

For Immediate Release

Traces on the Surfaces of the World

March 13 – April 24, 2021



Cristine Brache, *Morning Sickness in the U.S.A.* (2020), single-channel video, sound, 3mins

GAVLAK is pleased to present *Traces on the Surfaces of the World*, a group exhibition featuring Cristine Brache, Henry Chapman, Alex Chitty, Gisela Colón, Amalie Jakobsen, and Dean Sameshima.

Traces on the Surfaces of the World brings together six international artists whose works stage the anxious encounters between human bodies and inanimate objects that define a world reformed by an all-encompassing fear of contagion. In “Human Traces on the Surfaces of the World,” Judith Butler parallels the invisible passage of a virus from bodies to objects to other bodies, to the similarly invisible machinations of socio-political paradigms that dictate who must assume the risk of contact, and by extension which lives are expendable.¹ Artists and theorists have for decades romanticized the notion of dissolving the distance between art objects and those who experience them: this exhibition probes the dimensions of a reality in which this longed-for contact has become especially fraught. The exhibition opens on March 13th and will be on view through April 24th.

Henry Chapman’s *sing blue brown violet* (2020) marks the limits of the artist’s physical reach in swaths of luminously pale pigment that glow against a dark background like biological traces under black light. Dean Sameshima’s *Pleasure Doesn’t Really Make You Happy* (2011) preserves the fluid products of bodily exchanges, transforming the canvas into a ghostly relic of a recent past in which such encounters did not entail the same danger they currently do. Alex Chitty’s *Two people drawing together (Danny Shapiro IV)* (2017) submits the page as a site of intimate exchange in the form of a mutually informative web of fragile and occasionally tenuous lines. This delicate equilibrium takes a three-dimensional form in Chitty’s austere string paintings, in which the cotton fibers that make up the canvas that typically serves as the neutral surface for painting in the Western tradition are instead transformed into dynamic linear compositions in space, the simple mechanics of which can be both discerned and undone in the mind of the beholder.

¹ Judith Butler, “Human Traces on the Surfaces of the World,” in *ConTactos*, Diana Taylor and Marcial Godoy-Anativia, eds. (New York: HemiPress, 2020), <https://contactos.tome.press/human-traces-on-the-surfaces-of-the-world/>

Amalie Jakobsen's commanding geometric abstraction *Untitled* (2020) stages balance as a kind of violence through two monumental black aluminum shards, braced in the air by their skewering of one another. The foreboding opalescent projectile of Gisela Colón's similarly imposing *Parabolic Monolith (Obsidian Matter)*, (2021) appropriates the materials of aerospace engineering to invoke the mechanical surrogates we increasingly employ to extend our senses, whether the end goal is to attain pleasure, expand the scope of one's vision, or surveil or even snuff out the lives of others. Cristine Brache's video *Morning Sickness in the U.S.A.* (2020) eerily reverberates with contemporary concerns regarding contagion, isolation, and the movement of bodies across borders, despite chronicling events experienced by the artist's grandmother decades earlier. Juliana Brache's immigration from Puerto Rico to the mainland United States was interrupted by officials who confined her to a mental asylum after misinterpreting a highly ordinary affliction—pregnancy—as an unspecified tropical disease. *Traces on the Surfaces of the World* finds us at a unique historical juncture in which our realities are being rearranged out of dire necessity, while our collective survival requires a wholesale reevaluation of how we connect with both objects and bodies not our own.

Traces on the Surfaces of the World is organized by Efrain Lopez

Cristine Brache's (b. 1984, Miami, Florida) work was the focus of recent solo presentations at Fierman Gallery, New York (2020) and Locust Projects, Miami (2019), and featured prominently in group exhibitions at the ICA Miami (2020; 2019) and A.I.R. Gallery, New York (2018). **Henry Chapman's** (b. 1987, Brooklyn, New York) recent and forthcoming solo exhibitions include Labs Contemporary Art, Bologna (2021) and T293 Gallery, Rome (2018). The work of **Alex Chitty** (b. 1979, Miami, Florida) was the subject of solo and two-person shows at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2019-2020) and Patron Gallery, Chicago (2018). **Gisela Colón's** (b.1966, Vancouver, Canada; raised 1967, San Juan, Puerto Rico) forthcoming and recent solo presentations include Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art, Reston, Virginia (2021) and GAVLAK (2020). Notable upcoming and recent group exhibitions include LACMA's traveling exhibition at the Frist Art Museum, Nashville (2022) and the Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, Massachusetts; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas (2019-2020); DESERT X ALULA 2020, AIUla, Saudi Arabia (2020) and the Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, California (2019). **Amalie Jakobsen's** (b. 1989, Copenhagen, Denmark) recent and forthcoming solo exhibitions include Future Gallery, Berlin (2021), Gammel Strand, Copenhagen (2021), and Gether Contemporary, Copenhagen (2019; 2017). The work of **Dean Sameshima** (b. 1971, Torrance, California) was the focus of solo exhibitions for Peres Projects, Berlin (2017), GAVLAK (2016), and Casal Solleric, Mallorca, Spain (2014). Notable group exhibitions include presentations for the Museum of Art, São Paulo, Brazil (2018) and the touring exhibition *Art AIDS America* (Tacoma, Washington; Chicago; New York, 2015-2016).