

# Adams and Ollman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*There's Something About Maria: Vaginal Davis and ektor garcia*  
at Adams and Ollman  
September 20–October 19, 2024  
Opening Reception: Friday, September 20, 5–7pm

Adams and Ollman is pleased to present *There's Something About Maria*, a two-person exhibition featuring Vaginal Davis and ektor garcia. The artists, who first met in 2013, developed a friendship through years of correspondence, discovering shared interests in unearthing or re-inscribing forgotten histories and traditions, material experimentation, and unconventional modes of production. The exhibition will include sculptural installations, paintings, and collaborative works that pay homage to personal histories within broader cultural narratives, myth-making, and community and family traditions.

Both artists challenge traditional ways of making and disseminating art and ideas. Davis, whose history includes hosting parties, self-publishing zines, and gossiping, creates work for and with friends and fellow artists, often displayed in her Berlin atelier, heard on the radio, or experienced in her presence. garcia pushes boundaries and upends expectations of materials and objects. Like his sculptures and installations, garcia works fluidly across geographies in a nomadic practice that traces material use and tradition from place to place.

*There's Something About Maria* centers on the polycultural figure of Mary, whose name, possibly Egyptian in origin, has dual meanings—"beloved" and "rebellious." The iconic Mary becomes an archetypal third presence in the exhibition, embodying the power and wisdom of the divine feminine and evoking ideas of motherhood, family lineage, and ancestral knowledge. For Davis, Mary also has a more personal meaning—it was the name of her mother, Mary Magdalene Duplantier. For garcia, Mary was once a



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pseudonym.

Central to *There's Something About Maria* is Davis's constellation of painted portraits of various women, all named Mary, from various walks of life including cinema, literature, and science. This suite of "Marys" creates a through-line between famous, infamous, and unknown women—an unlikely cohort of historical, cultural, and political figures, including Marie Curie, Maria Montessori, and Mary Queen of Scots—across time and place. Presenting themselves as ghostly apparitions atop notes and to-do lists, the paintings in the show are created with unconventional materials such as make-up, medicines, tonics, and powders in reference to beauty standards, artifice, identity, witchcraft, and the history of Black alternative medicine.

Maria is a ubiquitous name and subject in the religious traditions and handicrafts of Mexican Catholic culture which deeply influence Garcia's work. Motifs and imagery found in this religious material culture—flames, hands, lace—appear throughout Garcia's ceramic sculptures and sculptural assemblages. The sculptures, resembling things from everyday life such as ropes, doilies, chains, curtains, pots, belts, and industrial castoffs, perform personal and poetic functions in the form of portable repositories or mementos that represent a form of personal activism, and celebrate those who have carried forward undervalued traditions while challenging gendered, classed, and racialized biases surrounding craft and labor. Garcia offers a reverential retooling that rethink conventional value systems, proposing materiality as an active agent with the power to cross geographical boundaries, advocate on our behalf, or watch over us. In the exhibition, the artist's vessels are both functional and poetic, creating a venerated space; his finely crafted crochet, handmade with thin copper wire, further demarcates the space, charging it with an erotic, electric energy.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Vaginal Davis (b. Los Angeles, CA; lives and works in Berlin, DE) has been included in exhibitions at The Hammer (2021), Los Angeles, CA; Art Institute of Chicago (2020), IL; the New Museum (2017), 80WSE (2016), Cooper Union (2015), Participant Inc. (2012, 2010), all in New York, NY; Portland Art Museum (2018), Portland, OR; National Museum of Contemporary Art Bucharest, RO (2009); Museum of Modern and

Contemporary Art Rijeka, HR (2009); Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA (2008); and Kunsthau Bregenz, AUT (2006), among many others. She has performed at the New Museum, New York, NY (2017); documenta 14, Kassel, DE (2017); Lafayette Anticipations, Archives nationales, Paris, FR (2017); Arsenal Institut für Film und Videokunst, Berlin, DE (2017); GenderFest Athens, GRC (2017); Creative Time Summit, Washington, D.C. (2016); Kunstverein Hannover, DE (2016); Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, Ontario, CA (2015); Centre for Contemporary Arts Glasgow, SCO (2015); New York University, NY (2014); School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL (2013, 2020); Participant Inc., New York, NY (2012); Southbank Centre, London, UK (2012); The Getty Center as part of Pacific Standard Time, Los Angeles, CA (2012); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (2011); and Tate Modern, London, UK (2011), among others. Davis has been a visiting professor at Lund University-Malmö Art Academy, SE; Justus Liebig Universität Gießen, DE; Goethe Universität Frankfurt, DE; Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; and New York University, New York, NY. Her prolific artistic production also extends to her participation in a number of art bands including The Afro Sisters; Black Fag; ¡Cholita! The Female Menudo; and Pedro, Muriel, & Esther; as well as solo projects. Her zine publications include *Dowager*, *Crude*, *Fertile La Toyah Jackson*, *Shrimp*, *the Magazine for Licking and Sucking Bigger and Better Feet*, *Yes, Ms. Davis*, and *Sucker*. In 2009, she was awarded the Ethyl Eichelberger Art Prize. Davis has hosted and curated the performative film event *Rising Stars, Falling Stars* at the Arsenal Institut für Film und Videokunst in Berlin for eight years. *Magnificent Product*, a solo exhibition examining Davis' work and legacy, is currently on view at the Moderna Museet, Nationalmuseum, Index, Accelerator, all Stockholm, SE.

ektor Garcia (b. 1985, Red Bluff, California; lives and works nomadically) received his BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL (2014), and his MFA from Columbia University, New York, NY (2016). Garcia was included in The Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2024); Hangzhou Triennial of Fiber Art, Hangzhou, CN (2019); the La Triennial at El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY (2021); and Prospect 5 in New Orleans, LA (2021). His work has also been exhibited at The Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, WA; New Museum, New York, NY; Sculpture Center, Long Island City, NY; Museum

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Folkwang, Essen, DE; LAXART, Los Angeles, CA;  
Museo de Arte de Zapopan, Guadalajara, MX; and Blaffer  
Art Museum, Houston, TX.

Vaginal Davis, *Mary Pickford in Caprice*, 2020,  
Hamamelis Wasser with Mandrake, Henbane and Datura,  
hydrogen peroxide, glycerine, food coloring, water color  
pencils, discontinued over the counter medicine including  
Anacin, Excedrin and Lydia E. Pinkham Health Tonic,  
coconut oil, nail polish, enamel, and hairspray, 2 1/16h x 1  
9/16w in, 5.24h x 3.97w cm

ektor garcia, *portaflor tornasol*, 2024, glazed ceramic,,  
crochet copper wire, 12h x 8w x 8d in, 30.48h x 20.32w x,  
20.32d cm