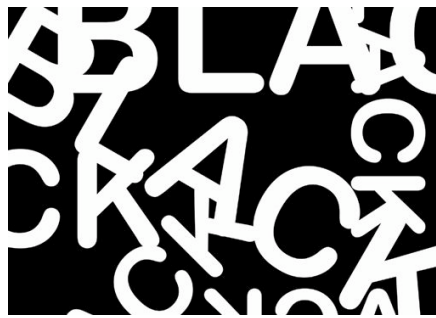


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Black/ dinner napkin paintings
CANDIDA ALVAREZ

Mar 12, 2011 – Apr 10, 2011

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Black/ dinner napkin paintings

Candida Alvarez

Questions and answers...

PP: What inspires your work?

Alvarez: The camera. In the early 80's I bought an Olympus 35mm camera. I lived in New York and was a regular visitor to The Museum of Modern Art, frequenting the photo and painting galleries. I was continuously drawn to a 1935 print entitled Portrait of the Eternal by the Mexican photographer, Manuel Alvarez Bravo. Here, a Mexican woman (Isabel Villaseñor) is caught captive between shadow and light. She is gazing intently into a small hand held mirror, cradled into the palm of her hand, combing her long black hair, which drops away into darkness. That is the space I am after in my paintings. The space that leaves, that drops out, leaving possibility in its wake.

How did these paintings come about?

I begin with drawings that come out of the growing archive of newspaper and magazine images, family snapshots and photos I take or collect. Having run away from seemingly inadequate definitions for abstract painting, I find myself immersed in a relationship that tracks, exchanges and shreds the world that is pictured into a subject-less pictorial mash-up. In essence, there is no more picture, there is only painting.

Is there a common thread to the imagery from which this black dinner napkin paintings series is derived?

All these paintings begin with a body in action. Walking, talking or holding. I am interested in a kind of painting that comes from daily life and captured within a ready-made.

Can you comment on the choice of the dinner napkins?

I wanted to paint on a black ground. I had these as leftovers from an earlier drawing project, where I was using black embroidery floss about ten years ago. I called them lap drawings. My son was young, and getting to the studio was a challenge. So I started a series of drawings that were hand sewn. Ultimately, they grew to be 9ft square. The cotton dinner napkins are in the world as ready-mades, and they were affordable and portable. These black squares are casually formal, holding ironed-in folds like drawing marks. I paint them on a table.

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You've titled the show Black. Can you comment on the different spaces/ states of mind you want to evoke through that very charged word?

1. black is a color
2. black is paint
3. black is deep
4. black is bodies
5. black is invisible
6. black is beautiful
7. black is a beginning point
8. black is just dark
9. black is blinding
10. black is an empty computer screen
11. black is formal
12. black is sexy
13. black is negative
14. black is the color of these here words
15. black is blue
16. black is hip
17. black is a possibility
18. black is silent
19. black is enough
20. black is the color of my eyes
21. black is alone
22. black pushes back
23. black is hair
24. black is shadows
25. black is space
26. black is a ground
27. black is intimate
28. black is everywhere
29. black stands out
30. black is bad ass
31. black is a choice
32. black is cool

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You really play with colors in your work. Can you elaborate on your approach to color and process in the studio?

Colors are contradictions. They fight, they make up. I sort through images to find unlikely pairings. Failing is always part of the success.

Candida Alvarez was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. Alvarez received her BA from Fordham University, Lincoln Center and an MFA from the Yale School of Art in Painting and Printmaking. She is an alum of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and was an artist in residence at PS 1 Long Island City, Queens. Her work has been shown in museums and galleries around the world and is represented in numerous public and private collections including The Addison Gallery of American Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and El Museo del Barrio. Reviews of her work have appeared in various publications including Art in America, Art News, and The New York Times. Alvarez has taught at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago since 1998. She is a tenured full professor in the Painting and Drawing department and is currently serving as Interim Dean of Graduate Studies.

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PEREGRINEPROGRAM presents 'Black/ dinner napkin paintings' by Candida Alvarez from March 12 - April 10, 2011.

An opening reception will be held Saturday, March 12, from 1-4 p.m.

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Selected work:



a flag, 2009

Acrylic, pencil on cotton, 19.5" x 19.5"

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a kiss, 2009

Acrylic, pencil on cotton, 19.5" x 19.5"

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a star, 2009

Acrylic, pencil on cotton, 19.5" x 19.5"