

CHATEAUSHATTO

ARIA DEAN
Art Basel Hong Kong
Booth 1C36

Previews March 27 & 28
March 29-31, 2019

Aria Dean's work picks up on the histories, ideologies and latent meaning that are harbored in familiar materials and recognizable formats. Primarily working in sculpture and video, her work acknowledges – then attempts to redistribute – the burden of this symbolic cargo.

Through individual works and exhibitions, Dean seeks to model an ontology of blackness that matches its frequency in the world. Dean's approach to her practice, which also extends to her writing, is defined by its entry into ideas at a structural level. With varying approaches, Dean stalls the tendency to narrativize artworks, instead arousing their phenomenological abilities.

For *Art Basel Hong Kong*, Dean presents a new video, a single wall-mounted sculpture and a series of stand-alone sculptures. These works continue the artist's inquiry into the abilities and limits of material to convey its own complexities. As in previous bodies of work, Dean's sculptural thinking hinges on the specificity of her materials.

Dean asks if blackness can be given form via a purely material or structural presence. In her thinking, these questions begin to align with the core concerns of minimalist sculpture: what is inherent or delivered by direct contact and what is accrued by a projected meaning. A wall-mounted disk, which hijacks the formal language of minimalist sculpture, is made from a mixture of clay extracted from the ground in Mississippi and an industrial resin. Materially, this is both personal/historical and generic/ahistorical, a tension that often emerges in Dean's work.

A suite of new stand-alone sculptures take the most basic flat form suggestive of a human figure, cut from two-way glass mirror and suspended in a wooden base. Two-way mirror is transparent from one side and reflective from the other. It's a material that is commonly used in scenarios of monitoring, surveillance and interrogation. It permits visibility from one side to another if looking through one side, then obfuscation via self-reflection if looking through the other. Dean offers a sketch of a figure that is both individual and generic. She's suggesting a consciousness that is doubled and an object that speaks differently to its audience, depending on their position. It can reflect back or be seen through, therefore it is both hyper-visible and invisible, at once. These works are playful yet deliberate, making use of the material's specific qualities while preserving their potential for a more spontaneous interplay.

Bracing Dean's practice is the enduring question of what constitutes an ontology of blackness. While this question takes shape in the sculptural works, it's rendered explicit in a video of densely edited crowd scenes, plucked from hip-hop and rap music videos and transferred to black and white. In these tightly sequenced, soundless videos, Dean approaches a kind of hip-hop structuralism in which moving-image assemblages magnify the peculiar ontological condition at hand.

Aria Dean (b. 1993, Los Angeles) is an artist, writer and curator based in Los Angeles and New York. She currently holds the position of Assistant Curator of Net Art & Digital Culture at *Rhizome*. Her writing has been featured in *Texte zur Kunst*, *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *The New Inquiry*, *Spike Art Quarterly*, *Real Life Magazine*, *Topical Cream Magazine*, *Mousse Magazine*, *CURA Magazine*, *Kaleidoscope*, and *X-TRA Contemporary Art Quarterly*. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include *Aria Dean*, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo and *Jonesome crowded west*, Château Shatto, Los Angeles. Dean has exhibited work in exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; De Young Museum, San Francisco; Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin and Knockdown Center, New York. Dean has presented talks and performances at the Serpentine Galleries, London; Swiss Institute, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; New Museum, New York; University of California, Los Angeles; The New School, New York; and Machine Project, Los Angeles. Dean recently completed an Artist Residency at the Hammer Museum and she co-directs the project space, *As It Stands*, Los Angeles.