



Dalia Amara, *I'll Be Your _____*, 2017

MAIN GALLERY

IN PURSUIT OF THE PERFECT POSE

Friday, October 27, 2017 to Saturday, December 2, 2017

Opening Reception: October 27, 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Brunch Talk: October 28, 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION:

In Pursuit of the Perfect Pose explores internalized performative manifestations of femininity and cultural alterity imposed through social structures and societal expectations of marginalized women. Drawing loosely on ideas of Otherness as experienced by racialized minorities, this exhibition highlights the intersections of barriers faced by women of colour, and the ways in which they challenge the constructed performance of their identities. Participating artists Dalia Amara, Rah, Rajni Perera, Shellie Zhang and Tau Lewis use image-based works and installation to reflect on the signifiers and foundations of cultural and gender performance in Western society. Each project takes a unique approach to question and reform enforced binary narratives that pose limits on a fluid disposition of self. With a

platform for these female artists of colour to take up space, subvert the colonial gaze and navigate through notions of otherness and performance in their work, the exhibition acts as a collective appeal to engage in further discourse on the barriers such mandated performance creates.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY:

DALIA AMARA

Dalia Amara is an American-Jordanian multidisciplinary artist living and working in Brooklyn, New York with a practice based in photography, video and performance art. Amara received her MFA in Photography, Video and Related Media from the School of Visual Arts in New York, and her BFA from Columbia College Chicago. Her work uses the domestic space or photo/video studio as a staging ground for sites of trauma, desire, and banality. Born to multi-ethnic parents, and raised in the US, Jordan, Egypt, Qatar and UAE, the ever-changing home, along with the varying and at times contradictory cultural expectations, have all been at the heart of Amara's motivations in her work. Amara has been featured in Paper Journal (UK), Art F City, and The Art Newspaper. She most recently participated in "Skin Dips," a two-person exhibition with Florencia Escudero at Selena Gallery in New York.

RAH

Rah is an Iranian-Canadian video, photo and performance artist. In her work she focus on and critiques the visual stereotypes and performative aspects that shape female gender identity and Iranian ethnic identity. Her perspective is that of a Canadian-Iranian who is questioning while also trying to assert gender and cultural identity. Rah's work has been published and exhibited in galleries and museums internationally and is represented by Vtape. She has been the recipient of numerous awards and residencies including: SSHRC (2016), Finalist for Team Canada in Digital Arts (2016), Conseil Des Arts et des Lettres du Quebec Grant for Film (2015) and Digital Arts (2014), Studio Das Weisse Haus Residency (Vienna, 2014), Artslant Georgia Fee Residency (Paris, 2014), Ottawa Art Gallery Award of Excellence (2013) and the SAW Video Award (2012).

RAJNI PERERA

Rajni Perera is a diasporic Toronto-based artist whose practice employs a variety of different mediums. Originally from Sri Lanka, Perera was raised between her homeland, Australia and Canada. She graduated from OCAD in 2011 and was presented with the medal for Drawing and Painting. Currently represented by Saskia Fernando Gallery in Colombo, Perera has exhibited in Toronto and internationally. Her work is an accessible East-West dialogue of ideas concerning immigrant identity politics, female sexuality and power, and science fiction. She also explores issues of hybridity, gender, sexuality, popular culture, deities, monsters and dream worlds. Perera creates a subversive aesthetic that counteracts antiquated, oppressive discourse, and acts as a restorative force through which people can move outdated, repressive modes of being towards reclaiming their power.

SHELLIE ZHANG

Shellie Zhang is a Toronto-based artist, born in Beijing and raised in various parts of China, the United States, and Canada. She has exhibited at venues including WORKJAM (Beijing), Scope Art Fair (Switzerland) and Public House of Art (Netherlands). She is a recipient of grants such as the RBC Museum Emerging Professional Grant, the Toronto Arts Council's Visual Projects grant, and the Canada Council's Project Grant to Visual Artists. Upcoming projects include a residency at the Art Gallery of Ontario with EMILIA-AMALIA, and an ongoing year-long peer mentorship program with Whippersnapper Gallery. By uniting both past and present iconography with the techniques of mass communication, language and sign, Zhang's work deconstructs notions of tradition, gender, identity, the body, and popular culture while calling attention to these subjects in the context and construction of a multicultural society. She is interested in exploring how multiculturalism, diversity and assimilation is implemented, how this relates to lived experiences, and how culture is learned/relearned.

TAU LEWIS

Tau Lewis (b. 1993) is a Jamaican-Canadian artist living and working in Toronto, Ontario. A self-taught sculptor, Lewis combines natural and synthetic materials to create simulations of living things. She considers the history and symbolism of each material, exploring the political boundaries of nature, identity and authenticity. Her work is bodily and organic, with an explicit strangeness and subtle morbidity. Previously, Lewis' work has carried strong feminist themes. Her current practice relies heavily on her surrounding environment; she uses live plants, found objects and repurposed materials collected throughout the Canadian landscape to create figurative sculptures investigating black identity politics and African diaspora. Lewis has exhibited at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Spring Break Art Fair in New York and Mulherin New York. She has received support from Toronto Arts Council and Ontario Arts Council. Recent and forthcoming exhibition sites include: New Museum, New York; Night Gallery, Los Angeles, USA; COOPER COLE, Art Gallery of York University, Toronto, Canada.

CURATOR:

LEILA FATEMI

Leila Fatemi is an emerging artist, curator and community arts worker based in Toronto. Living between cultures, her work and curatorial endeavours stem from her daily experiences as a visible minority and aim to provide platforms and contribute alternative narratives to conversations of Ethnic representation in contemporary art. Leila holds a BFA in Image Arts from Ryerson University and has exhibited her work and curated exhibitions both nationally and internationally.

Gallery 44: Centre for Contemporary Photography
401 Richmond Street West Suite #120
Toronto, Ontario, M5V 3A8