

ARIA DEAN

Facts Worth Knowing

September 14–October 26, 2024

Opening reception: Friday, September 13, 6–8pm



ARIA DEAN. *so solid*, 2024. Detail.

Aria Dean's (b. 1993) vigorous practice is characterized by a playful and probing dialogue with representational systems. Her sculptures, installations, videos and essays unsettle the status, operations, and motives of the art object—emphasizing dispossession and circulation over embellished meaning.

Facts Worth Knowing is Dean's second solo exhibition at Château Shatto and the inaugural exhibition at the gallery's new space on Western Avenue. In her first solo exhibition composed entirely of sculpture, Dean extends her approach to the medium developed in recent years, whereby digital forms are manufactured in—or extracted from—computer programs and then subjected to degrees of distortion. Made physical through inventive fabrication methods, Dean's sculptures evidence an impossible material event. The works call to the entwinement of temporality and matter and conjure the interdependency between the inert materials that give sculpture form and the dynamics that conceive of it.

The statuary that populate *Facts Worth Knowing* borrow their compositions from the set of D.W. Griffith's 1916 film *Intolerance*—a monumental, Babylonian construction that was abandoned once filming wrapped and left to decay on a lot in East Hollywood. In the century since, the set has been the subject of reference, reproduction, and imitation. *Facts Worth Knowing* takes this phantasmagoria as its subject by treating archival documentation of *Intolerance* alongside instances in which Griffith's set was simulated: a recently demolished mall facade in Hollywood; accounts found in Kenneth Anger's pseudo-journalism; an independent film dedicated to the production of *Intolerance*; a Californian theme park; and the open world video game *L.A. Noire*.

Dean's exhibition contributes to this sprawling map of physical and speculative locales by extracting, seizing, and manipulating pirated versions of the *Intolerance* set. Multiplying the "colossal spectacle" of Griffith's film through a transformation of its debris, her sculptures insert themselves into a system of objects that are reified through imitation and newly-opened channels of circulation.

Simultaneously, Dean's sculptures carry with them the representational devices—how illusory space is configured in a moving image—that hurled these forms into the theater of perception in the first place. Griffith himself has been credited with introducing cinematographic techniques that have since been baked into common filmmaking conventions: subtitles, close ups, camera pans, fade ins and fade outs, cross cutting, and parallel editing. As such, *Intolerance* imprinted a way of seeing that set the tone for 20th century commercial filmmaking and helped to define how we experience illusionism and define it against reality. The spliced logic of time proposed by montage, for example, has been effortlessly accepted by audiences since Griffith's films entered movie theaters.

Nearly a century later, *LA Noire* was celebrated for its "realism" upon its release in 2011. Grabbing the forms of the abandoned *Intolerance* set from the video game, Dean captures the embedded layers of representational models in the process, including the low poly surfaces that compose video game objects and the slant of a column that is angled by the player's point of view. In doing so, Dean asks: what defines reality within illusory space? What constitutes the real when fiction is folded so thoroughly into it?

Through this arrangement of objects, Dean plucks at the historical terms of engagement for sculpture: the relationship between the surface and interiority of a sculptural object; the dialectic between the static nature of an object and the absolute motion in which its perceived; the tussle between meaning and phenomenology; what underlies and defines a readymade; the entanglement of the object and the commodity; and the dance between space and time enacted upon sculpture.

3D modeling by Harry Sanderson

Special thanks to Harry Sanderson, Andy Rickert and Filip Kostic

Aria Dean (b. 1993, Los Angeles, USA) is an artist, writer and filmmaker based in New York. Selected solo and group exhibitions of her work have been presented at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Toronto; The Renaissance Society, Chicago; Whitney Biennial 2022, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; REDCAT, Los Angeles; Made in L.A. 2020, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge; Tai Kwun, Hong Kong; Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Geneva; Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin; de Young Museum, San Francisco; and Knockdown Center, New York.

Dean has delivered lectures and presentations at various universities and institutions, including Harvard University, Cambridge; Yale University, New Haven; California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), Santa Clarita; The Studio Museum, Harlem; MMK Museum of Modern Art, Frankfurt; Serpentine Galleries, London; New Museum, New York; DIA Art Foundation, New York. Dean's writings have appeared in several publications, a selection of which are available as *Bad Infinity*, published by Sternberg Press in 2023.

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Dean's work is included in the collections of museums and foundations in the US and internationally, including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Hartwig Art Foundation, Amsterdam; The Shah Garg Foundation, California; Olivia Foundation, Mexico City; University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Chicago; Kadist, Paris and San Francisco; and De Pont Museum, Tilburg.

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