, Bob Mizer’s quiet studies of sublimated desire, Alan Vega’s descending sculpture of lights and iconographic detritus. Kevin Tobin’s painting, Bat Legs (Piss Slit), is a meeting point of these two aesthetic poles, its skeletal forms and sexual symbolism grounding the opposing themes of ethereal purity and base corporality.

Much of the work revels in the beauty of aesthetics, but also takes heed to be suspicious of this power, evident in a common self-reflexivity in the process of creation. If the potential of the rainbow body lies in the clear light of unencumbered freedom, this show seeks to inquire into creativity’s destination, whether it be on earth or in the sky.