

THEY SICKEN
OF THE
CALM
WHO KNOW
THE
STORM

CURATED BY MAUREEN SULLIVAN

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Greta Alfaro, Julia Chiang
James Clar, Richard Garet
Pryce Lee, Naama Tsabar
Dustin Yellin

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FRIDMAN GALLERY

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*“...this no sea of mine, that humbly laves
Untroubled sands, spread glittering and warm.
I have a need of wilder, crueler waves;
They sicken of the calm, who knew the storm.”*

Dorothy Parker, *Fair Weather*, SUNSET GUN, 1928

Life in New York City is charged; it’s dialed to high. We love it, we hate it, we often can’t afford it. We escape, committed to finding more balance, and crawl back desperate to catch up on what we missed. It’s slick and seductive and dirty and extreme. The energy is pulsating, violent, irresistible, exhausting. It breaks us down and builds us up in endless cycles of hope and pain, desire and loss, and insatiable hunger.

Though this life of the storm sounds extreme, the seven artists in **They Sicken Of The Calm Who Know the Storm** examine the storm’s many facets through a range of minimalist works whose stories are quietly and slowly revealed. All exude a palpable energy and many have a violence barely contained.

Maureen Sullivan

Richard Gareth’s electrified color-rich moving image works created through sound then silenced, refuse to be stifled and throb with an intense energy. **Julia Chiang’s** white ceramic chains, made all the more implausible by their handmade fragility, triumph beauty over function and challenge ideas of desire, connectivity and confinement. **Greta Alfaro’s** films lure one in with their serenity in the natural environment. But the underlying anxiety, generated by our own challenges with stillness and yearning for action, is soon realized in a frenzied gluttony, leaving only the remains of the day in their wake. **James Clar’s** alarm clock, trapped in an airtight vacuum chamber, can be seen shaking and screaming Wake UP! but never heard, rendering impotent the technology that attempts to control our desires. In the same vein, **Dustin Yellin’s** explosive and collapsed illusions are suspended, dissected and trapped forever. **Naama Tsabar’s** bed sheets turned Molotov cocktail, plays with signifiers of danger and enjoyment, boundaries and borders, temptation and destruction. And **Pryce Lee’s** shattered mirror and bullet pieces reflect the randomness, violence and fragility of life – our beautiful danger.

In Ictu Oculi

2009
Single channel video
HDV, color, sound, 16:9
10 minutes, 35 sec
Courtesy of the artist

In Praise Of The Beast

2009
Single channel video
HDV, color, sound, 16:9
14 minutes, 58 sec
Edition of 5
Courtesy of the artist

Like a musical composition, Greta Alfaro’s two video works, *In Ictu Oculi* and *In Praise of the Beast*, gently entice the audience, and the filmed creatures, to enter scenes of serene natural beauty, devoid of people but disrupted by a human inspired temptation. This soon transitions to a frenzied crescendo before leaving all spent and satisfied as the work reaches its finale. Symbols of family celebrations – an extravagant dinner banquet and a giant birthday cake – presented out of any context in the bucolic settings, are the bait that the beasts can’t resist; and true to their nature, they tear the work asunder. All this is captured by the artist’s hidden camera, like a natural geographic video with a surreal twist and have been compared to Bruce Nauman’s nocturnal films of his mice-infested studio. The works also allude to the intense psychological emotions generated during family gatherings, which in civil times remain unspoken, and when let loose can resemble the set of a Jerry Springer show.

The more intense and disturbing of the two works, *In Ictu Oculi* (In the twinkling of an Eye), opens with an abandoned elaborately decked out banquet table situated in a barren field with olive orchards in the distance. It could be a landscape painting if not for the sight and sound of the breeze gently ruffling the tablecloth. This is soon further activated by shadows and glimpses of wings conducting surveillance. Suddenly gears shift and a flock of huge vultures descend devouring everything and creating mayhem of the banquet leaving only chaos in their wake.

In *Praise of the Beast*, the setting is even more surreal, with the absurd presence of a bright yellow birthday cake in a clearing in the woods as snow gently falls covering everything in a sugar-like layer of white. Anticipation slowly builds, and the artist’s use of light and shadow eventually reveals itself to be big wild boars. The beasts circle their sugary prey for an extended time until they finally can’t resist, and like pigs in mud, playfully roll around in the cake, covering their black coats with white icing and winning us over to the joys of surrender and gluttony.

Greta Alfaro



Julia Chiang

Keep It Together

2011
Unglazed ceramic
Courtesy of the artist

Chains have always made me think of a form of bondage, restraint, control, defining boundaries, violence, among other things, and I thought about how if they were made with ceramics they'd be really fragile- defeating their purpose and function. I was thinking about our efforts and desires to create relationships and how often boundaries and connections are forced.
– Julia Chiang

Julia Chiang's white chains are objects laden with contradiction, challenging ideas of connectivity and protection vs. captivity and confinement. Crafted in ceramic, the artist's desire for perfection is undone by the unevenness and delicate nature of the live material and the imperfection of the hand. Like people, the ceramic exudes both strength and fragility.

Chiang works in a range of media in her sculpture and painting – gold, ceramic, candy, etched glass and mirror, acrylic, gouache – and on multiple scales. Her work is repetitious and has an obsessive quality, with the form or word created over and over, but each slightly unique revealing the handmade connection to traditional crafts. The artist is often inspired by the stories and visuals of day-to-day life, personal histories, and the strengths and weaknesses within us all.



James Clar

James Clar's *Wake Up* brings subversive humor to the exhibition reflecting our endless cycles of ignoring signs and repeating undermining behaviors. Trapped in an airtight vacuum chamber, an alarm clock can be seen shaking and screaming Wake Up! but never heard; the systems that attempt to manipulate our desires are rendered impotent, locked forever in the complacency of snooze mode. Clar says, "This is the alarm calling the artist/viewer out of the dream/virtual world and back to reality."

Wake Up

2012
Alarm Clock, Vacuum Chamber
35 x 25 x 25 cm
Edition of 1 plus 1 AP
Courtesy of the Artist

Clar's practice is based on analysis, observation and critique of the affects of media and technology on our perception of culture, nationality, and identity. The artist originally studied and worked in film and animation, but his main oeuvre has been new technology merged with light that he forms into three-dimensional sculptures and installation works.

Moving from NY to Dubai from 2007 to 2012, the artist became actively involved in the development of the UAE's art and culture scene, and shifted his work from personal context to exploring socio-political issues of nationalism, globalism, and popular culture in the age of mass information.



PERCEPTUAL SERIES

The Red In My Life
2012

The Rainbow Thief
2012

Pouring Orange
2012

Video, Monitor with built in Media Player
29.1"H x 17.5"W x 3.7"D (each)
Courtesy artist and Julian Navarro Gallery

Richard Gareth uses sound as a main source in his practice working with moving image, multimedia, and time-based performance. In work ranging from site-specific installations to audio-visual screenings and sculptural works, Gareth creates immersive environments that stimulate sensorial, physical, psychological phenomena reflecting on the nature and experience of time and perception.

For Perceptual, Gareth uses sound as a tool to create the visual colors and motion driving the works presented on individual monitors: *The Red of my Life*, *The Rainbow Thief*, and *Pouring Orange*. The artist then removes the sound, leaving behind a silent moving image with “painting” sensibility that morphs and pulsates refusing to be stifled. The viewer is pulled deeper and deeper into sumptuous landscapes of continually reconfigured color and mood.

Using time-based computer processing and visual-constructs established from the permutations and the brilliancy generated by the media itself, the work explores the processes and qualities of luminosity, color and movement. A different approach to this investigation has been recently presented as well in real-time as an audiovisual performance.

Richard Gareth



Pryce Lee

Pryce Lee's work, in its subtle and scarred beauty, reflects our attraction to danger and the randomness and fragility of life. Lee experiments with diverse concepts, techniques and media to create visually arresting individual works and large-scale installations that incite social commentary drawn from personal experience and actual events.

For Lee's inaugural exhibition in NY, the artist has created a new work based on the 2012 *Empire State Building* shooting. Empire is presented as a seven-piece wall installation of shattered mirrors and bronze bullets, referencing the fatal shooting of the lone gunman's intended target and rival, as well as the sixteen rounds of bullets fired by the police killing the shooter and directly hitting six innocent bystanders. The bullets appear to smash the mirrors yet hold them together, capturing the tenuous moment between luck and misfortune, life and death. If the bullets are removed, the mirrors fall apart.

Exit Guapa Cardulelis

2013
Acrylic, Glass, taxidermy bird
13 x 10 inches
Courtesy artist and Anonymous Gallery

Empire State

2013
Acrylic, Glass, bronze, bullets (7 elements)
51 inches x 78 inches (variable)
Courtesy Artist and Anonymous Gallery

Empire continues the artist's *Innocent Bystander* series based on specific events in which people, in the wrong place at the wrong time, are unintentionally hit during a shooting. While the storylines vary based on the actual incidents (drive-bys, school shootings, police or military casualties), they are rooted in the tragic events that happen with alarming frequency.

Pryce Lee's second work, *Exit Guapa Cardulelis*, installed in the lit EXIT sign, provides a surprise encounter for those that look up. Flight, the ultimate symbol of freedom and folly, has inherent vulnerability and consequences in the human and natural worlds, and here the bird's too literal reading the sign results in its brutal finality. The taxidermy bird, appearing so lifelike, is trapped forever in the moment of tragic impact. Both a celebration of life and an acknowledgement of its chaos and unpredictability, Pryce Lee's mirrored works reflect us - destroyed and whole.



Sweat 3

2014
Two Bed sheets, Two filled Arak liquor bottles, Shelf
59"W x 6.5"D x 24"H
Unique
Courtesy Artist, Dvir Gallery, and Spinello Projects

Naama Tsabar

For her latest rendition of the work, Tsabar additionally addresses ideas of coupling and separation, borders and boundaries, and her own Israeli identity through the materials and composition. The choice of bottles for this sculpture is the aniseed liquor Arak, which comes from Arabic araq meaning sweat. First made in Lebanon, it is now the traditional alcoholic beverage in Israel and throughout the Middle East. The two separate bed sheets, rather than her typical one or more entwined, are stuffed into the mouth of each of the two matching bottles, slowly absorbing the liquid over the course of the month. Stained and exuding a sweet scent up close, the soft sheets penetrate the rigid shelf together through one hole, but then go their separate ways. Trapped in a closed cycle, the work consumes itself slowly through the course of the exhibition and exudes a sense of futility. The bottles can't be used as a weapon and can't be consumed – the danger and pleasure cancel each other out.

The work intertwines refinement and superfluity, delicacy and bluntness, order and lack of control. The tradition of minimalist sculpture is highly present in it, but at the same time, it also embeds inseparably blended specific and personal contents which undermine the rigidity of its frame, such as nightlife, with their music, drinking, and radicalized intimacy.

- Hadas Maor, Contemporary Art Curator, Tel Aviv Museum, from text on Sweat, 2010

New York-based Israeli artist Naama Tsabar creates work that challenges the distinction between high and low and blurs the boundaries between medium and genre. Often taking nightlife as inspiration - its dynamics of gender, power and seduction - the artist merges materials that range from rock band and nightlife paraphernalia with the aesthetics of Minimalist art in her sculpture, installation, and performance work.

In Sweat, a series Tsabar began in 2009, the artist plays with signifiers of danger and enjoyment, temptation and destruction. Here white bed sheets – the material of dreaming, intimate encounters, escape ladders, and Molotov cocktails – slowly absorb trickling fluid from bottles of alcohol – creating a disorienting multisensory and potentially combustible experience.



Bobo Sea Cage 2

2013
Glass, collage, acrylic
17 W x 17 1/2 H x 9D inches
Courtesy the Artist

Dustin Yellin

Dustin Yellin's explosive and collapsed spectacles are suspended, dissected and trapped in sliced layers of resin. His surreal tableaux range from supersized human skeletal figures to settings of otherworldly and dreamlike nature. The richly detailed collages of paint and clippings are layered in acrylic and multiple glass layers creating three-dimensional hologram-like works.

Bobo Sea Cave 2, is an iridescent aquamarine mythical world of undulating waves, a womblike cave, and a variety of figures animating the work that appear upon intimate inspection. In the artist's final gesture for the work, a dagger is inserted slicing through the cave like a god's spear. Yellin says of his work, "The preternatural scene recalls the orgiastic, aberrant violence of Bosch, with the wickedly sunny garden recast as an ominous, roiling sea. Confronted by colossal power, human technology is helpless and material progress is drowned."



**Below are introductions to the artists,
for complete bios click on their website links.**

GRETA ALFARO

www.gretaalfaro.com

Greta Alfaro, 1977, lives between London and Spain. Her work has been exhibited internationally in places like Whitechapel Gallery, Saatchi Gallery and Institute of Contemporary Art in London, La Casa Encendida, Madrid, and Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Huarte in Spain, Museum of Contemporary Art of Hiroshima, Trafó Gallery Bucharest, La Conciergerie in Paris, Dryphoto arte contemporanea in Italy and Museo Ex-Teresa in Mexico City. Her video work has been part of the program of the *International Film Festival Rotterdam* and screened at the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

JULIA CHIANG

somethingstoday.tumblr.com

Julia Chiang was born in Atlantic City, NJ and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Her work has been exhibited at places such as Bill Brady Kansas City, Nanzuka in Tokyo, Colette in Paris, Half Gallery, OHWOW, and Deitch Projects, with limited editions at The New Museum of Contemporary Art, Exhibition A, and The Standard. Julia's work has been written about in publications such as Whitewall Magazine, Modern Painters, Art in America, Flash Art, The New Yorker, The New York Times, Paper, Purple, Fader, and more. She released her first book *Coming Together, Coming Apart* with Picturebox and Nanzuka in 2013.

JAMES CLAR

www.jamesclar.com

James Clar currently lives and works in New York. He studied film and animation at New York University's Interactive Telecommunication's Graduate Program and participated in a residency with Eyebeam Atelier, New York. He is represented by Carbon 12 in Dubai. Additionally, Clar has had numerous collaborations merging media and art with architectural projects.

RICHARD GARET

www.richardgaret.com

Richard Gareth is an American interdisciplinary artist, born in Uruguay and based in New York City. He holds an MFA from Bard College. Recent exhibitions include *Soundings: A Contemporary Score*, Museum of Modern Art, New York (2013); *Extraneous to the Message*, Julian Navarro Projects, NY (2013); *The Spacious Now and the Scale of the Instantaneous*, Studio 10, NY (2012); *Activating the Medium Festival*, SF-MOMA, San Francisco, CA (2011); among many other national and international exhibitions. His work has been profiled and reviewed globally and his sonic constructions have been published through sound art labels such as 23five, And-Oar, Non Visual Objects, Winds Measure Recordings, Unframed Recordings, Con-V, Leerraum, White Line Editions, OBS, Sourdine, and Contour Editions.

PRYCE LEE

www.prycelee.com

Pryce Lee is a British born, New York-based artist whose work has been exhibited at Central Saint Martins, London and recently shown at UNTITLED Art Fair in December 2014 with Anonymous Gallery. His work will be presented at Art14London and his *Barred* installation was select-

ed as a special project during the fair. He Sickens of the Calm Who Knows the Storm is his first exhibition in NY; In March, LEE will open his first solo exhibition in New York during the Armory Show with Anonymous Gallery.

NAAMA TSABAR

www.naamatsabar.com

Naama Tsabar is an Israeli born, NY-based artist. Her work has been exhibited internationally at institutions including MoMA PS1, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, The Bucharest Biennale for Young Artists, and more. Tsabar's work has been featured in publications including ArtForum, ArtReview, The New York Times, New York Magazine, ArtAsia Pacific and Fader Magazine.

DUSTIN YELLIN

www.dustinyellin.com

Born in California in 1975 and raised in Colorado, Dustin Yellin is a contemporary artist living in Brooklyn, New York, best known for his sculptural paintings. He has a show coming up with Richard Heller Gallery this February and has shown with Robert Miller Gallery, James Fuentes, Bruce High Quality and more. In 2010, Yellin founded Pioneer Works, a social sculpture and non-profit institute for art and innovation in Red Hook.

MAUREEN SULLIVAN

www.redartprojects.com

Maureen Sullivan is an independent curator in addition to directing her company Red Art Projects, which works nationally and internationally with artists and art organizations on strategic planning and communications. Curated projects have featured artists Eve Sussman, Simon Lee, Jeremy Blake, Ghost of A Dream, Yorgo Alexopoulos, and group exhibitions featuring Bjorn Melhus, Marilyn Manson, Ragnar Kjartansson, Sue de Beer, Jen DeNike, Meghan Boody, Gilad Ratman, Ugo Rondinone and more. Talks and performances have been organized with Guy Ben-Ner & Jon Kessler for Artis and Performa, Yael Bartana with Artur Zmijewski at MoMA, and Naama Tsabar for X-Initiative.

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