

# GREENE NAFTALI

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## Trisha Baga *Mollusca & The Pelvic Floor*

September 14<sup>th</sup>—October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Ground Floor

Trisha Baga's installations navigate between virtual and actual, projecting moving images punctuated by 3D technology onto and amongst handmade and found objects. In recent years, the artist has increasingly incorporated ceramics into her practice, working on a scale unconventional to the medium and often reproducing functional objects, articulating yet emptying their operational details. For her third exhibition at Greene Naftali, *Mollusca & the Pelvic Floor*, Baga presents an installation comprising a wide-ranging landscape of ceramics in varying scales, as well as a new video installation.

The exhibition's eponymous central video examines language, technology, identity, and intimacy, through an expanding and contracting scope that ranges from galactic footage sourced from the sci-fi movie *Contact*, to video of intimate minutia such as Baga's toes peeking out from a bathtub, an image echoed in a pair of small ceramic sculptures on the floor. *Mollusca & The Pelvic Floor* loosely narrates Baga's increasingly intimate relationship with Mollusca—the name and prompt Baga has given to the virtual assistant more commonly known as Alexa. Baga's entanglement with Mollusca eventually becomes embodiment, narrated by descriptions of metamorphosis and inter-species contact from Octavia Butler's *Imago*, Dan Brown's *Origin*, and Michael Chrichton's *Sphere*. Orchestrated between two projectors, which spill across the gallery floor, the video's wild shifts in narrative scope are compounded by the elastic space Baga achieves with 3D video and layered audio. Queues in the narrative selectively animate various objects in the room – an oscillating fan, an analog clock, and naturally, an Alexa—generating spatial and temporal immediacy. Footage from caves in Sicily, the artist's family in the Philippines, popular movies, the artist's studio, and digital space frequently share the screen in composite scenes and discreet spatial layers, complicating geography, space, and time. Hurling, boisterous sequences are arrested by solemn, meditative intervals. Ventriloquism, synesthesia, and telepathy occur, as the film progresses towards a liberating, universal form of communication.

Among the ceramics on view are a full-scale band; faceless framed photographs; a stiletto; an absent Elvis indexed by his crumpled suit and rogue hairpiece; Nicole Kidman submerged in a tub, indulging a cigarette; a globe illuminated from within, emblazoned with the dismal message, HELP. Some ceramics approach the subject of language and communication explored in Baga's video: a collection of Sphinx-like poodles with flaming heads reference the Catholic story of the "tongues of fire" in the Pentecost, in which the Apostles were visited with the Holy Spirit and given the power to speak in diverse languages, mysteriously understood by each person as their native tongue. Functional ceramic lamps depict Lesbos Island during a UFO visit, suggesting another encounter across languages. Presiding over the scene are ceramics of RuPaul and Baga herself—each bust on view is equipped to contain an Amazon Alexa and respond to commands. In *Mollusca & The Pelvic Floor*, ceramics behave as a diversity of encasings for an intelligent, visceral mass.

Trisha Baga lives and works in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include *Biologue*, Gallery TPW, Toronto (2018); *Trisha Baga: CCC*, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard College, Cambridge (2017); *Biologue*, 356 Mission Road, Los Angeles. Her work belongs to the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Zabłudowicz Collection, London/New York/Sarvisalo; Julia Stoschek Collection, Düsseldorf; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; and Aishti Foundation, Beirut, among others. Her work will be featured in the upcoming group exhibition, *The Body Electric*, at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, in Spring 2019.

Please note that all money collected in the ceramic band's tips jar will be donated to The Climate Justice Alliance. Trisha Baga would like to extend special thanks to Greenwich House Pottery, New York.

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