

SOLDES

Lakshmi Luthra
Noli me tangere

with new poems by
Christopher Carlton

ON VIEW
February 15–March 15, 2025

EXHIBITION OPENING
February 15, 5–8pm

For Immediate Release

When I was young, I was warned that mud puddles give you worms, and that these worms live inside of you, in the “stomach”—the organ-shorthand for all interiority. I imagined these parasites as highly intelligent and strategic, hijacking bodily wants.

The hookworms’ symptoms are more devious than most, leaving their looping scrawl on the skin. When deciphered it reads *you have been breached*. A surface defines an interior, a site for fantasies of self-containment and restraint, but this writing on the flesh is not one’s own. An intimate other speaks through the surface; a ventriloquism articulating the dependency between parasite and host.

Adherents to the emission theory of vision point to the glowing eyes of animals in the dark as evidence, proof that beams of light emit from the eye to generate visual perception. Rather than reflected light from the object penetrating the eye, it is the eye that is armed with light. Emission theory is the touch-me-not conception of vision. The eye deflects, protects itself.

The photographs in *Noli me tangere* sidestep conventional optics. They are *images by other means*, made by different forms of touch: the even pressure of the etching-press drum forms slopes and lips and pocks in low relief. These impressions onto silver chloride paper are licked by light, forming gradient contours and mineral pools. The surface is a scene excerpted from a wider expanse. Here is a similar kind of looking to the detail inset on a map, a topographical enlargement that offers specificity and precision while forfeiting a total sense of space. Here I find the pleasurable misrecognition of myself, my body as a parallel site, mapped to emulsion and light sensitive.

**510 BERNARD STREET
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012**

**AUX@SOLDES LA
@SOLDES.LA**

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Looking and reading, I make out an *o*, *l*, *i*, loop, hook, lure, dash, suture.
The edge of the frame recedes and is replaced by the curl of the print. The
haptic image pictures submission, impact, compromise, latency. These are
the ways touch can cut.

— Mary Helena Clark

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