

DEVIATIONS

**CAMERON PATRICIA DOWNEY, DORON LANGBERG,
EMILIO TAMEZ, JAMES BANTONE, JULIANA HUXTABLE,
NASH GLYNN, MARTINE GUTIERREZ, MICHAEL STAMM,
OSCAR YI HOU, PE FERREIRA, SAM PENN, SER SERPAS**
Curated by Oscar yi Hou
April 24–May 7, 2025

**Opening reception:
Thursday, April 24, 6-8pm**

Text by hannah baer

DEVIATIONS is a group show of 12 artists, most of whom I know more or less intimately, and most of whom are trans or gay and/or hang out “downtown” (a word which here alludes to but does not in fact denote geography). The works are almost all either portraits or sculptures, some self-portraits and in more than one case, a portrayal of another artist in the show. In this way the works form a web of sociality that supersedes but also links to physical space, much like the non-geographic downtown which the artists represent. You may not personally know these artists, but to know that they largely know each other is perhaps to understand some aspect of how they arrived together here.

Some people who study the mind believe one’s unconscious is populated by so-called “objects”; for example, a maternal object describes a shape into which you fit people who remind you of your mother (which is also a word used to describe someone who raised you in the scene). To portray someone is also, concretely, to make their likeness into a physical object. To place such portraits alongside sculptures—or a painting of a sculpture (Michael Stamm), a photograph of a figure with an object (Pe Ferreira), or of the artist herself with a sculpture as clothing (Martine Gutierrez)—suggests the friction between the person and/as the object, especially in a socio-visual culture that centers visibility and glamor. The totality of objects in your unconscious, and the relation between them, is said to constitute your “object world.”

These works in relief of one another instantiate visceral questions about the nature of subjectivity in relation to the plausible object in one’s mind (a recognizable chair) versus the object in the world, perhaps distorted (a chair with elongated legs, Cameron Patricia Downey). When you look at an object, does it look back at you? (Sam Penn’s two chiaroscuro portraits suggest that a moment of not-looking may still constitute acknowledgement.) Such riddles abound, as do themes around contact, reification and its disruption, and ekphrasis, or the depiction of one work within another.

Or, I would put it another way, and did, in fact, first write about these pieces in language that hews more closely to form, to the object, ekphrastic too but not only, in what follows:

the friction between

the world as it is and the world as it we
hold it in mind

your body knocking into
your own furniture (that you
acquired in a hope that it would
make people like or respect you
though it is hard to admit)
in the dark

and/also
tracing the curve
of a friend
's cheek or hip
(a friend you pursued because
being near her left a residue)
again, obviously,
in the dark

(or doron whispering something to me
on the dancefloor about how he felt in his
body when painting someone
else's body)

(that one might feel studying her own
body)

relaxing into
the friction (pressure?)
between your friend as she is and
your friend as you hold her in mind,
deviations
between one and the other
notwithstanding

-can i ask about a so-called term of art:
ekphrastic

thing-within-thing

you looking at someone you admire and
then she's in you
relating as rendering, reproducing, making
concrete

"once removed," like a cousin, like trade
who never leaves

friction magnified by exquisite attention

or another term of art to refer to the
person in the mind: "object"
as in, "object world"

the acquisitive impulse here, wanting to
take someone in, wanting to render them

something taut between what's imagined
and what you touch

that heaves and sometimes collapses with
contact

(harris said "correspondences") which is
accurate, or

who you are in my mind is part of a web
between all our bodies

mediated not as much by possessions,
not as much by like and dislike

but the network of friction, pressure, and
groping

a generation of young people who talk to
each other, represent each other, follow
each other into caves and back rooms

and so, in our minds, in our choreography,
in our renderings of one another,
correspond.

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

Oscar yi Hou

I began this friends-and-family exhibition somewhat last minute, with no aspirational grand narrative or through-line. But quickly, some threads became apparent. And to be clear, I did not intend for the show to comprise artists of any specific identity, save for *artist*—the queerness of it all is more a reflection of my lifeworld than it is of anything else. *DEVIATIONS*, alongside this text, is an attempt to describe, not prescribe, what already exists in the world.

When I'm feeling playful with my semantics, I like to differentiate between a *piece* of art (an art-object) and an art *work*. As a kind of gerund, the *artwork* is the phenomenon by which an art-object does meaningful work onto you. It exerts a force onto the viewer, which moves some part of the viewer.

Bodywork might describe artwork that does work onto the body. Not the viewer's personal body per se, but rather the discursive formation of the body. In other words, what is conjured in the state's imaginary by the word *body*. Through apparatuses like legislature, textbooks, or medicine, the state proscribes what bodies are to exist within the state's own, well... *body*.

The state delimits what is a normative body. And it's through this disciplining that we encounter the deviant body—those forms of people rendered extrinsic to the contours of the state. *Bodywork* destabilizes the normative body. It works it; resignifies it. It declares its own freedom (to deviate). When we say that one's *body is tea*, it implies that the body can constitute its own drama, worthy of awe and gossip, soft gasps. Enough of a deviation to rework the very notion of what a body is and what it could be.

I find that queer art practices often concern themselves with the body, as the body is the interface onto which deviancy is first inscribed. Perhaps medically, at birth... then through ornamentation, aesthetics; an errant earring, jeans fitting too tight. Or too loose. The wrong hairstyle. However deviance finds itself most clockable in its performance, its *doing*. The sway of a hip, the slack of a wrist. The wrong smile for the wrong person.

Indeed, in light of the ways in which queers perform their bodies—may it be penetrating the other's body in purportedly exotic ways, medically alchemizing our bodies, or chemical interventions for the basest need of all: the pleasure principle—do we see how *bodywork* is rendered an unavoidably queer phenomenon.

For an artwork to do *bodywork*, it does not need to represent a body literally. A figure is the form of a body, yes; but the form of a body can also be its absence, remnant, or impression. A shadow can be a figure, but not a body, for example.

In *DEVIATIONS*, the works by Cameron, Ser, and Michael contain the absent-presence of bodies. A seat for a body. An installation with objects that bodies have done work to, moved through, then discarded. Or the allusion to a body as recipient of chemical pleasure. These works do work onto the body through their retooling of objects and/or chemicals. The motion, leisure, and pleasure of a body are all implied through its absence.

Several other works depict others, or the artists themselves. My painting is of Emilio, for example. Doron's painting is of Nash; and Nash, Martine, and Juliana have all depicted themselves. (Sam has depicted Max, who has been helping behind the scenes with the show.) At large, *DEVIATIONS* figures a "web of sociality" (as hannah says) for the viewer. Beauty, gender, and personhood can all be pried into with these portraits.

But perhaps such topics are subsumed by a far more simple and elegant truth: that these works express life. Life as it is, as it could be, as it might as well be, for us.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Cameron Patricia Downey (b. 1998, North Minneapolis, MN) is an anti-disciplinary artist whose work oscillates between photography, film, body, sculpture, curation, and otherwise. The incidental, the precarious, and the misremembered are central to these works which strive to archive, unfurl, make-alter-of, and bring fantasy to the Blues of Black life and relation. Solo exhibitions include Hoard Ecstatic T293 Gallery, Rome (2025) and Super Deluxe, Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis (2024-2025). They have presented work as venues including the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2023, 2024); Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (solo, 2023); M+B Gallery, Los Angeles (2023); Kunstraum Kreuzberg, Berlin (2021); Rochester Art Center (2021); and Hair+Nails Gallery, Minneapolis (solo, 2020, 2023), among others. Residencies include the Walker Art Center's Moving Image department, Juxtaposition Arts, Loghaven Artist Residency, and Second Shift Studio Space of Saint Paul. They were the 2023 recipient of the Carolyn Glasoe Bailey Foundation's MN Art Prize. Downey graduated from Columbia University in 2021 with a double concentration in visual art and environmental science and is currently a first-year MFA candidate in sculpture at the Yale School of Art.

Doron Langberg (b. 1985, Yokneam Moshava, Israel) received an MFA from Yale University School of Art, and a BFA from the University of Pennsylvania. Langberg's work is currently on view as part of the collection display at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and at the National Portrait Gallery, London. Solo exhibitions include *Part of Your World* at Kunsthall Rotterdam (2024); *Doron Langberg* at Rubell Museum Miami (2022–23); *Give Me Love*, Victoria Miro, London (2021); and *Likeness*, Yossi Milo Gallery, New York (2019). Group exhibition venues include the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, The Frick Collection, ICA Miami, American Academy of Arts and Letters, Leslie-Lohman Museum, and The PAFA Museum. Langberg's work is in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; National Portrait Gallery, London; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore; Crystal Bridges, Bentonville; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain (MAMCO), Genève; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; Rennie Museum, Vancouver, Canada; RISD Museum, Providence, Rhode Island; and Rubell Museum, Miami.

Emilio Tamez (b. 1999) is an American-born artist whose narrative-focused imagery conveys both holiness and sacrilege with dramatic sensuality. In her belief, the ultimate intersectionality is individuality. In the search for what then connects us, Tamez is seeking conversion with themes of the human experience; those which are true across cultures and throughout time. Lust, lamentation, prayer, meditations on femininity, anguish, romance, and rebellion—among others—are recurring egregores in her work. As she sees it, the world is made of signs and symbols; and she pursues mastery of her own visual language. Tamez has exhibited her photography at Espace Parallèle, Paris (2025); VOO Space, Berlin (2024); and Kapp Kapp Gallery, New York (2024). In 2024 she released her first photo-book, *The Perfect Initiate*.

hannah baer is a writer and therapist based in New York. She is the author of the memoir *trans girl suicide museum*. Her second book, *The Life of the Party*, is forthcoming in 2027.

James Bantone (b. 1992, Geneva) uses his artistic practice as an ongoing exploration of identity obsession, combining photography, sculpture, and video to play with ulterior perspectives and the poetics of anonymity. Bantone received an MA from the Geneva University of Art and Design (HEAD) in 2021, and BA from the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). He has presented solo exhibitions at Karma International, Zurich (2021) and Coalmine, Winterthur (2020), and has participated in group exhibitions at Kunsthalle Zurich (2023), Simian, Copenhagen (2023), Klemm's Gallery, Berlin (2023), Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen (2023), Centre d'Art Contemporain de Genève (2022), Cordova, Barcelona (2021), Swiss Institute, New York (2020), Kunsthalle Fribourg (2020), and UV Estudios, Buenos Aires (2019).

Juliana Huxtable (b. 1987, Bryan-College Station, Texas) is an artist, writer, musician, and performer whose work explores and challenges discourses around contemporary perceptions of identity, futurity, and politics using a diverse set of means including self-portraiture, text-based prints, performance, nightlife, music, writing, and social media. Huxtable does not privilege any method over another, and the lines between different forms of her work are often fluid. She attended Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, where she studied art, gender studies, and human rights. Solo exhibition venues include Project Native Informant, London (2022, 2024, 2017); Fotografiska, Berlin (2023); Reena Spaulings, New York (2017, 2019); and Shoot the Lobster, New York (2018). She has participated in group presentations at MoMA PS1, New York (2014); White Columns, New York (2014); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2014); and *2015 Triennial: Surround Audience*, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2015); among other venues. Her work is in the permanent collections of The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York; CCS Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem; and Magasin III Museum for Contemporary Art, Stockholm.

Nash Glynn (b. 1992) is a transdisciplinary artist whose paintings, drawings, videos, and photography use her body as a medium to interrogate categories such as nature, female, and the human. Solo exhibitions include *Interior*, Vielmetter, Los Angeles (2021); *Self Portrait with One Foot Forward and One Hand Reaching Out*, OCD Chinatown, New York (2020); and *The Future is Fiction*, Participant Inc, New York (2019). She has participated in group exhibitions at Victoria Miro, London (2021); Metro Pictures, New York (2021); Sargent's Daughters, New York (2020); Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles (2020); Latvian National Museum of Art, Latvia (2020); Spinello Projects, Miami (2019); Thierry Goldberg, New York (2019); Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art (2018); among other venues. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Tate Modern, London.

Martine Gutierrez (b. 1989) is a transdisciplinary artist whose work in photography and video subverts various performances of pop-cultural tropes in the exploration of identity. Her amass of media—ranging from billboards to episodic films, music videos and renowned magazine, *Indigenous Woman*—produce the very conduits of advertising that sell the identities she disassembles. Gutierrez received her BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design (2012), She is also a published musician and has produced several commercial videos. She has presented solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2024); Henry Art Gallery at the University of Washington, Seattle (2024); The Polygon Art Gallery, Vancouver, Canada (2024); H'ART Museum, Amsterdam (2023); RYAN LEE, New York (2013, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2023); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2022); Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa (2022); Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (2022); Public Art Fund, New York (2021); Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston (2020); Modern Art Museum of Forth Worth (2019); among others. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington DC; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC; Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Minneapolis Institute of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Pérez Art Museum, Miami; among others. Gutierrez is a 2025 Guggenheim Fellow.

Michael Stamm (b. 1983, Illinois) is a painter interested in strength and weakness, vice and virtue, self-actualization and obliteration, and all other unstable psychosocial dualities. He attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2016 and received an MFA from New York University, MA in English Literature from Columbia University, and BA from Wesleyan University. Solo and two-person exhibition venues include Deli Gallery, New York (2022); Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles (2021); DC Moore Gallery, New York (2018); and Thierry Goldberg Gallery, New York (2016). He is the recipient of a NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship in Painting and has been written about by the *New Yorker*, *Artforum*, *W Magazine*, and *Art in America*. His work is in the permanent collection of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami.

Oscar yi Hou (b. 1998 in Liverpool, England) received his BA at Columbia University, New York. Solo exhibitions include *The beat of life*, James Fuentes, New York (2024); *A sky-licker relation*, Brooklyn Museum, New York (2022); *A sky-licker relation*, James Fuentes, New York (2021). one of the youngest artists to do so. Other solo exhibitions include James Fuentes, New York; and *Crane Seeking Comforts*, T293 Gallery, Rome (2021). Yi Hou has participated in group exhibitions at Pace Gallery, Hong Kong; WOAW Gallery, Hong Kong; Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus; Gallery 12.26, Dallas; T293 Gallery, Rome, Italy; Sprüth Magers Online; Asia Society, New York; Tong Art Advisory, New York; Half Gallery, New York; Rachel Uffner, New York; Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles; and the Royal Academy, UK. His work is in the permanent collections of Whitney Museum of American Art, Brooklyn Museum, ICA Miami, New-York Historical Society, Columbus Museum of Art, Cantor Arts Center, and M+ Museum. James Fuentes Press published *Vol. 6: Oscar yi Hou* in 2022.

Pe Ferreira (b. 1996, São Paulo) is a multidisciplinary artist exploring the interplays of deviance, light, memory, and sexuality. Compositing works around film photography, video making, drawing, and music, Ferreira samples bodies, besties, brilliance, and burdens. Under the moniker "DJ working class" she extends her practice to sound, disassembling categories of music genres. Solo exhibitions include *For Mattresses to Floor Waterbeds Into Air*, No Tax, Paris (2024-2025), and *LIKE MY MOTHER*, Corridor Project, Oslo (2024). She has participated in exhibitions including *On Depiction*, Mercatoria Fishing Club Gallery, Saint Leonards (2025); *El Futuro es Infertil o no Sera: Muestra de video de America Latina y el Caribe en II Actos*, curated by Sofia Moreno, AAAA, Athens (2022); *Sounds of Music*, Kino Sud, Zurich (2021); *Forever Imbricated Backroom Fr(ri)ctions*, CCS, Paris (2021); *what Adults do*, Cherish, Geneva (2021); *IMS Convida*, Instituto Moreira Salles, São Paulo (2020); *Bouquet Issue no.2* (2019), *Balice Hertling*, Paris (2019); and *Vesicula*, BREU, São Paulo (2018). Pe currently lives and works between Paris and Berlin.

Sam Penn (b. 1998) is a photographer based in New York. She presented her first solo exhibition, *Bad Behavior* at Balice Hertling Galerie, Paris in 2024. Group exhibitions include *Turn My Way*, OCD Chinatown (2024); *Salon*, New York Life Gallery (2024); and *It's Personal*, OCD Chinatown (2023). Publications include *Bad Behavior* (2024) and *Some Girls* (2023), both published by New York Life Gallery. Editorial photography clients include *DUST*, *Document Journal*, and *Interview*; commercial photography clients include Balenciaga and Vaquera,

Ser Serpas (b. 1995, Los Angeles) makes works that take form as unstable assemblages of found objects, in which painting, sculpture, drawing, and texts bring together personal memories and traces of everyday life. Primarily interested in death and legacy, her work is preoccupied with its own urgency in the face of fossilization. Serpas has presented solo exhibitions at Bourse de Commerce, Pinault Collection, Paris (2023); Swiss Institute, New York (2023); Balice Hertling, Paris (2022); Karma International, Zurich (2020); Ludlow 38, New York (2019); Truth and Consequences, Geneva (2019); LUMA Westbau, Zurich (2018); among others. She participated in the 2020 *Made in LA* biennial at the Hammer Museum and the Huntington Museum, Los Angeles; and has been featured in group exhibitions at MAMCO Geneva (2023); White Columns, New York (2023); Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2023); Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève (2022); Carlye Packer, Los Angeles (2022); Balice Hertling, Paris (2019, 2022); Arcadia Missa, London (2020); Ochi Gallery, Los Angeles (2020); Kunsthalle Fribourg, (2019); Company Gallery, New York (2019); Swiss Institute, New York (2018); Performance Space New York, New York (2018); Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York (2018); Queer Thoughts, New York (2018); and SculptureCenter, New York (2017); among others. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Pinault Collection, Paris; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; LUMA Foundation, Zürich; Rubell Family Foundation, Miami; Palm Springs Art Museum; Collezione De Iorio, Trento, Italy; The Burger Collection, Hong Kong; Domus Collection, Beijing; Fondation Beyeler, Basel; Neal Baer Collection, New York; The Burger Collection, Hong Kong; and The Long Museum, Shanghai.

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