

321 Gallery presents *6 Obsessions*, an exhibition of new work by Raque Ford.

The show comprises two wall works made from black acrylic. Spanning the length of the gallery, they are derived from the artist's ink drawings and hand-written texts. After digitally scanning these pages, Ford reassembles the drawings and writings into revised sequences, finally translating the digital files through a laser-cutter. The resulting shapes and text are enlarged and then etched into pieces of black acrylic, preserving their gesture while giving them a mechanically precise edge.

*I wanted to write this story about my mother, how she's the Devil, but I feel so conflicted. To show her as a villain means that I am a villain. I am just her creation. How can I be something different than what she is? It's really a story about how I am the Devil or her spawn and that we are the same. How far removed am I? How can I not be judged? Where do I start? Describe me. I am the Devil's daughter.*

An evil person to me is just a complicated one.

It's hot. It's the summer and we're visiting family in Arkansas. I hate Arkansas. It's where she's from. It feels like the smallest town I've ever been to. We're driving in a rental car. You can't get a direct flight to where she's from because it's in the middle of nowhere. I could almost see how it used to look beautiful here. There are a few old bath houses that are grand in their design. I'm told my grandfather worked at one, but now they're just old and empty. Coming here makes me think that this must be where all the evil things happened to her and made her who she is. The South is what turned my mother into the Devil.

She might be the Devil but she always promised to protect me. I get lost in thought wondering if I'm supposed to dislike her or love her. When people think of the Devil they think of red, evil, Satan, the Fallen Angel who dared to want to be God. Full of pride and vanity, then became a fallen angel. Pride and vanity run deep in our veins. I would stare in the mirror for hours trying to see myself outside myself.

The last time I saw my mother was at a Chinese restaurant downtown. I sat patiently at our table and she busted in the tiny restaurant like a fucking tornado. She had a ton of bags with her and enough frazzled energy she could've knocked the building down. That was her typical way of entering a room. I too have the ability to emit an aura of energy one can feel about five feet before actually touching me. I like to imagine I can control it better than her. That I can turn it on and off and use it to my advantage, but I'm not entirely sure that I can.

I get up and say, “Hi mom, do you need any help?” and try to tone down her energy by forcing out calm waves. We don't do well unless I release this calm energy like a microwave or a pheromone or something. Only one of us can be the one letting out our red hot intensity. It's not rage or some built up anger, it's more animalistic. It's like our true inner feral being. It's like we've been hypnotized into acting like just two normal women but with a snap or a clap we can turn back into our true forms—our feral forms. She would turn into the devil and I would be the Devil's daughter. Like one of her fallen angels. I'm her spawn. But we are hypnotized and dress like appropriate woman for the most part. You wouldn't know at first glance what we really are.

My calm energy works. She's soothed, we catch up, and she dotes on me.

I know it's wrong to say my mother is the Devil, but she really is. It's not her fault and you shouldn't feel bad. She's from the South—it was bound to happen. And as the Devil's daughter I am no Antichrist, but I am ready to rule the world.

– Raque Ford, 2019

*6 Obsessions* is the artist's first solo presentation with 321, and her fourth overall with the gallery.

Raque Ford (b. 1986, Columbia, MD) is a Brooklyn-based artist. Solo shows include *My Biggest Fan* (CAPITAL, San Francisco, CA); *con•fi•dence* (Williamson and Knight, Portland, OR); *Karafun* (The Fort, Brooklyn, NY); *Carolyn* (Shoot the Lobster, New York, NY); *It's All About Me, Forget About You* (Species, Atlanta, GA); *That Which We Call a Rose by Any Other Name Would Smell As Sweet* (Soloway, Brooklyn, NY); and *Raque* (Welcome Screen, London, UK); Recent two-person and group exhibitions include *Retrograde* (Deli Gallery, Brooklyn, NY); *Soul is a four letter word*, Museum Gallery (Brooklyn, NY); and *In Practice: Fantasy Can Invent Nothing New* (Sculpture Center, Queens, NY). She is the recipient of the 2017 Louis Comfort Tiffany Biennial Award, was awarded a residency at the International Studio and Curatorial Program (Brooklyn, NY), and was a resident at S1 (Portland, OR). Ford graduated with a BFA in painting from Pratt Institute and received her MFA in Visual Arts from Rutgers Mason Gross School of the Arts.

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