

MATTHEW BROWN

KENTURAH DAVIS

Apropos of air

November 13–December 18, 2021

In this new body of work, the artist expands the landscape where language and the figure intersect. The show is framed by two new works in glass: custom stained-glass windows made in collaboration with Judson Studios. A grid of colored light filter into the gallery, intra-acting with the space inside. The color continues into the works on paper, introducing the artist's experiments with color which integrate writings about conditions that are at the horizon of our understanding (such as the ancient knowledge systems and the physics of color, space and time). As the texts drift in and out of legibility, the figures embody how the perception of ourselves shift so swiftly with every nuanced change in our environment. Nothing exists in isolation, but rather in a contingent relationship with its context. The figures in the stamp drawings echo the phrase *The Bodily Effect of a Color*, against a ground of pixelated hues. The newest series, *planar vessels*, bear washes of ink produced using a photographic process where an image is made without a camera by placing objects directly onto the surface and exposing it to sunlight. They are then embedded with text, leaving a low relief that allow for a dynamic relationship with the blurred figures that are rendered on its surface. Several of these drawings are accompanied with paper thread weavings. The artist begins this process by writing a text on paper, then slices and twists the paper into thread. For these latest weavings, she worked with Kente weaver, Bob Dennis Ahiagble, who wove her threads into a graphic and coded pattern. Together, the portrait and text(tile) embody the ways language flows around and through us in invisible ways. The 2-d plane of the paper and fabric is reconfigured as a vessel, full of meaning, a container of information. For the first time, the artist also presents an arrangement of chine collé photographs that reveal the significant role of photography in her practice. These long-exposure images note the poetics of the durational experience the artist has with her community of friends/sitters.

apropos of air is Kenturah Davis's second solo exhibition with the gallery.

The artist lives and works between Los Angeles, CA and Accra, Ghana. Davis earned her BA from Occidental College, CA and MFA from Yale University School of Art in 2018.

Davis's work is currently included in Black American Portraits at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). In 2020, Davis presented her first solo museum exhibition, Everything That Cannot Be Known at the Savannah College of Art and Design Museum (SCAD). Recent institutional exhibitions include Plumb Line: Charles White and the Contemporary, curated by Essence Harden and Leigh Raiford at the California African American Museum (CAAM), Los Angeles, CA (2019) and Afrocosmologies: American Reflections, at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford (2019).

Other notable institutional exhibitions include: Linked in Tradition, Inspiring in Vision: A Selection of Works by African American Women Artists, Robert and Frances Museum of Art, San Bernardino, CA (2017); Black Joy, Yale University, New Haven, CT (2016); We Must Risk Delight, organized in collaboration with the 56th Venice Biennale, at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia, Venice Biennale (2015); The Silence of Ordinary Things, The Mistake Room, Los Angeles (2015); i:23, The Yokohama Triennial, Yokohama, Japan (2014); An American Water Margin, Ucity Museum, Guangzhou, China (2014); Mass Attack, Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA (2013); and Mis-Design, Ian Potter Museum, Melbourne, Australia (2011).

Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include (a)Float, (a)Fall, (a)Dance, (a)Death, Jeffrey Deitch, New York (2021); Blur in the Interest of Precision, Matthew Brown, Los Angeles (2019); a two-person exhibition with Desmond Lewis at Crosstown Arts, Memphis in coordination with the traveling venue, Seed Space (2019); and Narratives and Meditations (2014) and sonder (2013), Papillion, Los Angeles.

Davis was commissioned by the Los Angeles Metro Rail to create large-scale, site-specific work that will be permanently installed on the new Crenshaw/LAX rail line (2021). Other public projects include Four Women, a commissioned mural by Alliance Francaise to commemorate International Women's Day, in Accra, Ghana and Metamorphose, comprised of five portraits commissioned by architect Elliott Barnes, featured in Barnes' installation at the Lâ Exposition AD Interieurs, Paris, France.

The artist was an inaugural artist fellow at NXTHVN in New Haven, founded by Titus Kaphar and Jonathan Brand. Davis was selected as a DAMLI fellow at the Cleveland Museum of Art. She took part in the 2020 Artist In Residence Program at the Headlands Residency, Sausalito, CA.