

## ROMANCE

**Zora Moniz**

*i stage up late*

Nov 11–Dec 22, 2023

*Any faint shadowy semblance; an unsubstantial image. An unwanted image similar to and overlapping or adjacent to the main one on a television screen, caused by the transmitted image being received both directly and via reflection. (attributive) Abandoned. (attributive) Remnant; the remains of a(n). (attributive) Perceived or listed but not real. (attributive) Substitute. (obsolete, transitive) To haunt; to appear to in the form of an apparition. (obsolete) To die; to expire. (graphical user interface) To gray out (a visual item) to indicate that it is unavailable.*

*A false image formed... (In the eye) in my eyes.*

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I experience migraines with aura—often described as a body's warning signal of impending pain—where I partially lose my vision for a period of time. I have experienced sporadic clusters of migraines since I was a teenager, sometimes months or years apart, and at the inception of this exhibition I had one for the first time in a few years. During these periods I am highly sensitive to light, and many components of these new works were made from bed in my dark room. For weeks after I fear the return of the blurry dots and ghostly strips of light that signal another migraine. I (think I) see things—dancing spots, bug-like forms or rippling shadowy shapes out of the corners of my eyes, provoking my excavation of shadow and ghost as image making tool, as parameter, and as analogy for missing form and shape: *i stage up late*.

*i stage up late* references a note I found tucked in the pages of a book that I cannot remember. It slipped out after I brought it home. Written on the note was “*i stage up late*” with a drawing of a wide open eye. I assume it was a child's note where they meant to write “*I stayed up late*”—I can't find the note, but have repeatedly redrawn it. I wonder if the note might still be nestled in a book somewhere in my home.

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Zora Moniz's work sees what's no longer there but is remembered. Her practice buries abstractions of encounters with loss, attempts at repair, and simultaneous play through near-fictions—depictions of a bed, or what could be a bed, with the hint of someone who could have once been there. Articles of clothing with no one (body) in it: items she's lost, or were never hers to begin with. Ambient light emanates from papier-mâché floor sconces calling to mind petrified fabric, arresting something soft, or holding comfort in suspension. Ad-hoc floor box-cum-lamp sculptures might initially suggest beds with pillows or furniture covered with sheets, but the cluster forms an uneasy makeshift graveyard or small contained worlds functioning as sites of mending and control.

Developing her compositions through a slow process of layering (paper, paint, glue, scraps, fabric), concealment and disguise are important components: things re/joined, patched, covered up. Newsprint and paper ephemera collected from around New York City and Chinatown are collaged in both works on panel and paper sculptures utilizing a long-standing Mexican handcraft technique to produce carton piedra (stone cardboard). Or redigesting imagery from former works and from her surrounding environment, she conjures a reassuring cycle of resurrection and recycling. Each motif feeds into another: swirls of spots like steppingstones on a garden path, MTA subway flooring patched with new linoleum, tacks to keep something in place, nails and screws on a stage floor, an ache in your head. In these artifacts of repair or (dis)order, Moniz both practices discomfort and creates self-soothing abstract effigies, amulets that allow for a working through the fear of the inevitable next round of pain to heal.

**Zora Moniz** (b. 1995, Oakland, California) is an interdisciplinary artist living and working in New York City. She received her BA in World Arts and Cultures with a minor in Food Studies from UCLA's School of Arts and Architecture in 2017. She recently attended the Can Serrat Art Residency, El Bruc, Spain, in April 2022. She has been included in exhibitions at A.D. Gallery, New York; The Hole, New York; WHAAM!, New York; Sculpture Gallery, Broad Art Center, Los Angeles; The Loft at Gallery 1548, Los Angeles.