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CANDIDA ALVAREZ : *Palimpsest*



My work stumbles through what I think of as chatty abstractions that shape-shift and dream-catch both light and space. These investigations allow my paintings and drawings to build abstract structures that mix and remix themselves, interweaving the narrative with the pictorial.
— Candida Alvarez

Los Angeles, CA – GAVLAK is delighted to present *Palimpsest*, Candida Alvarez's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles. Born in New York and now based in Chicago and Michigan, Candida was the recipient of the Helen Frankenthaler Award for Painting from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts in 2021, as well as a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant in 2019. Over the past three decades, Alvarez has explored and expanded her conceptually rich, intuitive process of building abstract paintings. *Palimpsest* will be on view September 18 through October 30, 2021 at GAVLAK Los Angeles, and will be accompanied by an illustrated catalogue including an essay by curator and philosopher Sue Spaid.

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Alvarez's new body of work investigates the richness of effacing without erasing, enabling substantial traces of prior material to remain and shine through. Embodying this approach, her *Palimpsest* paintings began with pencil and watercolor drawings on Yupo paper, which were then scanned, digitized, and printed on canvases with acrylic polymer ink. From there, the artist applied several more layers of matte acrylic, incorporating more transparent shades atop the printed images and tones. This unfixed approach deflects linearity away from completion to instigate organic, rhizomatic growth—as a readymade each ground layer can be altered ad infinitum—so that all of the layers intermingle with each other and entangle time itself. By returning to and revising her work over significant periods, Alvarez has actively encouraged the ruptures and transitions of what has been an eventful and open career. The intertwined moments found in *Palimpsest* are captured and pressed between the layers of paint like flowers between the pages of a book. With time itself caught by its own tail in these multivalent assemblages, Alvarez's shapeshifting abilities exude a vibrancy commensurate with the experience of a life lived with the benefit of an innovative and colorful mind.

Since the early 1980s, Alvarez has activated images and procedures as agile tools to challenge established categories of medium, approach and style. Perpetually rearranging intersections of materials as well as long-standing hierarchical dichotomies such as painting vs. drawing, abstraction vs. representation, and/or figure vs. ground, with *Palimpsest* she has propelled her work into new and adventurous territory.

Alvarez was born in 1955 in New York City, and she lives and works between Chicago, IL and Michigan. Candida received a BA from the Fordham University and a MFA from Yale School of Art. She attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. She holds the F.H. Sellers Professorship in Painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her work has been exhibited at the Chicago Cultural Center, El Museo del Barrio, DePaul Art Museum, Hyde Park Art Center, Museo de Arte de Puerto Rico, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, the Contemporary Art Museum in Houston, The Bronx Museum of Art; among others. Her work is included in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, The Addison Gallery of American Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, El Museo Del Barrio, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.