

AUTRE

"TO HIDE TO SHOW" A GROUP EXHIBITION THAT EXPLORES THE NATURE OF HIDING AND REVEALING: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE ARTISTS

June 12, 2015

Opening tomorrow night in Los Angeles, MAMA gallery will present To Hide To Show, a group exhibition derived from a contemporary French social anthropological study entitled *Montrer / Occulter*, which loosely translates to the exhibition's title. The artists chosen to represent the ideas and concepts behind this study, and its conclusions, experiment with the notion of concealing and revealing on a societal, intellectual and creative basis. These artists include Clara Balzary, Zoe Crosher, Nana Ghana, Ariana Papademetropoulos, Mattea Perrotta, Fay Ray, Lisa Solberg, and Johanna Tagada. The concept of hiding and showing lends itself as a true analysis of the assembling and dissection of the human psyche, in a constant battle between order and sabotage, between how we present our true self to the world and how we feel about inner self – the dark ghost that is always haunting from within. In *To Hide To Show*, the artists are interpreting these multi-dimensional, anthropological, psychological and metaphysical concepts using varying degrees of personal reflection, historical reference, visual language and controlled performance. *To Hide To Show* is the idea that concealment is to make something sacred and exposure of that sacredness is equal to degradation. To be revealed in this exhibition are the artists' artifacts of what they hold sacred while at the same time what they choose to defile.

Read the following Q&As to learn more about each artist in the exhibition...

JOHANNA TAGADA



WHERE ARE YOU FROM? From a tiny village in east France. Now based in London.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION: Nature, daily life, feelings and traditions.

FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD: A chance for “places”? My lover's arms; Nara in Japan and all the small villages near by; my grandparents' farmhouse.

CHOSEN MEDIUM: Painting. I also do drawing, photography, video, publishing, sculpture, textile and installation.

MEDIUM THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE WORKING WITH: I enjoy very much working with all mediums mentioned above and I look forward to do more modular sculptures. In a conversation with LA based BOOK STAND earlier this year I said "It is important to question the physicality of the medium with which I am involved. It can be something difficult, for example, one of my main mediums is painting, which has such a big tradition, but that is also so often seen again and again as "dead." Push the reflection further, compose, question, endlessly, and yet keep it simple and understandable on various levels. I like to create a dialogue between the various mediums with which I am composing in my body of work. Every thing is connected, my paintings are like the roots, my photographs might reveal the seeds, my publications are the branches that are like traces of the growth of the tree, the videos and installations pieces are like the blooming flowers of my work that are only seen occasionally and that should be enjoyed together as a whole."

GREATEST DISCOVERY AS AN ARTIST: The world.

STRANGEST EXPERIENCE: What do you call "strange?" Here is something happy and unexpected: Meeting Yoshitomo Nara, one of my favorite artists and assisting him for his lecture on the occasion of his retrospective at the Dairy Art Center in London last fall.

WHAT ARE YOU HIDING? Insecurity.

WHAT ARE YOU REVEALING? Positive feelings, happy memories.

WHAT'S NEXT? Épistolaire Imaginaire - Les Fleures du Japon: a solo exhibition and the U.S. introduction of my piece Épistolaire Imaginaire (it first premiered in Tokyo, July 2014) opening on July 11th at at IKO IKO x BUILDING BLOCKS (LA) in collaboration with BOOK STAND.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS AN ARTIST IN FIVE YEARS? Working on projects and exhibitions through which I can bring positivity to people's lives. I truly hope for my work to be a trigger, softly, like a warm hug pushing people to make positive and meaningful changes. Despite my soft and tender imagery, the ideals I pursue as a human, as an artist, require hard work and strength. For my artistic practice and lifestyle I am inspired by the way of life from my ancestors, I do best to apply this to the period of time in which we live. Such decisions for example imply saying no to mass produced food and clothes, creating my publishing work with acid free paper, binding them by hand, it's a little like being a Poetic "Punk". I am very attached to nature and I do not believe in a hierarchy system in which the human sits on top. Therefore life choices such as being Vegan are relevant to my body of work.

A QUOTE OR SENTIMENT TO LIVE BY: Oneness

MATTEA PERROTA



WHERE ARE YOU FROM? Venice Beach, California

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION? Anywhere and everywhere. It's all in the tiny details of what is existing in our peripheral, and what we choose to take note of. Curiosity inspires my work most.

FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD: Any ocean.

CHOSEN MEDIUM: Oil.

WHAT IS THE MEDIUM THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE WORKING WITH? Bronze, plaster, wood.

GREATEST DISCOVERY AS AN ARTIST: Being comfortable sharing what is hidden. I often times have these moments and think, "what the fuck am I doing?" This is always a break through moment for me because I go deep into my unconscious when I work and lose sight of my reality. I work from emotion, pleasure and use my work as a vehicle to understand what the hell is going on around me. When I take a step back and leave my unconscious is when I'm tested. It's what I'm revealing about my hidden emotions and seeing this abstract emotion painted on a tangible object is wild. Sometimes it works and can exist in my reality, and often times I'm not ready to share it. Vulnerability is difficult for me, but my work has helped me become okay with sharing what I'm hiding.

STRANGEST EXPERIENCE: Anytime someone asks you what your painting means.

WHAT ARE YOU HIDING? I won't tell. We're all hiding something, aren't we? These things are what make us more complex and interesting individually.

WHAT ARE YOU REVEALING? Life is very, very complicated. I'm trying to understand the absurdity and beauty of it all through my work.

WHAT'S NEXT: I'm currently at Al Maqam Artist Residency in Marrakech working on a new oil series for a fall exhibition. I'll also be showing work alongside a handful of Moroccan and French Artists in San Francisco this October.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS AN ARTIST IN FIVE YEARS: That's difficult to say considering I barely know what I'm doing tomorrow. I only work when inspiration strikes. I hope to be traveling and understanding more about the world, being inspired from the places I visit and people that cross my path. The unconscious comes to me during these moments, and these are the moments that get me in the studio creating. I see myself working on large-scale paintings and working 3-dimensionally with plaster or wood. I'd love for these two mediums to have a relationship and co-exist in the same space.

A QUOTE OR SENTIMENT TO LIVE BY: "This whole world is wild at heart and weird on top," David Lynch.

NANA GHANA



WHERE ARE YOU FROM? I am from a coastal village called Bakaano in Ghana West Africa

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION? I look for inspiration from everyday life, people, places and things.

FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD: Favorite place in the whole world? Hard to say, there are many places I still haven't been yet, I guess it be in the arms of my lover.

CHOSEN MEDIUM: Performance art and filmmaking.

WHAT IS A MEDIUM THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE WORKING WITH? The medium I like to be working in is exactly the medium I am in right now: performance and filmmaking

GREATEST DISCOVERY AS AN ARTIST: The greatest discovery thus far as an artist is that that the path of the artist is a spiritual journey.

STRANGEST EXPERIENCE: Strangest experience as an artist, like Jim Morrison said, "People are Strange."

WHAT ARE YOU HIDING? Nothing

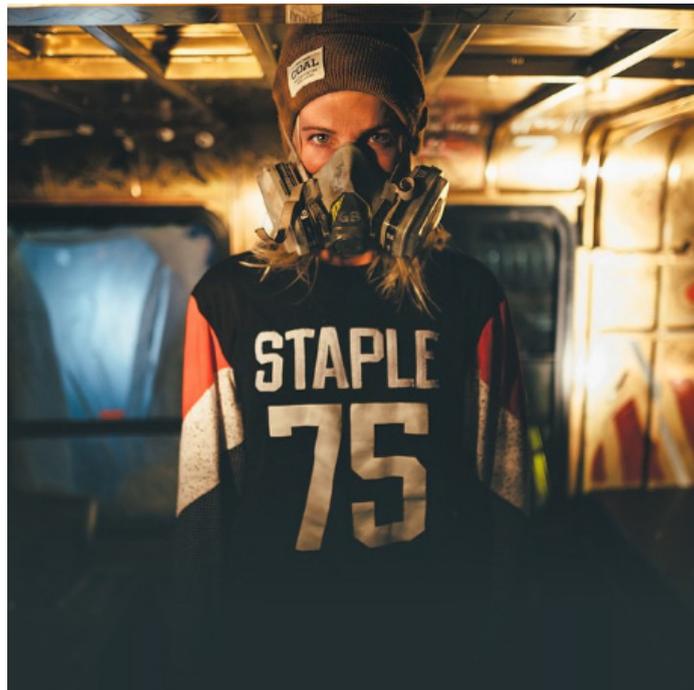
WHAT ARE YOU REVEALING? Everything...take it all.

WHAT'S NEXT: Keep doing dope projects with amazing people and sending African Alien Mermaid vibes to ALL.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS AN ARTIST IN FIVE YEARS: In five years....Keep on doing what I'm doing but get to higher levels...Cause there are levels to this shit!

A QUOTE OR SENTIMENT TO LIVE BY: Life is a feeling process...I love Feeling...feeling it all.

LISA SOLBERG



WHERE ARE YOU FROM? Chicago.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION? Everywhere... boring, but true.

FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD: Iceland or Indo.

CHOSEN MEDIUM: Oil paint, ballpoint pen.

WHAT IS A MEDIUM THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE WORKING WITH? Black sand.

GREATEST DISCOVERY AS AN ARTIST: Beauty.

STRANGEST EXPERIENCE: Saying I'm an artist.

WHAT ARE YOU HIDING? It would ruin the show if I said!

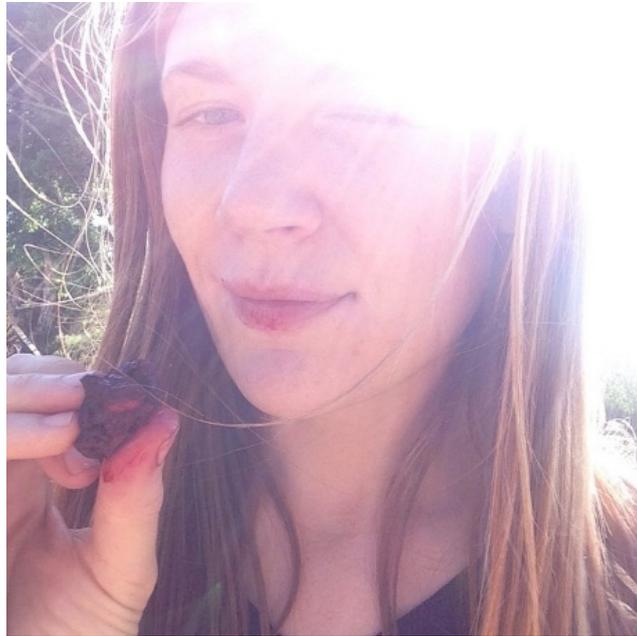
WHAT ARE YOU REVEALING: I like the unexpected.

WHAT'S NEXT? I'm doing a performance based installation/strip club, pimping out a snowcat in Utah, exhibiting a new show at 24HR PSYCHIC, and continuing to write on the side.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS AN ARTIST IN FIVE YEARS: With a secondary studio on a bunch of land out in nature someplace.

A QUOTE OR SENTIMENT TO LIVE BY: Go big or go home!

CLARA BALZARY



WHERE ARE YOU FROM: Los Angeles, CA.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION: Books, films, and out the window.

FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD: The south in the summer.

CHOSEN MEDIUM: Photography.

WHAT IS A MEDIUM THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE WORKING WITH? Writing.

GREATEST DISCOVERY AS AN ARTIST: That to dig deep into your own work isn't always all that dissimilar from a 9 - 5 job.

STRANGEST EXPERIENCE: Going on trips up north alone to take photos and realizing I hadn't spoken out loud for days.

WHAT ARE YOU HIDING? Boring light.

WHAT ARE YOU REVEALING: That Oooh heaven is a place on earth!

WHAT'S NEXT: Breaking away from shooting pretty girls by default.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS AN ARTIST IN FIVE YEARS? On the southern coast of Italy dressed like Truman Capote.

A QUOTE OR SENTIMENT TO LIVE BY: Life'll kill ya.

FAY RAY



WHERE ARE YOU FROM? Southern California

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION: Rocks.

FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD: Any beach.

CHOSEN MEDIUM: Photography

GREATEST DISCOVER AS AN ARTIST? If you keep making work, you learn things about materials, process and meaning and if you stop making work you don't.

STRANGEST EXPERIENCE: It's all strange.

WHAT'S NEXT: I am in a group show in Miami titled Bananas at Gallery Diet in Miami from June 19 to September 5th

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS AN ARTIST IN FIVE YEARS? My only hope is to still be making art and to be grateful for whatever is going on at the time.

A QUOTE OR SENTIMENT TO LIVE BY: Reward yourself often.



WHERE ARE YOU FROM: I was born in Santa Rosa in Northern California, but never lived there, growing up the daughter of a diplomat. I often describe my life as covering the Cold War Hot Spots - Germany in the late 70s, Moscow in the early 80s, Athens in the mid/late 80s. I spent the last few years in High School in suburban MD (years I have basically blanked out.) Then I did the rebellious thing of going to UCSC, while my parents went on to live in Seoul, Korea in the mid-90s, where I did spend a junior semester abroad. CalArts called me for my MFA, which is how I moved down to the Los Angeles area.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION: It depends on what time of day and what day of the week! Generally cinema and architecture (particularly about Los Angeles, and particularly from the 70s and 80s) inspires me, as does work that collapses theory and inspiration. Really good art writing can light a fire as well. Ladies who own who they are, have agency and are generous in nature, who really find their own course, are an endless inspiration. Recently, I'm overwhelmingly moved by someone known only as "Madame" from Lotusland - Madame Ganna Walska (please see here for more). I learned about her while doing a small residency up at the stunning garden in Santa Barbara. Just read her bio to see why I'm so inspired - she is noted for selling a million dollars worth of her jewels in the 70s to buy super rare cycad seeds to complete her gardens. She made her own clothes, staged her own plays, had numerous husbands, built out her fantasy world - she even wrote an autobiography called 'There's Always Room At The Top'. I think she even helped start the Audubon Society, to stop millinerics from decimating birds for hats! Along with lady eccentrics, my current obsession right now is tending towards gardens - I'm thinking a lot about what gardens and art collections have a lot in common - constantly fighting entropy, chaos, decay, collecting, endlessly archiving, etc.

FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD: I'm defaulting to the Ice Hotel for some reason right now. Perhaps it's a conversation from tonight, speaking to a lady who is getting married and on the fence about taking a honeymoon. It is something I didn't do right after getting married, which I regret - and for some reason I always thought going to the Ice Hotel in Sweden would have been amazing (it harkens back to a childhood fantasy in Superman, when I fell in love with his crystal palace, appropriately called The Fortress of Solitude.) I also default to a fantasy Italian villa that is rustic and perfect, complete with the food and wine that magically appears in between siestas, long walks and other distractions.

CHOSEN MEDIUM: Right now, I'm terming something I'm calling the IMAGIATIC - as opposed to the "photographic". I come out of a photography background, but have always felt limited by the terms of it, terms which have in the last few years melted away. But instead of tending towards this sort of New Materiality that so many of the formerly photographically-inclined in Los Angeles do, I'm tending towards a more expanded field of photography that I am terming the IMAGIATIC - concerned with the imaginary, the image, etc. The medium itself doesn't matter, it's almost a conceptual conceit. Thus I'm engaged now in sculpture (natural bronze), fools gold dust, desserts, billboards, compositions, publications, and still of course images as photographs, anything that engages with the imaginary of Los Angeles. For it is not the medium that determines the message, it's the imaginary that does.

WHAT IS A MEDIUM THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE WORKING WITH? I've already jumped into it - and am learning an infinite amount right now about bronzing.

GREATEST DISCOVERY AS AN ARTIST: Walking into Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Room at Robert Miller Gallery when it first was shown - before the Whitney, before its infamy. I was in NYC, somewhat annoyed and downtrodden about the commodification of Chelsea, when I fell into a line to go into this nondescript trailer sort of thing. I remember being so annoyed at having to wait in line (and it was a very short line back then), then only to discover the life and mind-bending perfect art moment. Discovering that piece, discovering the potential of art, discovering the promise of Art, it was a joy I will never forget. And it is a joy that keeps me going through the dark days of the current art world.

WHAT ARE YOU HIDING? How angry I am at/with the extreme and horrendous level of sexism that exists in the art world. And how crazy it makes me that so many women with power perpetuate this sexism.

WHAT ARE YOU REVEALING? My endless enthusiasm.

WHAT'S NEXT? Bronzing all these "blossoms" from various disappearing and rare plants from the Lotusland Garden. A lot of these incredible plants do a sort of last hurrah dance, with reproductive organs (sex parts!) that grow sometimes ten times the size of the plant itself, going full out right before the plant dies! I'm collecting all these blossoms, both male and female, from super small blossoms to super huge pieces - it's been quite an amazing experience to work with these incredibly rare and extensive gardens. I am also continuing my conceptual mapping of Los Angeles, this time through its discarded palm fronds. Ideally this project consists of about a hundred natural bronze palm frond sculptures, all of which are unique and named according to where they were found in and around Los Angeles. There will be an exhibition of a handful of them at LAXART, opening on September 12th.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS AN ARTIST IN FIVE YEARS: Similar to my life now, but at a more expansive scale. I already have in mind the things I want to do and make, and I have tasted what is possible when there is real support behind a project. I think expansively, from huge, harrowing archives to cross-country billboard projects. Right now I'm trying to figure out how to get Swarovski involved in the crystalizing of one of the entropic Shangri-LA'd walls I'm commissioning, which I'd love to have produced all over the world (I want to see what a London florist will do vs. a San Paulo florist will do, when given the challenge to create their fantasy of Los Angeles, in any way they want, as a wall of flora and fauna.) I'd love to find the right place of support where the means and ways can catch up to what I already see and imagine in my head - and it is something I can't wait to realize. It's an inspiring time right now in my practice.

A QUOTE OR SENTIMENT TO LIVE BY? Don't confuse the personal and the professional - make sure your true intimates have nothing to do (or as little to do) with your work life as possible. In a time when so much is privately and publicly collapsed, it's hard to tell why someone might engage with you. When it comes to your home and romantic life, take that 'what can you do for me' and whatever power question completely out of the running. Make your personal life about something more than what you do.

ARIANA PAPADEMETROPOULOS



WHERE ARE YOU FROM: Pasadena and Venice California.

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR INSPIRATION: The more I think about it the more I realize that it's very difficult to pinpoint. It's not from being in my studio this I know, it's from experiencing life outside of it, anywhere from attending a lizard convention, to a castle or a gun club. I would say that it stems from anything out of the ordinary, but even the ordinary can be really, really strange. If I am on a deadline and need to come up with something quickly I'll go to places with a concentrated amount of information, i.e. library or museum, the optimal place being The Huntington Gardens that contains a bit of everything.

FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WORLD: The Greek Islands.

CHOSEN MEDIUM: Oil paint.

WHAT IS A MEDIUM THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE WORKING WITH? Electricity. I would love to start making marvelous light fixtures.

GREATEST DISCOVERY AS AN ARTIST: That a painting can possess you.

STRANGEST EXPERIENCE: Last year I co-curated a show where I planned out a séance with Andy Warhol for the artist Jeffrey Vallance. Before the show, the medium, Joseph Ross and I got into a little quarrel. We had originally agreed he would be dressed in normal attire (not actually normal he wears fabulous purple suits and feathers in his hats resembling a 90s pimp) but that he wouldn't be in a costume of Andy Warhol. This was so that the audience wouldn't think we were phonies. Anyhow, an hour before the séance is to begin, he tells me that Andy has communicated to him that he refuses to be channeled unless Joseph gets an outfit and a wig. I couldn't argue with a ghost, especially not Andy Warhol; so he got his way. Later I found out that Andy Warhol would sometimes have impersonators of himself do lectures for him at schools in his wigged disguise.

WHAT ARE YOU HIDING? The taboo, the kitsch, kinky, and strange. Darkness, death and mortality.

WHAT ARE YOU REVEALING? An attractive palate of colors that distracts the viewer. Only the curious realize there's more to what the surface layer of my paintings conceal. Sometimes it's a midget handing a zucchini to Snow White from an Italian Snow White porno, or a dead man that's been so brutally murdered he has become an abstraction.

WHAT'S NEXT? I'm illustrating a children's book, recreating the vintage board game Snakes and Ladders and designing a few record covers I'm very excited about. I also have a solo show in Sonoma in a few weeks.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF AS AN ARTIST IN FIVE YEARS: Hopefully living in a hobbit / story-book home I've built.

A QUOTE OR SENTIMENT TO LIVE BY? My high school quote was "If you're having a terrible day, just pour a bag of glitter in front of a fan and live in paradise", and I think that's still a pretty good quote to live by. Although I meant it literally at the time, I think it means that you don't need much to be happy except for a little effort and a good attitude.