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Embodiment

With Pope.L, Jonathan Lyndon Chase, Cheyenne Julien & Tschabalala Self

534 West 26th Street, New York, NY

September 12 – October 26, 2019

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 12 from 6 to 8 PM



NEW YORK, August 12, 2019 – Mitchell-Innes & Nash is pleased to present *Embodiment*, a group exhibition of works by Pope.L, Jonathan Lyndon Chase, Cheyenne Julien and Tschabalala Self that explores the different ways in which corporeality is envisioned and depicted within the spatial confines of the two-dimensional picture plane.

The body and its representations have often been used to give physical form to the intangible: a stand in, so to speak, for an emotion, an idea, a time or even an atmosphere. In sculptural and performative works, the viewer is able to observe the metaphors of the body in physical space from his or her perspective. However, on the flat surfaces of paintings, drawings and text-based works that use the body as subject, the perspectival becomes a matter of embodying someone else's point of view.

With their renderings of bodies animated in some sort of action—be it dance, play or chore—Chase and Julien allow us a glimpse into the dynamic experiences of their subjects through rich technical skill. Both demonstrate a deft of hand to develop a narrative that hinges on psychological depictions: Julien in her encore of self portraits showing herself in various states of rest and unrest and Chase through his use of fragmented, unfinished or waning body parts within his larger compositions. Like Chase, Self is interested in the relationship between bodies and zeroes in on the exaggerated figure within familiar public meeting places, such as the bodega or brownstone stoop. She uses fabric and thread to suggest a new kind of mark-making that foregrounds identity construction. Pope.L's work in this exhibition, on the other hand, approaches the body through language in a series of text-based works known as *Skin Sets*. In these pieces, the body is delineated through the artist's absurdist phraseology. People of color (white, blue, green, brown, black and gold) are situated within nonsensical spaces. Strongly rooted in literary devices, these works on paper are purposefully puzzling and, at times, illegible, in order to comment on the visibility and invisibility that derives from deliberate social construction and alienation, particularly concerning the body in space as it negotiates between self-definition and definition of the self by others.

The works in this exhibition reveal not only the spaces inhabited by real or symbolic figures but also the complex and multidimensional identities, ideals and anxieties embodied by them. In this, there is in each of these works the incarnation of the "other"—an image of alterity that, paradoxically, is also a mirror that reflects back on the viewer. The worlds we see through these distinct, flattened windows are and are not, at the same time, our own.

Pope.L (b. 1955, Newark, NJ) is a Chicago-based visual artist and educator whose multidisciplinary practice uses binaries, contraries and preconceived notions embedded within contemporary culture to create artworks in various formats, for example, writing, painting, performance, installation, video and sculpture. Building upon

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his long history of enacting arduous, provocative, absurdist performances and interventions in public spaces, Pope.L applies some of the same social, formal and performative strategies to his interests in language, system, gender, race and community. The goals for his work are several: joy, money and uncertainty— not necessarily in that order.

Pope.L will be the subject of a trio of complementary exhibitions in New York this fall collectively titled *Instigation, Aspiration, Perspiration*, organized by the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and Public Art Fund. Recent exhibitions, performances and projects include *One thing after another* at La Panacée, Montpellier (2018); *Flint Water Project* at What Pipeline, Detroit (2017); *Whispering Campaign* at documenta 14, Athens and Kassel (2017); *Claim (Whitney Version)* at the 2017 Whitney Biennial (2017); *Baile* at the 32nd Biennial de São Paulo (2016); *The Freedom Principle* at ICA Philadelphia (2016) and MCA Chicago (2015) and *Trinket* at The Geffen Contemporary, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2015).

Jonathan Lyndon Chase (b. 1989, Philadelphia, PA) is known for his figurative paintings that highlight the complex nature of identity construction in contemporary society by centering the existing but often overlooked tenderness that finds form in the everyday. Chase's abstracted and dream-like depictions of queer black men serve to tie the corporeal with the psychic, structuring the interiority of his subjects and their environments in ways that capture a range of emotions from joy to melancholy and offering up the suggestion of unconditional love for, from and between these characters. Apart from painting, Chase's practice also encompasses drawing, collage and sculpture, and his work can be found in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Institute of Contemporary Arts, Miami; the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia; the Wedge Collection, Toronto; and the Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia. Chase has had solo exhibitions at Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles (2018); Company Gallery, New York (2018); and has been included in notable group exhibitions including *Punch*, curated by Nina Chanel Abney, at Deitch Projects, New York (2018) and *Reclamation! Pan-African Works from the Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection* at the Taubman Museum of Art, Roanoke (2018).

Cheyenne Julien (b. 1994, Bronx, NY) uses portraiture to convey quiet yet powerful moments of affliction, humor or pensive fascination, while using the body to negotiate a way of seeing that engages both the narrative of her personal experiences and the collective history of the larger world around her. Despite the cartoon-like features of her subjects, Julien imparts an undeniable and exuberant realism to anxiety, fear, happiness and contemplation. Avoiding an overtly politicized didacticism, the artist's paintings and drawings are instead reflective, focusing on the effects of trauma rather than its causes. Cheyenne Julien received her BFA in Painting at the Rhode Island School of Design in 2016. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include *Cheyenne Julien & Tau Lewis* at Chapter New York, New York (2018) and *Homegrown* at Smart Objects, Los Angeles (2017). Julien's work has also been included in group exhibitions at Gavin Brown's Enterprise/Unclebrother, Hancock (2018); Almine Rech Gallery, New York (2018); Karma, New York (2018); Loyal Gallery, Stockholm (2017); and White Cube Bermondsey, London (2017).

Tschabalala Self (b. 1990, Harlem, NY) is a New York-based figurative painter who uses the black female body as her primary subject. These figures, or "avatars" as she is known to call them, are often situated within the familiar public spaces of everyday life, such as the corner bodega or a neighbor's front stoop. In other works, her figures are shown floating in space, staring defiantly back at the viewer. Self's canvases are noteworthy for its sewn elements, often incorporating fabrics and furs—a practice that is tied to the artist's memory of her mother and the emotional and physical labor traditionally associated with women. Self's work often upturns

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the conventions of the feminine ideal, wary of adding to the myth of the ideal female body. Her paintings of bodies accentuate identity as it is formed and affected by not only race but also by the spaces, both symbolic and physical, it inhabits. Tschabalala Self received her BA in Studio Arts at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson (2012) and her MFA at Painting and Printmaking from the Yale School of Art, New Haven (2015). Recent solo exhibitions include *Bodega Run* at Pilar Corrias Gallery, London (2017), which traveled to the Yuz Museum, Shanghai (2018); Tramway, Glasgow (2017); Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, London (2017). Self's work has been included in recent group exhibitions at Crystal Bridges, Bentonville (2018); James Fuentes, New York (2018); Foxy Productions, New York (2018); Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles (2017); and the New Museum, New York (2017).

About Mitchell-Innes & Nash

Founded by Lucy Mitchell-Innes and David Nash, who previously headed the worldwide Contemporary and Impressionist & Modern Art divisions of Sotheby's, Mitchell-Innes & Nash places exemplary contemporary artists within a historical context, revealing a continuity of ideas and aesthetic virtuosity from the Modern era through the present day.

Mitchell-Innes & Nash's renowned exhibition program, in both their Madison Avenue and Chelsea locations, fosters excellence within artistic practice, while forging an informed dialogue between emerging and established internationally recognized artists. From acclaimed surveys of 20th century masters, such as Jean Arp, Anthony Caro, Jay DeFeo, Leon Kossoff, Kenneth Noland and Roy Lichtenstein, to solo exhibitions of Keltie Ferris, Pope.L, Martha Rosler, and Jessica Stockholder, Mitchell-Innes & Nash has proven expertise in both advancing the careers of emerging artists and maintaining the superior standard set by established artists.

Caption: JONATHAN LYNDON CHASE, watch shopping, 2019

© Jonathan Lyndon Chase.

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