

## interface gallery

486b 49th Street | Oakland, CA 94609  
p. 415 990-8028 | [www.interfaceartgallery.com](http://www.interfaceartgallery.com)

### Press Release: Opening the Trap

Diedrick Brackens, Amir H. Fallah, Genevieve Gagnard, Jiha Moon and Lana Williams  
February 16th – April 1st  
Reception: Friday, February 16th, 6-9 pm

Interface Gallery is pleased to present *Opening the Trap*, a group exhibition featuring work by Diedrick Brackens, Amir H. Fallah, Genevieve Gagnard, Jiha Moon and Lana Williams.

The artists in this show all explore the complexity and fluidity of identity in a variety of ways, often using the hybridity of their styles as a metaphor for this complexity.

Using props and costumes, Gagnard's photographic self-representations explore intersections of race, femininity and class. In differing ways, Moon and Fallah explore identity through the lens of immigration, global movement, and assimilation of personal and cultural influences. Meanwhile, Brackens and Williams use abstraction as a metaphor for bodies that don't conform to singular notions.

While the artists touch upon personal and collective struggles, their work is also celebratory and even playful – from the campy style of Gagnard's selfie-based photos to the humorous collision of references in Moon's work, which range from Korean temple painting to anime and internet emoticons.

The title for this exhibition comes from Thomas McEvilley's essay of the same name in which he asserts the need for exhibitions that recognize "that categories and criteria have no innate validity – only the validity that is projected upon them – and thus that their transgression can be an opening into freedom."

Collectively, the works in this exhibition represent this kind of opening by proposing "an idea of the self that is relative, multi-faceted, and shifting."

# interface gallery

486b 49th Street | Oakland, CA 94609  
p. 415 990-8028 | [www.interfaceartgallery.com](http://www.interfaceartgallery.com)

## About the work

**Amir H. Fallah** interrogates systems of portraiture and representation embedded in the history of Western art. Fallah's ornate environments combine visual vocabularies of painting and collage with elements of installation and sound to deconstruct material modes of identity formation. Portraits of the artist's veiled subjects capitalize on ambiguity to skillfully weave fact and fiction like the textiles that cover them. While the stories that surround his muses are deeply personal, told through the intimate possessions they're encompassed by, they universalize generational experiences of movement, trauma, and celebration. With their Pop Art hues and investment in domestic life, Fallah's paintings wryly incorporate contemporary American tropes into paintings more formally rooted in Islamic Art. In doing so, his work possesses a hybridity that reflects his own background as an Iranian-American immigrant straddling cultures.

**Genevieve Gaignard** utilizes photographic self-portraiture, sculpture, and installation to explore race, femininity, class, and their various intersections. The daughter of a black father and white mother, Gaignard's youth was marked by a strong sense of invisibility. Was her family white enough to be white? Black enough to be black? Gaignard interrogates notions of "passing" in an effort to address these questions. She positions her own female body as the chief site of exploration — challenging viewers to navigate the powers and anxieties of intersectional identity.

Influenced by the soulful sounds of Billy Stewart, the kitschy aesthetic of John Waters and the provocative artifice of drag culture, Gaignard uses low-brow pop sensibilities to craft dynamic visual narratives. From the identity performance ritualized in "selfie" culture to the gender performance of femininity, Gaignard blends humor, persona and popular culture to reveal the ways in which the meeting and mixing of contrasting realities can feel much like displacement.

**Diedrick Brackens** makes weavings that incorporate techniques drawn from European tapestries, West African weavings, and Southern quilts. Brackens has worked through political protest and personal pain in creating compositions that incorporate joy, pleasure, and imagination.

**Jiha Moon** explores fluid identities and the global movement of people and their cultures through gestural paintings, mixed media, ceramic sculpture and installation. She takes cues from a wide range of Eastern and Western art history, colors and designs from popular culture, Korean temple paintings and folk art, internet emoticons and icons, fruit stickers and labels of products from all over the world. She often teases and changes these lexicons so that they are hard to identify, yet stay in a familiar zone.

**Lana Williams** uses formalist abstraction as a metaphor for the body and identity. Her colorful, shaped paintings often do not fit their frames, evoking tension between forms and painted space. At times, the paintings extend beyond the frame, integrating with the space around them and expanding into something part sculptural and part installation. Through this queering of form Williams produces works that resist expectations and negotiate the politics of painting and identity.

## interface gallery

486b 49th Street | Oakland, CA 94609  
p. 415 990-8028 | [www.interfaceartgallery.com](http://www.interfaceartgallery.com)

### Artist Biographies

**Diedrick Brackens** earned a BFA at the University of North Texas, Denton (2011) and an MFA at the California College of the Arts, San Francisco (2014). His recent solo exhibitions include those at the Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita (2017); Steve Turner (2016); Johansson Projects, Oakland (2015); Conduit Gallery, Dallas (2015); and Pacific Sky Gallery, Eugene. Brackens is currently Assistant Professor of Fiber Arts in the School of Art at California State University, Long Beach.

**Amir H. Fallah** (b. 1979, Tehran) received his BFA in Fine Art & Painting at the Maryland Institute College of Art in 2001 and his MFA in Painting at the University of California, Los Angeles in 2005. He has exhibited extensively in solo and group exhibitions across the United States and abroad, including solo presentations at the Schneider Museum, Ashland (2017); the San Diego Art Institute (2017); the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland (2015); and The Third Line, Dubai (2017, 2013, 2009, 2007, 2005). In 2017, Fallah received the CCF Grant, and in 2015, the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant. The artist was chosen to participate in the 9th Sharjah Biennial. Fallah lives and work in Los Angeles.

**Genevieve Gaignard** received her BFA in Photography at Massachusetts College of Art and Design and her MFA in Photography at Yale University. She has exhibited throughout the United States, including shows at Studio Museum in Harlem, the Houston Center for Photography, and the California African American Museum. In 2017, she was included in the Prospect.4 Triennial, The Lotus in the Swamp, in New Orleans.

**Jiha Moon** is from DaeGu, Korea and lives and works in Atlanta, GA. She received her MFA from the University of Iowa, Iowa City. Her works have been acquired by Asia Society, New York, NY, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, The Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC, Smithsonian Institute, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC, Weatherspoon Museum of Art, Greensboro, NC and The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA. She has had solo exhibitions at Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia, GA, Taubman Museum, Roanoke, VA, the Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC, The Cheekwood Museum of Art, Nashville, TN and Rhodes College, Clough-Hanson Gallery, Memphis, TN and James Gallery of CUNY Graduate Center, New York, NY. She has been included in group shows at Kemper Museum, Kansas City, MI, the Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, PA, the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, Atlanta, GA, Asia Society, New York, NY, The Drawing Center, New York, NY, White Columns, New York, NY, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA, and the Weatherspoon Museum of Art, Greensboro, NC. She is recipient of prestigious Joan Mitchell foundation's painter and sculptor's award for 2011. Her mid-career survey exhibition, "Double Welcome: Most everyone's mad here" organized by Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art and Taubman Museum is touring more than 10 museum venues around the country until 2018.

**Lana Williams** received her MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 2013. Williams has shown at multiple galleries in the Bay Area. She was featured on KQED in an article entitled, "Bay Area Painting Right Now: Lana Williams Breaks the Rules." Williams is part of the collaborative group Bonanza that has shown at di Rosa, Southern Exposure, Walter McBean Gallery, n/a gallery, Artists' Television Access, and Interface Gallery. She lives in Oakland and is represented by Interface Gallery.