

SOLDES

Diaphane

curated by Patrick R. Crowley

with artworks by

Brian Bartz, Matthew Gallagher,
Matthew Angelo Harrison,
Liam Moore, Kandis Williams and
Jessica Wilson

April 19th – May 27th, 2025

EXHIBITION OPENING

April 19, 2025, 6–9pm

For Immediate Release

Transparency—on one hand, it is the cornerstone of Western liberal democracy. We demand it of the policies and procedures that govern our political, social, and financial institutions. On the other, we risk wielding it as an ideological cudgel, an administrative or intellectual imperative that flattens difference and threatens what the Martinican poet and thinker Édouard Glissant evocatively called the “right to opacity.” Hovering between these modalities of transparency and opacity is our ambivalent attitude towards labor that toggles between the valorization of showing one’s work and the phantasmagoric occultation of the commodity form under capitalism. At issue in each case are the conditions of possibility for perception and communication. The philosophy of this relationality goes all the way back to Aristotle, for whom transparency is the material basis of sense perception. Without it, we wouldn’t be able to see (or hear, smell, touch, or even taste) anything. Far more than a mere void or vacuum, transparency is the defining property of a medium, a spatial interval between bodies. As such, it facilitates the flow of information over distances both great and small. The artists in *Diaphane* exploit various media materialities—resin, wax, drafting film, plexiglass, mirrors, screens, radio—to channel the contemporary stakes of this ancient concept.

In *Conduit*, Brian Bartz presents a clear acrylic cube enclosing a cluster of electronics, long rabbit ear antennae projecting akimbo from its top. The work is listening—listening both to the ambient conversations of those standing nearby, and a range of radio frequencies invisibly undulating through the ether. A computer inside transcribes these communications onto an unfurling scroll of receipt paper that spills out onto the floor like old ticker tape machines in bell jars that recorded stock trading information transmitted through telegraph lines. Music, talk radio, and advertisements

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

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

SOLDES

Diaphane

curated by Patrick R. Crowley

with artworks by

Brian Bartz, Matthew Gallagher,
Matthew Angelo Harrison,
Liam Moore, Kandis Williams and
Jessica Wilson

April 19th – May 27th, 2025

EXHIBITION OPENING

April 19, 2025, 6–9pm

intermingle and compete with one another such that the transcription resembles a cross between a stenographic record and a poetic or oracular utterance. The computer is programmed to wake up and go to sleep at local sunrise and sunset. While it “dreams,” it takes snippets of these broadcasts and feeds them as prompts into DALL-E which in turn generates surreal images from its unconscious. Combining the cybernetic systems of 1960s art such as Hans Haacke’s *News* printing an RSS newsfeed via teletype; see-through electronics, first introduced as luxury commodities in the 1930s with the invention of lucite and later adapted for the penetrating gaze of carceral surveillance in the 1970s; and the “clear craze” of the 1980s and 1990s, from Crystal Pepsi to the iMac G3, *Conduit* reveals the technicity of transparency that is as specific to our time as the local stations it tracks.

Encoded in the quasi-registrarial conventions of Matthew Gallagher’s title for *EM.135.1882.2024* (2024) are the entwined strands of authorship and labor-time animating the work. “EM” designates Édouard Manet, whose iconic late work, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882), offers the source material for Gallagher’s exquisite detail of roses in a glass of water. The reverential, borderline obsessive nature of Gallagher’s art historical referentiality goes beyond the iconographic to include, and assiduously replicate, the chaîne opératoire of the original mark-making (albeit in graphite, rather than paint), documented in the “135” designating the number of hours it took him to complete it. Yet the work goes beyond a virtuoso display of mimetic transcription to experiment with novel forms of remediation, or the representation of one medium in another. In a technique of his own invention, graphite drawings of drafting film are transferred to molten wax in a pour whose result is no less risky and uncertain than the pouring of a large bronze. Endowed with a visible aura, the mimetic transparency of the drawing is diffused and delayed like starlight in a luminous transit through the wax substrate that terminates in a raw, resolutely sculptural, edge. In a subtle nod to the recent discovery that Manet traced his pictures to create the impression of improvisation in his letters, Gallagher installed a test version on the verso. Although unseen to the viewer, this move recalls Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s reversibility of perception with the example of a glove turned inside out: “There is no need of a spectator who would be on each side. It suffices that from one side I see the wrong *side* of the glove that is applied to the right side, that I touch the one *through* the other.”

The Latin title of Matthew Angelo Harrison’s *Operimentum* (2023) does a lot of heavy lifting that aptly coincides with the worker’s protective hard hat encased within its quadrifacial block of tinted polyurethane resin. The word designates a “covering” deriving from the verb *operio* that spans a

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

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

SOLDES

Diaphane

curated by Patrick R. Crowley

with artworks by

Brian Bartz, Matthew Gallagher,
Matthew Angelo Harrison,
Liam Moore, Kandis Williams and
Jessica Wilson

April 19th – May 27th, 2025

EXHIBITION OPENING

April 19, 2025, 6–9pm

staggering, if closely knit, lexical field: to cover (especially the head), conceal, or dissemble, and by extension to overwhelm or burden (with shame) or (with sin) to atone for, cause to be forgotten. While many of Harrison's works point to his personal and family connections to the automotive industry in Detroit and entangled histories of labor and racial capitalism, the hard hat's logo, visible on the underside of the sculpture through its acrylic base resting on an anodized aluminum pedestal, reveals its connection to a different labor sector: the now-defunct Detroit, Toledo and Ironton Railroad. Closely following the exterior contours of the hard hat, Harrison has carved the form of an African mask (the artist typically purchases these "readymade" objects—collectibles made specifically for the tourism or art market, rather than genuine artifacts—on eBay, thus highlighting the lack of transparency in their murky provenance), from a digital scan with a CNC-machine. Some areas are highly polished, creating lenticular effects that focalize and bend the light in ways that complement its crystalline facets; others index the route of the machine-path with its stippled and striated marks that trap the light and encourage the eye to linger. Cut from a wedge-like shape in the resin, the mask subtly recalls the Neoplatonic notion favored by Michelangelo of a sculptor carving out and thus "liberating" a captive figure within a marble block through subtractive operations. For Harrison, however, the resin block seems to contain within itself a different liberatory promise. In its dialectic between transparency and opacity, the machined block makes visible the labor that never quite congeals as settled fact. Rather, the refractive index of its adjacent but disjunct facets reveals its mutable status for diverse viewers as an *operimentum*: at once a protection from—as well as a burden and atonement for—the history and lived experience of racial capitalism.

In his brooding *Matte 01, Scene 16, Ext. Beach Oil Rig Storm*, Liam Moore restages the seductive allure of an old Hollywood trick: the matte painting. Although now mostly supplanted by digital techniques, matte paintings were used to fashion elaborate backgrounds of lush, sweeping vistas of fantastical or bygone landscapes and sets such as *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). Traditionally executed on large panes of transparent glass, the painted elements had a dull or "matte" finish to reduce glare. An irregular zone was left blank so that the live action unfolding behind seamlessly blended into the depicted scene. Filmed at Newport Beach, Moore's film tracks Harmony Tividad on a rocky jetty staring off into the distance of one of his signature crepuscular backgrounds. The static elements of the matte painting are augmented by a flurry of activity: waves crash onto the shore; birds fly across the sky; oil rig lights blink; a lighthouse beacon flashes; lightning sets the sky ablaze. What makes the illusion so convincing is not

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

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

SOLDES

Diaphane

curated by Patrick R. Crowley

with artworks by

Brian Bartz, Matthew Gallagher,
Matthew Angelo Harrison,
Liam Moore, Kandis Williams and
Jessica Wilson

April 19th – May 27th, 2025

EXHIBITION OPENING

April 19, 2025, 6–9pm

simply the blending of painting and performance, but a question of spatial indeterminacy whose media genealogy includes pre-cinematic nineteenth-century attractions such as the diorama and panorama. By presenting his parallel matte paintings atop a pedestal, Moore highlights the spatial interval necessary to achieve the illusion, laying bare the sculptural stakes of this pictorial conceit.

Kandis Williams's *Rheme: Coffins and Crowds* (2018) presents three groups of figures in ambiguously layered planes of representation. Vinyl stickers applied to mirrored glass create a palimpsest of images that become increasingly difficult to parse as their opacity shows through their transparency. Occupying the background of the picture is a detail from the south frieze of the Ara Pacis in Rome depicting a procession of togate figures from the imperial house; superimposed over the frieze are a group of men in chains—prisoners photographed at a concentration camp in 1904 at the outset of the German genocide of the Herero people (modern Namibia); and finally, interspersed among them, Peter Lindbergh's editorial photo-shoot for the “Wild at Heart” cover story in the September issue of *American Vogue* in 1991 that launched the new era of the supermodel. The reflective beveled edge of the mirror remains exposed, implicating the viewer in the crowded scene nevertheless governed by a formalist insistence on the principle of isocephaly, or the placement of heads on the same line. This compositional strategy reveals the spatializing structure of racist, genocidal violence, turning on the Herero prisoners and the gaze of the photographer-perpetrator and, at a deeper level, the German geographer and ethnographer Friedrich Ratzel's concept of *Lebensraum* (“living space”) that endorsed colonization and was later adopted by the Nazis. Hovering between ancient symbols of imperial power par excellence and the very epitome of 90s multiculturalism, the Herero prisoners make visible the stakes of a “rheme,” a type of sign in Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics that Williams defines as a kind of symbolic currency that traffics in the opacification of genocidal violence and state terror.

There is something vaguely discomfiting about Jessica Wilson's *Untitled 7* (2023). The picture, a UV print on aluminum dibond, presents a reflective plane surface speckled with water droplets masking the blurry backside of a naked figure located in an indeterminate space. The droplets create a diffuse “noise” that disrupts or scrambles the signal of a nonexistent clear image. Yet the crystalline, vitreous purity of the droplets themselves—particularly the longer one resembling a sperm cell that spills down the back of the figure—telegraphs a kind of uncanny hyperreality. Compounding the excessive mimesis of the picture is the axially oblique view of its imaging

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

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

SOLDES

Diaphane

curated by Patrick R. Crowley

with artworks by

Brian Bartz, Matthew Gallagher,
Matthew Angelo Harrison,
Liam Moore, Kandis Williams and
Jessica Wilson

April 19th – May 27th, 2025

EXHIBITION OPENING

April 19, 2025, 6–9pm

point whose angle of incidence reflects the chiral twins of the droplets on the glass surface while crucially omitting the viewer. The picture is the product of fiendishly complex digital rendering that Wilson incorporates into animations using a combination of both analog and digital techniques (scans of plaster casts, particle simulation). But if traditional analog depiction (such as painting) deploys non-notational symbol schemes that are irreducible to binary code, then what are the stakes of such hybrid practices? How or why does the technicity of the image matter if it is indiscernible from another image produced by different means? For the art historian Whitney Davis, the answer lies in the emergence of “New Analogy” in which “the discontinuous correlation of the digital mode of representation comprehensively replicates the continuous correlation of the analog mode—in relation to objective correlates, extra-pictorial world-coherences, that the analog mode cannot fully recognize unless and until it ‘goes digital.’”

—Patrick R. Crowley

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

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