

CENTRAL FINE

Corinne Bernard. *Seemingly*

October 22nd - November 24th

Corinne Bernard's first individual presentation explores the notions of appearances, sexuality, gender, and an elusive core that keeps on moving, generating reverberations/emanations that form a type of language. This language is accumulative, and it's charged by an internal sense of logic, designed to generate conceptual and visual permutations, disorder, and gaps of meaning.

Bernard's works reference the conventions and histories of painting, but largely remain within the field of 'drawing'. The central, symmetrical compositions repeated throughout her work, are informed by religious iconography, illuminated manuscripts, and stained-glass windows, among other sources. Bernard's vocabulary, in constant formation, appears as an extremely organized system, and the works -- opening like a book-- insist on presenting the notion of meaning, and the lack of it, activating the poetic space through unreadable texts, shapes, and colors that act as disruptors.

Bernard names certain aspects of her practice: To Frame [1], To Matrix [2], To Texture [3], To Write [4]...All these nomenclatures, evidence an insistence on establishing parameters designed by a personal take on reality. Indicating that there's a pursuit of what she calls the "order of the elements" --be it textures, symbols, color, objects, or carvings -- all interchangeable, and, designed to destabilize the idea of order per se.

In some works, spirals, or maze-like forms, filled with text, that were originally poems, or notes written by Bernard, map a trajectory that's unreadable, unpronounceable, and yet, not silent. In some of these text-based works, shells or random objects are inserted into cut-shapes or glued onto the structure of the verses, or paragraphs on her panels. The objects impact the works with the stamp of the real, appearing as solidifications, or hardenings under internal and foreign pressure, as a pear within a shell. These tangible elements contrast with the very notion of representation. They interrupt and confront the mediated mark-making, with their ontological weight.

Bernard's works exist between emergence and disappearance, acting as portals buzzing with constant activity, revealing marks interwoven in a dialectic game, constructing a tenacious investment in the chronicles of the spiritual, indexing time and language, in a hyper-determinate, and yet, unexpected way.

Corinne Bernard (b. St. Louis, MO) is based between New York, NY and Miami Beach, FL. Bernard completed her MFA at Hunter College in 2023, and her BFA at Otis College of Art and Design in 2015. Her work has most recently been exhibited in group exhibitions at The Patricia and Phillip Frost Art Museum, Miami, FL; CENTRAL FINE, Miami Beach, FL; and Hunter College, New York, NY.

Seemingly is Bernard's first individual presentation.

Notes

1. TO FRAME

The spiritual, or the inference of the unseen, is initiated by the understanding of a portal. The portal is a border or frame that lets you see the inside, see the unseen by dividing outside to reveal the inside. My borders can sometimes be temporal (the ribbon that frames the work or is featured within it) or permanent (architecture that structures some compositions) or sometimes bodily, like the outline of a hand that is filled with water, sky, or gardens. The ribbon is drawn with patterned gradients, giving the illusion of something in constant movement. It is weightless but as it moves and intersects itself, it opens a space around it from the outside. The architecture is firm; it has columns that symbolize a permanent structure, a human-made portal that is determined to be a point of access to the other realm, like a temple.

2. TO MATRIX

To investigate the bearing of the seen and the unseen (which begets which), most of my drawings hold tension in what I call a matrix. Part of the definition of matrix according to Merriam-Webster is :1: something within or from which something else originates, develops, or takes form...The matrix takes many forms based on these compositions and it is always used to symbolize the mysterious origin; of me, my body, the world around me, time, space, you.

3. TO TEXTURE

The textures in the drawings are drawn from the elements: water, fire, earth, and sky. The tools to make the textures also mirror the elements; drawing with the pencil as earth to make line and form, creating shade and space with graphite powder as air, and painting with water-soluble graphite as water. They are stylized approaches.

4. TO WRITE

Text: cursive formed from a continuous line; the text embodies multiple truths as it creates a positive and a negative with its form. The written word is inseparable from drawing. To write is to draw. Text in my work is scripture, the communication of ideas, place, and values through stories, through perspective. I think about scripture often. I think about how many ways a story can be understood, how it can be manipulated, punctuated, decontextualized, preached, pondered, and lived. A story may be a single perspective but the more persons that perceive the story, that single perspective is expanded, and that single story develops into many, like a game of telephone. The text in my drawings functions as scripture; with multiple truths, conflicting ideas, and many ways of understanding.

Books are an embodiment of knowledge, a mode of communication for thought, stories, and observations. Each book declares some truth, but how can conflicting truths coexist? Books show up in many forms within my drawings: in their symmetrical compositions (a book's matrix is its spine), in the text that initiates stories, and in their materiality as works on paper. For example, in collaboration with the poet Evie Ward, I have created a book of my drawings that is an embodiment of her poem, A Spongy Kind of One. In a collaboration, we also begin with two truths who attempt to negotiate into one: myself and Evie into a single work. In the book, neither exist separately; the text is bound in the drawings and the drawings do not exist without the text. This is a metaphor for drawing as an embodiment of word (poem)