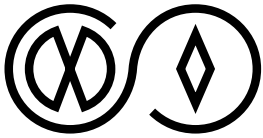


15 May - 29 June 2024



Phosphor

Antonia Kuo | Kathryn Kerr | Leslie Martinez

Project Native Informant presents a three person exhibition with Kathryn Kerr, Antonia Kuo and Leslie Martinez on the nature of transformation and belief. Titled *Phosphor*, all three artists share a conceptual and formal process of alchemy, transforming what was once mire and murky into light and brightness. In phosphorescence, a solid material is exposed to radiation such as ultraviolet light or an electron beam, and what was once dark, hidden, forbidden, is illuminated, uncovered, accessible.

Kerr, Kuo and Martinez are collectors of materials — be it iconography drawn from the internet, from personal memories or photographs, or objects imbued with affect. Through processes of transformation in the studio all three reveal studies of light, space and memory.

Kerr, Kuo and Martinez ask the viewer to look deeply, to suspend disbelief and take conceptual leaps of faith. The critic James Elkins describes the process of painting akin to the way all three artists approach their work: 'To an artist, a picture is both a sum of ideas and a blurry memory of "pushing paint," breathing fumes, dripping oils and wiping brushes, smearing and diluting and mixing. Bleary preverbal thoughts are intermixed with the namable concepts, figures and forms that are being represented. The material memories are not usually part of what is said about a picture, and that is a fault in interpretation because every painting captures a certain resistance of paint, a prodding gesture of the brush, a speed and insistence in the face of mindless matter: and it does so at the same moment, and in the same thought, as it captures the expression of a face.' For Kerr, Kuo and Martinez, thinking and doing, making and becoming, are inherent and equivalent processes. What we see in their works are luminous and transparent revelations of making. Equally, each artist asks the viewer to behold the new and fantastical worlds they inhabit.

Rather than literal representations of objects or gestures of pure abstraction, Kerr's paintings appear as portals or fragments of time and memory. Her compositions seem fleeting, but grounded, hovering between time and space. The paintings are more than a compilation of references but vast collections of information — iconography, gestures, scavenges. They appear to draw from collective memory or landscape, not as appropriation, but as an attitude, a reflection of the artist. They seem to tell open ended narratives or dreams. Kerr's recent paintings exude an emergence of colour and form from a darkened or muddied atmosphere, a luminescence which appears to reveal something previously concealed, a kind of interior logic of the painting itself. In Kerr's paintings, the act of viewing is itself a form of scavenging.

Kuo's practice centres around recording, image-making and the potential of the photographic medium. In her unique 'photochemical paintings'. Kuo manipulates photographic imagery and painterly actions on light-sensitive silver gelatin paper, distilling the material's innate ability to capture light, time and mark making. The foundation for Kuo's layered pieces often begins with hand-painting, gestural drawings or photographs, which are then translated through various printmaking and image transfer methodologies, applied to the surface of the light-sensitive paper, and developed experimentally with photographic chemistry. Over multiple sessions in chemical baths and successive layers of painting dyes, the images gain complexity and become something akin to what Kuo refers to as 'destabilised images,' deliberately complicating the act of visual recognition.

Martinez's process is equally intuitive and revealing. The artist collects textiles and other materials often sourced from loved ones, which are then soaked in paint, reconfigured and splayed onto the canvas. These are combined with scraps and paint chips, saved and hardened over many months, with industrial materials such as sawdust and iron oxide to build up the surfaces, agglomerations that coalesce into linkages that relate to the body and emergence of form. The colours emerge out of darkened or muddied grounds, possessing a halo of phosphorescent chalkiness, an afterglow, emitting a kind of powdery materiality. Their canvases are fluid experiments in material, colour, and gesture. Through material citation, Martinez keeps the previous material owners' memories alive. Everything is in a continuous state of becoming.

Project Native Informant
Units 1 and 3, 48 Three Colts Lane, London E2 6GP
+44 (0)20 8133 8887 • write@projectnativeinformant.com
projectnativeinformant.com

List of Works (Clockwise from Entrance)

1. Antonia Kuo
Super Collider, 2024
Unique chemical painting on light-sensitive silver gelatin paper, acrylic, bullet-pierced aluminium relief in custom aluminium frame
180.3 x 161.6 x 11 cm (71 x 63 5/8 x 4 3/8 in)
2. Leslie Martinez
Transmitter, 2024
Canvas scraps, used studio rags, used studio clothing, paper fragments, paint chips, pumice, glass beads and acrylic paint on canvas
36 x 38 x 10 cm (14 1/8 x 15 x 4 in)
3. Kathryn Kerr
Maureen, 2024
Oil, acrylic and Flashe on canvas
96.5 x 111.6 x 3.2 cm (38 x 44 x 1 1/4 in)
4. Leslie Martinez
Primordial Halo at the Ragged Edge, 2024
Canvas scraps, used studio rags, used studio clothing, plastic film stuffing, polyester sewing threads, paper fragments, paint chips, modelling paste and acrylic paint on canvas
152.4 x 199.5 x 21.5 cm (60 x 78 1/2 x 8 1/2 in)
5. Antonia Kuo
Captive Sun, 2024
Unique chemical painting on light-sensitive silver gelatin paper in custom aluminium frame
166.4 x 138.1 x 5.1 cm (65 1/2 x 54 3/8 x 2 in)
6. Kathryn Kerr
Me & My Boys, 2024
Oil, acrylic and Flashe on canvas
152.4 x 183 x 3.2 cm (60 x 72 x 1 1/4 in)

Kerr, Kuo and Martinez received MFAs from Yale University in 2018.

Kathryn Kerr (b. 1984, based in New York) recent solo exhibitions at Lomex, New York; ANDNOW, Dallas. Group exhibitions at David Peter Francis, New York; Chapter NY, New York.

Antonia Kuo (b. 1987, based in New York) recent solo and duo presentations at Art Basel Hong Kong; F, Houston; Chapter NY, New York; CHART, New York. Recent group exhibitions include Metropolitan Museum of Manila; Maine College of Art & Design, Portland; Each Modern, Taipei, TW; Centre Pompidou, Paris. Kuo's work is included in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York and Centre Pompidou, Paris. This year, Kuo will have a two-person exhibition with Martin Wong at the Frye Art Museum, Seattle.

Leslie Martinez (b. 1985, based in Dallas) recent solo exhibitions at MoMA PS1, New York; Speed Museum, Louisville; Commonwealth and Council, LA; Blaffer Art Museum, Houston. Recent group exhibitions at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston and Dallas Museum of Art. Martinez's work is included in the collections of Perez Art Museum, Miami; Dallas Museum of Art; High Museum, Atlanta; Speed Museum, Louisville; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Project Native Informant would like to thank ANDNOW, Dallas and Chapter NY, New York for their kind support and assistance.