

Not Everything is Given

May 9, 2024 – May 24, 2024

ISP, 745 Washington Street, New York, NY

Curated by Ella den Elzen, Gervais Marsh, Carlota Ortiz Monasterio, and Alper Turan

Curatorial Statement

The aspirations of language often leave words skirting around the edges of emotions, grasping at their depth. What fuels the demand to decipher as a measure of value or the foundation of understanding? This exhibition disturbs the expectations from artworks and artists to “demonstrate,” “elucidate,” or “bear witness” to the fraught conditions of our world. Amid multiple ways of knowing and forms of communication, not everything has to be given or shared.

The artists gathered here circumvent and interrogate the expectations placed on them by overdetermined categories (race, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, geography), reorienting towards the self and those with shared experiences. In doing so, they complicate histories of past and present genocide, logics of anti-Blackness and settler colonialism, and gesture to concealed structures of control, including those imposed by the State, the law, and the archive. Through practices of withholding and self-articulation, they interrupt linear narratives using forms of coded communication, experimenting with strategies of obscurity and material form while affirming the poetics of mythmaking and fiction and underscoring the fragility of subjecthood.

As curators, we reckon with the urge to respond to the pervasive and gratuitous violence that is foundational to the world we live in and extends to the history of exhibition-making. Holding these tensions, we suspend the need to comprehend to consider alternative social and political modes.

Checklist

Kameelah Janan Rasheed

,they feed on the altitude of our afterlife.

Vinyl

2024

Courtesy of the artist and Nome Gallery, Berlin

,they feed on the altitude of our afterlife. combines hand-drawn mathematical notation, a poem obscured using Photoshop’s content-aware function, and scans of Xeroxes. Arranged along the staircase, in combination with this larger vinyl work, small vinyl pieces of text have escaped the frame or spilled out of the confines of a sentence. This work considers the questions posed by Fred Moten in conversation with Renee Gladman’s work in the text *One Long Black Sentence*: “Is there refuge in the sentence? Is there an underground railroad in the sentence?”

- K.J.R.

Noor Abed

our songs were ready for all wars to come

Single-channel video, 19 mins 50 secs

2021

Courtesy of the artist

our songs were ready for all wars to come stems from Abed's interest in folklore, social choreography and political ideologies enacted through everyday movements. With a tone between magical realism and archival footage, the film is shot together with family members and friends. Filmed in an area of Palestine with empty, dried out water wells, caves, and smaller holes opening to the underground, the work features choreographed scenes inspired by Palestinian folktales and communal rituals of mourning and death. Through a narrative delivered entirely in song, with lyrics collaged from these folktales, Abed explores myths and movements as tools to challenge dominant discourses, reclaim narratives, and reshape realities.

Aziz Hazara

Takbir

Single-channel video, 5 mins

2021

Courtesy of the artist and Experimenter, Kolkata

Takbir presents a scene of a young man beating his chest while staring intensely into the camera. This act echoes the collective mourning rituals during Ashura, symbolizing resistance against injustice. Through this solitary act, Hazara explores individual acts of mourning as challenges to collective historical narratives and how sound contours subjectivity. The repetitive thud of flesh highlights the body's mortality, vulnerability, and agency, underscoring the physical effects of enduring injustice while questioning how mourning sounds in the absence of a shared language for grief.

Niloufar Emamifar

Three Inches And A Half

Pigmented hard plastic, paint, clay, dirt

2018

Collection of Gabriel Catone, New York

This work was cast in the crevice between two Palestinian-owned mechanic shops in Los Angeles' Koreatown, capturing the vertical space between the two properties. In legal terminology, this type of interstitial space is ruled to be devoid of specific dimensions or tangible attributes, and thus, without value.

Diyar Mayil*Sitting Through*

Silicone, ceramic, wood, salt

2019

Courtesy of the artist

Mop

Glass, metal

2022

Courtesy of the artist

Working through themes of alienation and foreignness, Mayil's sculptures of domestic objects contend with the positionality of being both host and a guest within nations. Quotidian household furnishings, such as a table, and mop, are made materially unfamiliar. Alluding to conceptualizations of visibility and invisibility, comfort and discomfort, Mayil's works contemplate the contradictions of what it means to be simultaneously stateless and at home, and how the body holds these tensions.

Ebun Sodipo*Celeste*

Single-channel video, 6 mins

2023

Courtesy of the artist

Ebun Sodipo makes work for black trans people of the future, guided by black feminist study, through a methodology of collage and fabulation. Framed by the ocean, *Celeste* is an experimental film. A deluge of scenes, slippages in time. A search. A seance. A commune. It meditates on the intimacies and difficulties that shape Black trans femme life, while thinking alongside the life of Vitoria, an enslaved African transgender woman who worked as both a healer and sex-worker in Lisbon in the 16th century.

Ebun Sodipo*Prosthesis for freedom - Mary Jones' piece of cow leather pierced and opened like a woman's womb'*

Piece of cow leather pierced and opened like a woman's womb

2022

Courtesy of the artist

Ebun Sodipo makes work for black trans people of the future, guided by black feminist study, through a methodology of collage and fabulation. An excerpt from Sodipo's text *Prosthesis for freedom*, "She lifts her piece from the edge of the dresser in front of her, the dimples out of the leather rough against her fingers, the dark brown of the vulva just a few shades darker than the

skin of her hand but an exact match as the inside of her thigh, the skin at the crook of her elbow, and the behind of her knees...As always there is a force that rushes through her and sets her mouth into a wide smile as the leather presses into her groin. She feels a path open before her, euphoria extending itself before her body, a sensation so needed in squalid New York, where whiteness and poverty weigh heavy against her and the other girls of ill fame."

Charisse Pearlina Weston

diaphanous envelop of the object side

Slumped and etched mirropane, lead and concrete

2024

Courtesy of the artist; PATRON gallery, Chicago; and Jack Shainman Gallery

Charisse Pearlina Weston engages "the dynamic interplay of violence and intimacy" through practices of concealment, repetition, and enfoldment. She considers the complexities and generative potential of Black interior life as sites of resistance. *Diaphanous envelop of the object side* draws on the material dimensions of mirropane, thinking critically about structures of surveillance and opacity, with Weston's poetic gestures interwoven throughout the piece.

Charisse Pearlina Weston

that old saying is true: you've got to weep what you sow

Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle canvas etched with replacement frame glass from collapse, glass, canvas, glass shards, 2017.

Courtesy of the artist; PATRON gallery, Chicago; and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

Charisse Pearlina Weston engages "the dynamic interplay of violence and intimacy" through practices of concealment, repetition, and enfoldment. She considers the complexities and generative potential of Black interior life as sites of resistance. *That old saying is true: you've got to weep what you sow* reconfigures shattered glass into an inkjet print, underscoring both the fragility and malleability of the material amidst the possibilities that emerge in collapse.

Shala Miller

The Makings of a Supervillain

Archival pigment print on William Turner paper, hand engraving on plexiglass, 2023

Courtesy of the artist

Shala Miller's practice meditates on the conjunction of desire, mourning, pain, and pleasure. Under the moniker of Freddie June, explores the voice as material. *The Makings of a Supervillain* leans into fiction, constructing narratives of the character Obsidian to consider the convergence of rage, resistance, and desire within Black femme life.

Obsidian Theme (Edition Three)

Sound piece, 8:30 mins, 2023. Courtesy of the artist

Shala Miller's practice meditates on the conjunction of desire, mourning, pain, and pleasure. Under the moniker of Freddie June, she explores the voice as material. Through shifting vocal registers, *Obsidian Theme (Edition Three)* engages autoethnography and song to consider the convergence of rage, resistance, and desire within Black femme life.

**Taqralik Partridge and
Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory**

Inissaliortut: Making Room

Two-channel video, 19 mins; plywood panels, 2022

Commissioned by the CCA for the exhibition *ᐱᕐᕐᕐᕐᕐ / Ruovttu Guvlui / Vers chez soi / Towards Home*

© Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory

In this video, Taqralik Partridge and Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory directly address one another, as friends, co-conspirators, and mothers—acknowledging and affirming each others’ knowledge as Inuit women. Through their dialogue, they point to the ways in which colonization of the Arctic has been enacted through government policy, while attending to the everyday experiences and familiar places inhabited by Inuit communities. Larger than human scale, they are in conversation first and foremost with one another.

Cameron Rowland

0D20706

Lojack transmitter, car battery, 2014. Rental

LoJack is only available aftermarket. When installed, the transmitter serial number and the VIN are registered in a database at the National Crime Information Center, directly linked to enforcement. LoJack receivers in police cars search the serial number of the transmitter based on the VIN of the missing vehicle. This is an unused, unregistered transmitter, powered, which operates for 200 milliseconds every 10 seconds at 173.075 MHz. The frequency 173.075 MHz is available for stolen vehicle recovery systems on a shared basis with the Federal Government.

- C.R.

Zişan

Felaket (Catastrophe)

Reproduction of an original work of an ink on paper

1923

Courtesy of the İz Öztat and Zilberman Gallery, Istanbul

In her ongoing body of work, İz Öztat fabricates the (auto)biography of Zişan (1894-1970), who appears to her as a historical figure, a ghost, and an alter ego. She adopts Zişan's work to

create a complex temporality that allows the suppressed past to intervene in the increasingly authoritarian present. Fleeing Istanbul with her father in 1915 to escape the Armenian Genocide and meandering through the canon of avant-garde art without being noticed, Zişan disseminated her work anonymously. Here, she attempts to represent the unrepresentable, unrecognized genocidal violence through geometrical abstraction and text that reads "Catastrophe."

BAÇOY KOOP

Birding

Reproduction of mimeograph printed flyers

2016

Courtesy of the artists

The work by BAÇOY KOOP (Printing, Duplication and Distribution Cooperative) is named after the clandestine printing and distribution method originally used by leftist organizations to duplicate and disseminate dissident content. Created in 2016 amid heightened tensions from failed peace negotiations and increased state violence against Kurdish communities, *Birding*—referring to the action of throwing pamphlets up in the air in a crowd to disseminate and to be disguised—responds through coded visual and gestural language incorporating symbols of mourning and resistance.

Oraib Toukain

Offing

Single-channel video, 28 mins and 15 secs

2021

Courtesy of the artist

Offing emerges from the summer 2021 war on Gaza, and an online conversation with Salman Nawati, between Berlin and Gaza. Nawati's words are heard alongside Toukan's footage from outside Gaza, narrating the juxtaposition of the hardships and mundane realities of daily life under the conditions of war. Exploring the projection of images onto others' accounts of suffering, and pondering the space where speech and imagination meet, *Offing* is part of Toukan's engagement with 'cruel images' that reframes subjects within stifled narratives. Through close-ups, lush visuals, and manipulations of time such as reversing or changing the speed of footage, *Offing* attempts to hear and relate to parallel stories behind the frame of war. Nawati's reflections extend towards the horizon of the Mediterranean Sea—an illusion of freedom perceived from the confines of Gaza, symbolizing both distance and desire for escape from the inescapable siege.

Naomi Rincón Gallardo

Resiliencia Tlacuache (Opossum Resilience)

Single-channel HD video, 16 mins 01 secs

2019

Courtesy of the artist and Parallel Oaxaca, Oaxaca

Set in the hills of Oaxaca, Mexico and inspired by encounters with local land defenders, this fabulation by Naomi Rincón Gallardo traces an unlikely relation between four figures: a Hill, an Agave, an Opossum, and the Mixtec deity Lady Reed. With her characteristic use of humor, speculative fiction, vernacular crafts, and theatrical techniques, the artist deliberately “bastardizes” Mesoamerican myths with elements of contemporary popular culture, disturbing the demands placed on Indigenous knowledge and challenging the discourses and policies that relegate Indigenous cultures in Mexico to the ancient past and fail to recognize these groups’ rights.

Joyce Joumaa

Hallab Bldg

Inkjet on archival vellum paper, breaker box, stainless steel, computerized timer, light

2024

Courtesy of Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal and Galerie Eli Kerr, Montreal

Hallab Bldg speaks to the contemporary energy crisis in Lebanon, a result of state economic mismanagement. The work consists of a breaker box that has been repurposed as a lightbox for a backlit photograph, an image of the interior of a Tripoli apartment. Set on a timer, the work becomes illuminated at the same time that the residents of this apartment have electricity. Most people experience blackouts throughout the day, and neighbors have created schedules to determine when to share power.

Mafra' Baladiye

Inkjet on archival vellum paper, breaker box, stainless steel, computerized timer, light

2024

Courtesy of Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal and Galerie Eli Kerr, Montreal

Mafra' Baladiye speaks to the contemporary energy crisis in Lebanon, a result of state economic mismanagement. The work consists of a breaker box that has been repurposed as a lightbox for a backlit photograph. Taken in a village in Northern Lebanon, the image shows the hands of the artist’s aunt and grandmother preparing Sunday lunch in their home. Set on a timer, the work becomes illuminated at the same time that the residents of this apartment have electricity. Most people experience blackouts throughout the day, and neighbors have created schedules to determine when to share power.