

Out of Easy Reach

April 27 – August 4, 2018

Gallery 400, University of Illinois at Chicago

Expanded Exhibition Checklist

Lisa Alvarado

Traditional Object 21, 2017

Acrylic, fabric, wood, 86 x 104 in.

Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC

Traditional Object 15, 2014

Acrylic, fabric, wood, 74 x 80 in.

Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC

Alvarado's *Traditional Object* series began in 2010 as portable stage sets for performances by Natural Information Society, a musical ensemble of which the artist is a member. With that performative history and potential and their repetitive patterning, Alvarado's paintings connect to traditions of ritual and textile objects produced by less visible cultures. For instance, the artist has acknowledged textile traditions from the Americas as a framework for her painting and concepts of talismans and mandalas in her practice. The artist's choice to call the works "traditional objects" also calls into question the very terminology used to discuss such cultures —what does it mean for Alvarado's unconventional and hybrid works to be "traditional"? And where is the line between "objects" and "art"?

Torkwase Dyson

Untitled (Hypershape), 2017

95 gouache and pen on paper drawings, 9 x 12 in. each

Courtesy the artist and Rhona Hoffman Gallery

Dyson's ever-evolving practice examines how geometry and the language of shapes hold history and meaning. *Untitled (Hypershape)* continues the artist's production of paintings and works on paper that investigate power, with specific relationship to land, history, natural resources, and well-being. The title is influenced by ecological theorist Timothy Morton's concept of "hyperobjects"—objects that are so diffuse that they are not easy to study and understand directly (such as global warming). Dyson's hypershape practice builds formal improvisation on proximity, habitation, and motion as they relate to the material zones of industrial extraction and capital exploitation.

Leslie Hewitt

Riffs on Real Time (10 of 10), 2008

Traditional chromogenic print, 40 x 30 in.

Collection of Dr. Daniel S. Berger, Chicago

Courtesy the artist and Perrotin

Begun in 2002, *Riffs on Real Time* is an ongoing series of photographs within photographs. In the images, small snapshots selected from the personal archives of the artist or acquaintances are juxtaposed with newspapers, books, vintage issues of magazines like *Life*, *Ebony*, and *National Geographic*, and other mass culture publications or materials. This juxtaposition follows a logic of building in which the personal image is visually encircled by the larger cultural page, which in turn is visually surrounded by a floor surface such as wood or carpet, often marked by use and time. The nested or embedded structure of these *Riffs on Real Time* suggests that personal memory and history entwine visually, politically, and culturally. The improvisational evocation of riffs in the series title further marks the shifts, reconstructions, and multiplicity of the system created.

Juliana Huxtable

Nuwaub Chair, 2012

Color inkjet print, 8 x 10 in.

Courtesy the artist and JTT, New York

Untitled (For Stewart), 2012

Color inkjet print, 20 x 30 in.

Courtesy the artist and JTT, New York

Nuwaub Chair pictures the artist as a follower of the Nuwaubian Nation, a radical religious sect that combined Islamic, Ancient Egyptian, and extraterrestrial theories, but in a stance and with a gaze that confounds ready categorization.

Untitled (Destroying Flesh), 2015

Color inkjet print, 40 x 30 in.

Courtesy the artist and JTT, New York

Untitled (Casual Power), 2015

Color inkjet print, 40 x 30 in.

Courtesy the artist and JTT, New York

Often focusing on her body as a site, Huxtable, who was born intersex and raised male, explores constructions of the self and the social. Her photographic, non-linear text, and performance works create a subject position that sits alongside, but outside of, what has been determined to be normative. In the untitled works presented here, the artist uses freely flowing language, charting the topography of her desires and amalgamating seemingly disparate ideas about the flux of identities in time and across real and virtual spaces.

Yvette Mayorga

Monument 2, 2015

Frosting, foam, plaster, party decorations, toy soldiers, guns, hair, balloons, wood, fabric, acrylic, handcuffs, 30 x 24 x 24 in.

Courtesy the artist

The tier cake forms of Mayorga's *Monuments* draw on transnational family narratives and the politics of border-crossing as they evoke Mexican American quinceañera and birthday cakes to pay homage to specific people important to the artist. Marrying effusive adornment with frosting, toys, balloons, streamers to forms in collapse or deflation, as well as the toy guns and handcuffs, the sculptures consider the complex territories of race, gender, identity, Latinx stereotypes, cultural assimilation, and the American dream.

Monument 3, 2015

Frosting, foam, plaster, party decorations, toy soldiers, hair, wood, fabric, acrylic, 24 x 6 x 24 in.

Courtesy the artist

Monument 1, 2015

Frosting, foam, plaster, party decorations, toy soldiers, hair, balloons, wood, fabric, acrylic, 48 x 12 x 12 in.

Courtesy the artist

Monument 5, 2015

Frosting, foam, plaster, party decorations, toy soldiers, Selena's picture, guns, hair, balloons, wood, fabric, acrylic, 72 x 24 x 24 in.

Courtesy the artist

Monument 4, 2015

Frosting, foam, plaster, party decorations, toy soldiers, hair, balloons, fabric, acrylic, 48 x 12 x 12 in.

Courtesy the artist

Howardena Pindell

Free, White and 21, 1980

Color video with sound, 12:15 min. loop

Courtesy the artist and Garth Greenan Gallery, New York

The video's title is adopted from a colloquial refrain heard in American cinema and other pop culture forms of the 1930s and '40s. At that time, young female characters frequently expressed defiance, independence, and sovereign individuality by proclaiming, "I'm free, white, and twenty-one!" Pindell's use of the phrase as the title of her work points to the glaring inequality upon which many gains in white feminism were built. Pindell's performance persona and image groundbreakingly consider the tensions within the U.S. feminist movement.

As the only work in the exhibition created before 2010, it also acts as an anchor, bridging performance practices of the 1970s and '80s with those of younger artists such as Juliana Huxtable.

Martine Syms

More Than Some, Less Than Others VIII, 2014-2016

Archival pigment print, 28 x 22 in.

Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC

More Than Some, Less Than Others IX, 2014-2016

Archival pigment print, 28 x 22 in.

Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC

Subtle Maneuver X, 2016

Cut vinyl on paper, 28 x 22 in.

Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC

More Than Some, Less Than Others XXXIX, 2016

Archival pigment print, 28 x 22 in.

Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC

More Than Some, Less Than Others XVI, 2014-2016

Archival pigment print, 28 x 22 in.

Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC

More Than Some, Less Than Others XIX, 2014-2016

Archival pigment print, 28 x 22 in.

Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC

More Than Some, Less Than Others XXVII, 2016
Archival pigment print, 28 x 22 in.
Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC

More Than Some, Less Than Others XII, 2016
Archival pigment print, 28 x 22 in.
Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC

More Than Some, Less Than Others X, 2016
Archival pigment print, 28 x 22 in.
Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC

More Than Some, Less Than Others XXII, 2014-2016
Archival pigment print, 28 x 22 in.
Courtesy the artist and Bridget Donahue, NYC

More Than Some, Less Than Others are stills from short videos informed by the Black literary tradition, and inspired by authors such as Zora Neale Hurston and Kevin Young. In this series fences, skylines, and headlines point to major metropolises—such as Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles—that were impacted by early 20th century migration of Black southerners to the North and West. Yet, in spite of this suggestive theme, the image-text pairings in this series resist a defined narrative understanding. Distanced and close-up shots refuse a single privileged viewpoint, and technologies of mediation (projections, signage) show up as recurring motifs. Thus, a central theme becomes how mediation constructs knowledge and subjectivity. Likewise, *Subtle Maneuver X* states the artist's desire to resist definition and neutrality. "The cut" has many meanings here, alluding to a physical location that is secluded or not easy to find, the disruption between scenes in video forms, and theorist Fred Moten's concept of the generative space of radical Black aesthetics.

Zipporah Camille Thompson

prismatic root, 2015
Acrylic and mixed media, 70 x 70 x 7 in.
Courtesy Whitespace Gallery, Atlanta, GA

Interested in spiritual and ritual-based traditions, Thompson explores destruction and fertility in her work, raising spiritual questions related to life cycles and transformation. In *prismatic root*, the artist's collection and curation of objects sacralizes the mundane and explores accumulation in a manner similar to traditional African art. The work's focus on hair—human and animal, natural and synthetic—suggests the spiritual power associated with hair's functions of covering and protecting the body.

panspermiatic drift, 2015

Handwoven tapestry, 44 x 26 x 12 in.

Courtesy Whitespace Gallery, Atlanta, GA

Much of Thompson's inspiration is derived from landscapes and landforms, either physical and tangible or imagined and unknown. A material investigation of natural disasters and their ability to shape our environment, *panspermiatic drift* derives from the artist's examination of various media images of major floods and their aftermaths. Incorporating handweaving and tapestry methods, the work's amorphous structure holds a tangle of objects metaphorically washed up from human civilization.