

# GALLERY 400

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### **Out of Easy Reach**

April 27–August 4, 2018

**I ALWAYS PICKED THE GIRLS WHEN I PLAYED VIDEO GAMES. IF FOR NO OTHER REASON, THAN OUT OF SHEER SPITE AT THE EASE OF IDENTIFICATION THE BOYS AROUND ME HAD WITH THEIR UN-INTERESTINGLY PHALLIC/KAMEHAMEHA SUPER-HEROES... WITH THE ASSUMPTION THAT THERE WAS SOME SORT OF INHERENT OR TRAGIC FLAW IN PRINCESS PEACH'S MARIO KART 64 PERFORMANCE. CHUN-LI'S ABSURD CURVES AND THE CUNT'S MEOW SCREECHING FROM EVERY TURN OF HER HYPER-PORNOGRAPHIC BODY FUELED MY RAGE AGAINST BOYHOOD, ALBEIT THROUGH ARGUABLY THE MOST 'BOYISH' OF MEANS. I DISCOVERED, USING MY VIRTUAL PUSSY TO STRADDLE THE BEEFY TRAPEZIUSES OF ANTHROPOMORPHIC CYBORG ATTACKERS, THAT THE AWKWARD SHORTCOMINGS OF PUBESCENT LIFE COULD BE OVERCOME ONE PELVIC HEAD CRUSH AT A TIME. LIKE MOTOKO KUSANAGI, MY WOMANHOOD WAS ENTIRELY ARTIFICIAL, SAVE MY MIND AND THE TINGLING SENSATION IN MY SPINE PRESENT AT THE REVELATION OF A NEW LEVEL, ESPECIALLY ONE UNLOCKED AS A SECRET—EACH TIME MY ARTIFICIAL LUNGS LIFTED INTO THE AIR AS IF I WAS ÆON, BRAVELY DENYING VERTIGO OF ITS AFFECT AS I SPREAD MY AMAZONIAN LEGS AND TAKE IN THE RAPIDLY MOVING AIR THAT TRACES THE FANTASTICAL SKYSCRAPERS OF BREGNA. IMMERSSED IN A WORLD OF POST-APOCALYPTIC INDUSTRIAL WAR-ZONES, I ASSUMED THE ETHICAL AND POLITICAL TASK OF FIGHTING OFF THE TENTACLE AGGRESSION OF HENTAI RAPE AND THE CHUCKLES OF MY PEERS SIMULTANEOUSLY. I WENT TO EVERY LAN PARTY IN HOPES THAT I COULD WITNESS THEM LOSE BATTLE AFTER BATTLE TO HYPERBOLIC DEPICTIONS OF THE SAME FIGURES THEY WOULD LATER JERK OFF TO; THE SAME FEAR-INSPIRING FEMME FATALE'S WHO THEY WOULD, AT SOME POINT ATTEMPT TO BATTLE IN THE REAL; THE SAME IMAGINARY CUNTS AND PHANTASTICAL PUSSIES THAT WOULD (AND STILL DO) TEMPT THEM TO TOUCH AND CONQUER THE VITAMIN-ENRICHED TUNA OF MY BODY.**

Juliana Huxtable, *Untitled (for Stewart)*, 2012, color inkjet print, 20 x 30"

**Artists: Lisa Alvarado, Torkwase Dyson, Leslie Hewitt, Juliana Huxtable, Yvette Mayorga, Howardena Pindell, Martine Syms, and Zipporah Camille Thompson**

**Curated by Allison Glenn**

March 26, 2018–Chicago, IL—***Out of Easy Reach*** is a cross-institutional exhibition curated by **Allison Glenn**, associate curator, contemporary art, The Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. The exhibition is co-organized and co-presented by Gallery 400, the DePaul Art Museum, and the Stony Island Arts Bank.

Countering conventional accounts of art history, which have often overlooked the artistic contributions of women of color, *Out of Easy Reach* presents 24 artists from the Black and Latina diasporas through artworks created from 1980 to 2018. The exhibition features myriad ways that three generations of artists use abstraction as a tool to explore both personal and universal histories, with an emphasis on mapping, migration, archives, landscape, vernacular culture, language, and the body.

Gallery 400's portion of the exhibition presents nine artists, Lisa Alvarado, Torkwase Dyson, Leslie Hewitt, Juliana Huxtable, Yvette Mayorga, Howardena Pindell, Martine Syms, and Zipporah Camille Thompson, whose works converge around issues of spatial politics, mapping, and migration, at the same time that threads can be drawn to the themes presented at the other two venues.

**Lisa Alvarado** combines material-driven, forensic abstraction with the formal idioms of ceremonial crafts belonging to traditions that exist within the aftermath of cultural erasure. The *Traditional Object* series, bold double-sided tapestries that incorporate fabric, embroidery, and paint, draws on Alvarado's study of historically disregarded traditions and perspectives.

Created as part of **Torkwase Dyson's** nomadic pop-up art school, *Untitled (Hypershapes)* functions as a small action, suitable for understanding problems that are so massive, systemic, intractable, and global as to exceed our conception—our current environmental crisis is foremost among these, as is anti-blackness. These abstract, highly formal “hypershapes” distill the lessons of Dyson's pedagogy and research into visual and visceral forms.

For her series *Riffs on Real Time*, **Leslie Hewitt** repurposed domestic and personal objects such as family snapshots, books, magazines, and handwritten letters to create still lifes that intertwine personal and historical narratives. These layered images, meticulously composed of textured items, color, and patterns, become a metaphor for how memory, history, and common materials can be manipulated, transformed, and restaged.

**Juliana Huxtable** combines and reinvents cultural histories, questioning the presentation and perception of identity in artworks that often use her own body. Presented in the exhibition, Huxtable's mesmerizing, extended texts weave personal history with pop-cultural histories, and notions of race, gender, and queer sexuality.

**Yvette Mayorga's** confectionary *Monument* sculptures combine sweetness and abject everyday objects as cultural and personal references that critique the bitter-sweetness of the American dream for Mexican-American immigrant families. Mayorga's larger body of work tackles issues of race, identity, gender, and Latin stereotypes by using visual tropes of celebration.

In *Free, White and 21* **Howardena Pindell** focuses the camera on herself to give a deadpan account of the racism she experienced coming of age as a black woman in America. This iconic work illustrates the stark divide between black and white Americans with Pindell appearing as both herself and as a white woman.

In the photo series *More Than Some, Less Than Others* **Martine Syms** uses vagueness, indifferent framing, and an ambiguous source in the interest of prosaic black representation. Borrowing images from previous works and fragmentary sources, Syms builds continuous narratives, remixed across temporal boundaries, and collapsed into new fictions.

**Zipporah Camille Thompson's** *Panspermiatic Drift* and *Prismatic Root* are representative of her practice of fusing together an array of materials and techniques, to connect histories both personal and collective. Evocative of Thompson's deeply intuitive material process, the works evidence both the metaphysical and spiritual by way of abstraction.

#### **Gallery 400 Out of Easy Reach Programs:**

Friday, April 27, 5-8pm—**Opening Reception: *Out of Easy Reach***

Saturday, July, 28, 1-4pm—**Workshop with Artist Yvette Mayorga**

**Additional program details to be announced. For a complete list of programs visit [gallery400.uic.edu/events](http://gallery400.uic.edu/events)**

#### **Catalogue:**

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue that includes full-color plates of the works on view; commissioned essays by Allison Glenn and Cameron Shaw, executive director and founding editor of Pelican Bomb; and short-form contributions about each exhibited artist written by invited scholars, curators, writers and artists. Contributors include: Julie Rodrigues Widholm, director and chief curator, DePaul Art Museum; Lorelei Stewart, director and curator, Gallery 400 at the University of Illinois at Chicago; Rachel Adams, senior curator of exhibitions, UB Art Galleries; Torkwase Dyson, artist and educator; Chloë Bass, artist and writer; Rashayla Marie Brown, interdisciplinary artist and writer; Alexandria Eregbu, interdisciplinary artist, curatorial coordinator, Mana Contemporary Chicago; Faye Gleisser, assistant professor of contemporary art, department of art history, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana; Mia Lopez, assistant curator, DePaul Art Museum; Kimia Maleki, project assistant, Persepolis Fortification Archive, The Oriental Institutes of the University of Chicago; Erin Nixon, assistant director, Gallery 400 at the University of Illinois at Chicago; Emily Wilkerson, deputy director for curatorial affairs, Prospect New Orleans; and Jennifer Williams, deputy director for the public experience, Prospect New Orleans.

## **Tours:**

Gallery 400 also offers guided tours for groups of all ages. Tours are free of charge but require reservation. Please complete our online form (accessible at [gallery400.uic.edu/visit/tours](http://gallery400.uic.edu/visit/tours)) to schedule a tour of *Out of Easy Reach*. For more information, or to discuss the specific needs and interests of your group, please contact us at 312-996-6114 or [gallery400@uic.edu](mailto:gallery400@uic.edu).

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Founded in 1983, Gallery 400 is one of the nation's most vibrant university galleries, showcasing work at the leading edge of contemporary art, architecture, and design. The Gallery's program of exhibitions, lectures, film and video screenings, and performances features interdisciplinary and experimental practices. Operating within the School of Art & Art History in the College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Gallery 400 endeavors to make the arts and its practitioners accessible to a broad spectrum of the public and to cultivate a variety of cultural and intellectual perspectives. Gallery 400 is recognized for its support of the creation of new work, the diversity of its programs and participants, and the development of experimental models for multidisciplinary exhibition.