

JESSICA SILVERMAN GALLERY

For immediate release

Biomorphic Virtuosity: Aleksandra Domanović, Isaac Julien, Christina Quarles

April 26 – June 2, 2018

Opening reception: Thursday, April 26, 6–8pm

Jessica Silverman Gallery is pleased to present "Biomorphic Virtuosity," a three-person exhibition about the present tense and multiple futures of the human body. Through paintings by Christina Quarles, sculptures by Aleksandra Domanović, and a video and collages by Isaac Julien, the show explores the relationship between animal and machine, environmentalism, virtuoso aesthetics and novel forms of beauty.

Isaac Julien's "Radioactive" photographic collages (2018) riff on his film "Encore II: Radioactive" (2004). Both are inspired by Octavia Butler's science fiction classic "The Parable of the Sower." Butler's gripping tale is about a cyborg who has just lost her husband and son in a final World War where the Earth is being destroyed by an atomic fire. Julien's film and collages follow this solitary heroine, exploring her "mixed race" of human and mechanical origins, through a solarized landscape. Julien's application of gold and silver foil shifts the work beyond the photographic into a compelling terrain of hybrid materiality.

Aleksandra Domanović's work weaves together ancient art history, contemporary popular culture and cutting-edge scientific research. *Kalbträgerin* (2017), which means "calf bearer" in German, consists of a rectangular red column, crowned with a baby bull whose legs are held by slender human arms. The sculpture is inspired by an ancient Greek statue, depicting the sacrificial offering of a calf to Athena, the goddess of wisdom. Relevant to the puzzling meaning of the work are two details: Domanović's calf is hornless, the result of genetic modification; and the column is inscribed with an *ensō* or circular Zen symbol of enlightenment and unceasing transformation. Genetic transformation is also at issue in *The Fly* (2017), a stacked paper triptych, which draws from David Cronenberg's sci-fi film where flawed experiments in teleportation lead the main character to splice his own DNA with that of a fly. Together, Domanović's works raise questions about reproduction, mutation and the natural versus the engineered.

Christina Quarles' paintings are sensuous studies of human entanglement, which display a dazzling range of painting styles and an uncanny sense of inside-out space. Working with a bright spectrum of color that sometimes bleeds into the raw canvas, Quarles deploys a broad range of creative tools, including brushes, combs, rubber forks, X-ACTO knives, tape, and odd-ball utensils from 99 cent stores. The figures are painted from strong memories, rather than live models or photographs, which results in works with a haunted or active sense of timelessness.

Aleksandra Domanović's (b. 1981, Novi Sad, SFR Yugoslavia) recent major solo exhibitions include the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Schwarz Foundation, Samos; Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow; firstsite, Colchester; and Kunsthalle Basel. Her work has been featured in recent group exhibitions at Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Whitechapel Gallery, London; New Museum, New York; Dallas Museum of Art; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing; and Kunsthalle Vienna. She was the recipient of the 2014/5 Ars Viva prize for artists working in Germany. She is currently in residence at the MAK Centre for Art and Architecture in Los Angeles and has her first major U.S. museum solo show opening at MOCA Cleveland in October of 2018. Domanović lives and works in Berlin.

Isaac Julien (b. 1960) has won many awards for his work, including at least half a dozen international awards for his seminal film *Looking for Langston* (1989). In 2001 he was nominated for the Turner Prize for *The Long Road to Mazatlan* and *Vagabondia*. Julien studied painting and fine art film at Central St Martin's School of Art, and is currently a member of faculty at the Whitney Museum of American Arts and Professor of Global Art at the University of the Arts, London. His work is in the collections of Tate Modern, Centre Pompidou, the Museum of Modern Art (New York), Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, Guggenheim Museum, the Albright-Knox

JESSICA SILVERMAN GALLERY

Museum, the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the National Museum of Norway, Brandhorst Collection, Fundación Helga de Alvear, Goetz Collection, the Louis Vuitton Art Foundation, LUMA Foundation, the Zeitz Foundation and the Kramlich Collection. Select solo museum exhibitions include Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City (2016); the De Pont Museum, Netherlands (2015); Museum of Modern Art, New York (2013), and Art Institute of Chicago (2013). He currently has solo exhibitions at MOCA Taipei and the Whitworth at the University of Manchester as well as works in the group exhibition, "Selves and Others" at SFMOMA. Julien is the recipient of the James Robert Brudner '83 Memorial Prize and Lectures at Yale University (2016). Most recently he received the Charles Wollaston Award (2017), for most distinguished work at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and in 2018 he was made a Royal Academician. Julien was awarded the title Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen's birthday honours, 2017. Julien lives and works in London.

Christina Quarles (b. 1985, Chicago, IL) received an MFA from the Yale School of Art in 2016, and holds a BA from Hampshire College. Quarles was a 2016 participant at the Skowhegan School for Painting and Sculpture. Recent group exhibitions include "Trigger: Gender as a Tool and as a Weapon" (New Museum, New York, NY), "Fictions" (The Studio Museum, New York, NY), and "Reconstitution" (LAXART, Los Angeles, CA), among others. Quarles has been the recipient of a number of awards and grants including the Rema Hort Mann Emerging Artist Grant and the Robert Schoelkopf Fellowship at Yale University. She is preparing for a solo exhibition at the Berkeley Art Museum in September 2018 as part of the MATRIX series and will participate in the "Made in L.A." biennial at the Hammer Museum opening on June 2, 2018. Quarles lives and works in Los Angeles.