

CHAPTER NY

For immediate release

Body without Organs

Samuel Guerrero, Maren Karlson, Heidi Lau, Rosha Yaghmai, Stella Zhong

curated by Alison Dillulio

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*When you have given [Man] a body without organs
you will have relieved him of all
his automatisms and rewarded him with
his real freedom.¹*

Chapter NY is excited to announce, *Body without Organs*, a group exhibition featuring works by Samuel Guerrero, Maren Karlson, Heidi Lau, Rosha Yaghmai, and Stella Zhong.

Beyond habitual or constraining organizational structures—bodily or otherwise—there lies a limitless unknown. All the artists in this exhibition adapt and deconstruct the familiar, investigating subjects that depart from representational conventions. Navigating the liminal space between reality and imagination, their works reveal objects and beings not yet seen.

Both Guerrero and Lau merge elements of ancient history with conditions of contemporary existence. Guerrero's practice considers humankind's longstanding preoccupation with transcendence, stemming from Pre-Columbian spiritual practices to present-day fitness regimens. They consider the human body's relationship to machines and the use of modern science and technology to push beyond natural physical limits. His subjects succumb to divine forces that inspire hope for something more. Lau similarly channels spirituality, interweaving mythic histories to build fictional narratives that dislocate her work from the linearity of time. Inspired by *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*, a Chinese text from 4th Century BCE that chronicles mythic geography and creatures, her ceramic sculptures propose the possibility of a non-hierarchical, post-human world in which hybrid creatures and lush vegetation occupy a genderless and generative terrain.

Simultaneously engaging a cultural history while eschewing its identity-based significations, Yaghmai's paintings confound the viewer with an other-worldly, kaleidoscopic layering of moiré patterning. She inverts, enlarges, and distorts images from historical Persian miniatures, enacting a formal othering that speaks to her own experience as an American with Iranian heritage. She removes all narrative structures to create elusively microscopic or bodily compositions that suggest the presence of embedded meaning just beyond grasp.

The haziness of Yaghmai's work carries into Karlson's enigmatic paintings that merge the bodily with the mechanical. Her densely wound, conglomerate forms serve as portals between inner and outer worlds. Her most recent paintings reference man-made objects that the artist observed in a polluted river near her family's home in Germany. Like Karlson's paintings, the river embodies the convergence of the man-made and the organic—itsself a passageway, or transportive space that mimics bodily function, but one that is punctured by industrial processes.

¹ Antonin Artaud, "To Have Done with the Judgment of God: An Approximation in English," trans. Guy Wernham, *Northwest Review* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1963): 61.

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Like Karlson, Zhong constructs unrecognizable convergences inspired by everyday forms and experiences. Her paintings and sculptures are less concerned with bodily sensations, but instead finds energy among unlikely objects with incongruent spatial relationships. She imbues inanimate objects with agency and presence, creating a feeling of otherness and anonymity that pushes against notions of power and identity. Zhong crafts a speculative future where inanimate objects roam freely through open space.

Together these artists remind us of our intimate proximity to an ever-present unknown, either incomprehensible or lost to the limits of human perception and memory. They merge inorganic and natural forms with personal and cultural histories to deconstruct learned categorizations and methodical ways of separating and processing information. The alluring quality of their work draws us in, pulling us a little bit closer to an ethereal threshold or void space, allowing us to imagine a limitless world and offering an invitation rather than a warning.

Samuel Guerrero (b. 1997, Mexico City, Mexico) lives and works in Mexico City. He received his BFA from Centro Nacional de las Artes, Mexico City. Recent solo exhibitions include *LISTE*, presented by Lodos, Basel (2022); *Destino vas muy rápido*, Lodos, Mexico City (2021); *Observatorio*, Ladrón galería, Mexico City (2021); *Flor del valle* with Sterling Hedges, Rudimento, Quito (2020); and *Samuel Guerrero, Antes de Cristo*, Mexico City (2019). Guerrero's work is currently included in *Frontal Sphinx*, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo.

Maren Karlson (b. 1988, Rostock, Germany) lives and works in Los Angeles, where she is currently completing an MFA in Painting at UCLA. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include: *Cypher*, Soft Opening, London (2022); *Nodulara*, Ashley, Berlin (2021); *Counsel*, with Kira Scerbin,, Springsteen, Baltimore (2021); *Petal's Path*, in lieu, Los Angeles (2020); *Rats dream about the places they want to explore*, 427 gallery, Riga (2019); *Hear the lizards listening*, with Claude Eigan, Mélange Gallery, Cologne (2019); and *Happy Dark*, Interstate Projects, New York (2017).

Heidi Lau (b. 1987, Macau, China) lives and works in New York. She received a BS from New York University in 2008. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include *Gardens as Cosmic Terrains*, Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn (2022); *Empire Recast*, Grand Lisboa Palace, Macau, China (2021); *Spirit Vessels*, Matthew Brown, Los Angeles (2020); *Blood Echoes*, AALA Gallery, Los Angeles (2019); *The Sentinels*, with Rachel Frank, Geary, New York (2018); *The Primordial Molder*, The Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (2017); and *Third Rome*, Deli Gallery, New York (2016).

Rosha Yaghmai (b. 1978 Santa Monica, CA) lives and works in Los Angeles. She received an MFA from California institute of the Arts in 2007 and her BFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York in 2001. Recent solo and two person exhibitions include *Miraclegrow*, The Wattis Institute, San Francisco (2019); *Postcards & Pipes*, Marlborough Contemporary, New York (2017); *Night Walker*, Cleopatra's, Brooklyn (2016); *Easy Journey to other planets*, Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles (2015); *Waxworks*, Weiss Berlin, Berlin (2016); and *Volitionaries*, Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles (2013). In Spring 2023 Yaghmai will have a solo exhibition at Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles.

Stella Zhong (b. 1993, Shenzhen, China) lives and works in New York. She received an MFA in Sculpture from Yale University in 2021 and a BFA in Glass from Rhode Island School of Design in 2015. Recent solo exhibitions include *(of an object) Synchronized Loss*, Adams and Ollman, Portland, OR (2022); *Fig. 2 PLOT*, Fanta-MLN, Milan (2022); *comet with a tail*, Chapter NY, New York (2021); *nigh*, Peninsula Art Space, Brooklyn (2016); *Unnameable*, Weybosset Gallery, Providence (2015); and *Zhong Diming*, Guan Shanyue Art Museum, Shenzhen (2004).