

**GINA  
OSTERLOH**

her  
demilitarized  
zone

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# GINA OSTERLOH

her  
demilitarized  
zone

**SILVERLENS**

25 november to 22 december 2021 | by appointment only

Gina Osterloh's solo exhibition, **her demilitarized zone**, reflects on the current human condition and contemplates an alternate way of being where words and images are de-weaponized; implements of brutality, violence, and exclusion metamorphose into a poetry of pleasure and possibility. The slow and labor-intensive processes of creating each image and object in this exhibit embody the difficult and committed work necessary to see the other without preconceived notions and ideology.

Ruminations on the etymology of photography : writing with light - led to experiments using a welder's torch to inscribe words on steel. Words that initially seem like scribbles of black paint are burned onto steel bars, the intensity requiring the artist to stop after each gesture is rendered. The steel of industry, modernization, and militarization - steel bars that wall off the other - are slowly transformed. Intractable steel is blistered and scarred with phrases suggesting release, letting down defenses. Unlike earlier works on steel plates, these are not left to rust but are subjected to a series of processes akin to darkroom photographic chemical baths that infuse them with the black color and coatings that fix the surface, rendering them forever irreversibly altered. The intangibility of the words ...

*her  
demilitarized  
zone*

—  
*pleasure*

*after  
centuries  
of  
war*

*they  
saw  
each  
other*

*without  
weapon  
he  
wept*

in perpetual tension with the permanence and weight of the steel.

Body as contested site - a theme that Osterloh has continuously investigated - is magnified in the "portraits" **Mirror Woman** and **Shutter Vision**. In these photographs, she sits as one does for a traditional portrait but she covers her arms, torso, and head in tape, denying the viewer the convenience of quick judgement and categorization based on skin color that was ever present while growing up Filipino-German-American in Ohio and living in the racially charged climate of America today. **Shutter Vision** unsettles the viewer with its resemblance to BDSM images. Not intended to allude to sex, the artist articulates its reference to image as fetish. ('An object, the possession of which is believed to procure the services of a spirit lodged within it', which also shares origins with 'magic', the Portuguese word *feitiço*, and the Latin root words for 'artificial' and 'to make' *facere*.) "*I simplify, amplify, lay bare the photographic field, a terrain of power – our global cultural and political landscape – dominance and submission: the two inextricably intertwined through looking.*" The dizzying **Pressing Against Looking** underscores the overwhelming nature of our current visual culture that calls for constant looking, seeing, and being seen, that the artist describes as "the frenzy of vision".

In **Mirror Woman**, the reflective tape that serves as skin appeals to the ego centric instinct to glean our own image, to gauge ourselves based on our estimation of the other. Inevitably, this proves unrewarding; what we see is distorted and fragmentary.

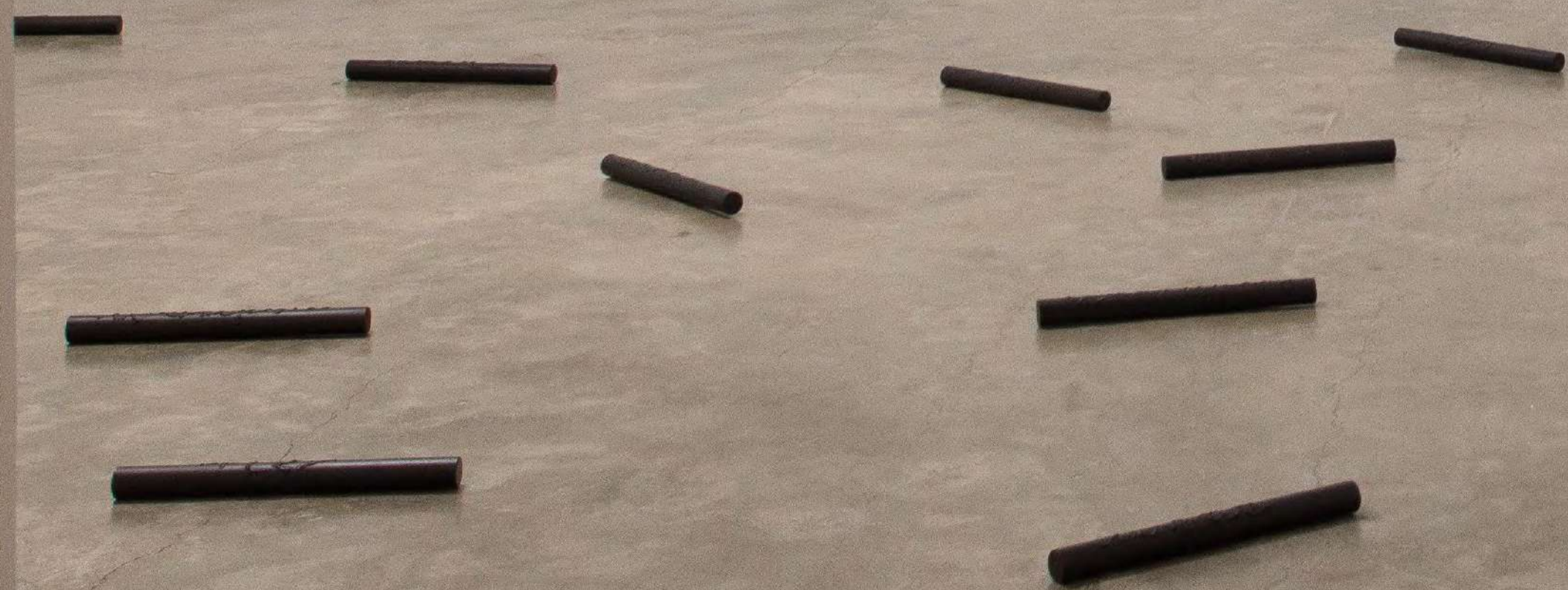
As she deprives the viewer of the power of judgement through vision, she denies herself as well. Eyes sealed shut, she is blind to the viewer; photos are taken, impressions made without seeing. Despite being cut off from sight and sound, the artist exudes a calm energy, slowly reached through hours of meditative cutting and taping. Turning inward, she shuts out visual noise, allowing for the possibility of relating on a different level. In that shared vulnerability of not being able to appraise each other visually, a space opens for a spiritual connection.

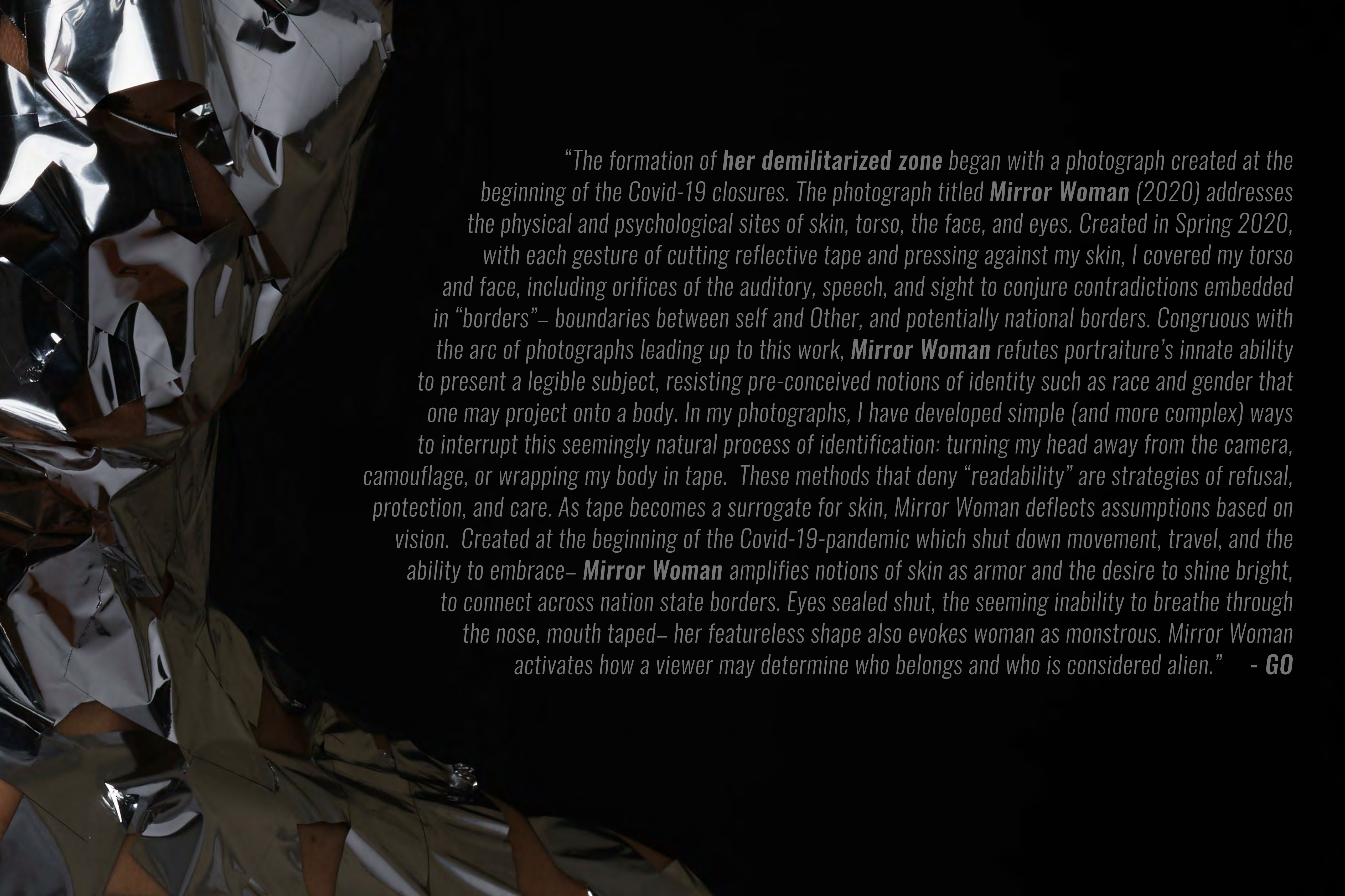
Visualized through room sets that Osterloh uses to invite viewers to inhabit the photographic space, **Psychic Drop - Pink and Psychic Drop - Grey** refer to a concept the artist encountered in reading philosophy and art theory texts describing the act of camouflage as a momentary loss of one's individuality, a psychic drop in ego. In resonance with the idea of de-weaponization, camouflage is conceived of "not as a tactic of war, but instead a strategy to inhabit other points of view". Silencing oneself demands time and work, it requires shedding the artificial, ultimately ineffective protections we layer on ourselves, layers that like the tape in the portraits adhere to skin becoming one with the body, leaving their marks when ultimately removed.

*words by Yael Buencamino*



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zone





*“The formation of **her demilitarized zone** began with a photograph created at the beginning of the Covid-19 closures. The photograph titled **Mirror Woman** (2020) addresses the physical and psychological sites of skin, torso, the face, and eyes. Created in Spring 2020, with each gesture of cutting reflective tape and pressing against my skin, I covered my torso and face, including orifices of the auditory, speech, and sight to conjure contradictions embedded in “borders” – boundaries between self and Other, and potentially national borders. Congruous with the arc of photographs leading up to this work, **Mirror Woman** refutes portraiture’s innate ability to present a legible subject, resisting pre-conceived notions of identity such as race and gender that one may project onto a body. In my photographs, I have developed simple (and more complex) ways to interrupt this seemingly natural process of identification: turning my head away from the camera, camouflage, or wrapping my body in tape. These methods that deny “readability” are strategies of refusal, protection, and care. As tape becomes a surrogate for skin, **Mirror Woman** deflects assumptions based on vision. Created at the beginning of the Covid-19-pandemic which shut down movement, travel, and the ability to embrace – **Mirror Woman** amplifies notions of skin as armor and the desire to shine bright, to connect across nation state borders. Eyes sealed shut, the seeming inability to breathe through the nose, mouth taped – her featureless shape also evokes woman as monstrous. **Mirror Woman** activates how a viewer may determine who belongs and who is considered alien.” - **GO***



## Mirror Woman

2020  
archival pigment print,  
framed under museum glass  
31h x 22w in  
78.74h x 55.88w cm  
edition 2 of 7

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*“In **Shutter Vision** (2019) my jaw holds the shutter release for the camera. (A large format 4x5” film camera.) Closing my jaw, teeth biting down, an image is formed eyes closed. How do we see each other? Is it possible to embrace each other physically, virtually, spiritually – like a photograph even if for a fleeting moment in time and space? How do we cut through ideological divisions?” - **GO***



## Shutter Vision

2020  
archival pigment print,  
framed under museum glass  
31h x 22w in  
78.74h x 55.88w cm  
edition 2 of 7

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*“Echoing the body wrapped in black tape and holding the shutter release in my mouth in **Shutter Vision** (is it a grenade? BDSM gag?) **her demilitarized zone** \_\_\_\_\_ **pleasure after centuries of war they saw each other without weapon he wept** (2021) is both sculpture and poem in flux– 17 solid steel bars echo a staccato of war, brutality, the police beating stick. Symbols of minimalism, violence, and power scarred by the artist’s hand, my hands holding the bright hot white light of the welder’s torch, a slow writing of duration.” - **GO***

her  
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2021  
17 part floor sculpture, solid steel bars  
16w x 1.5dia in • 40.64w x 3.81dia cm each

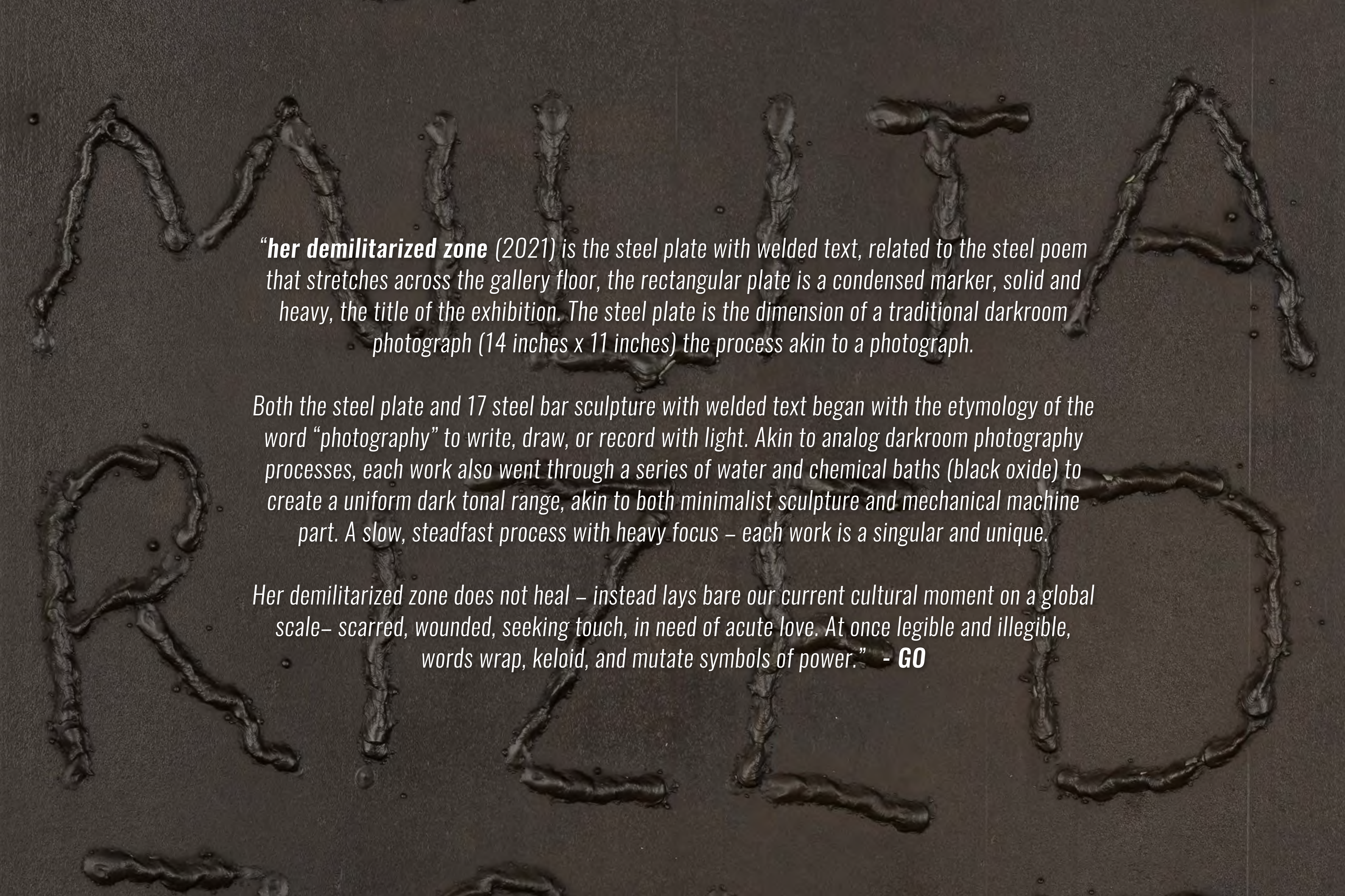
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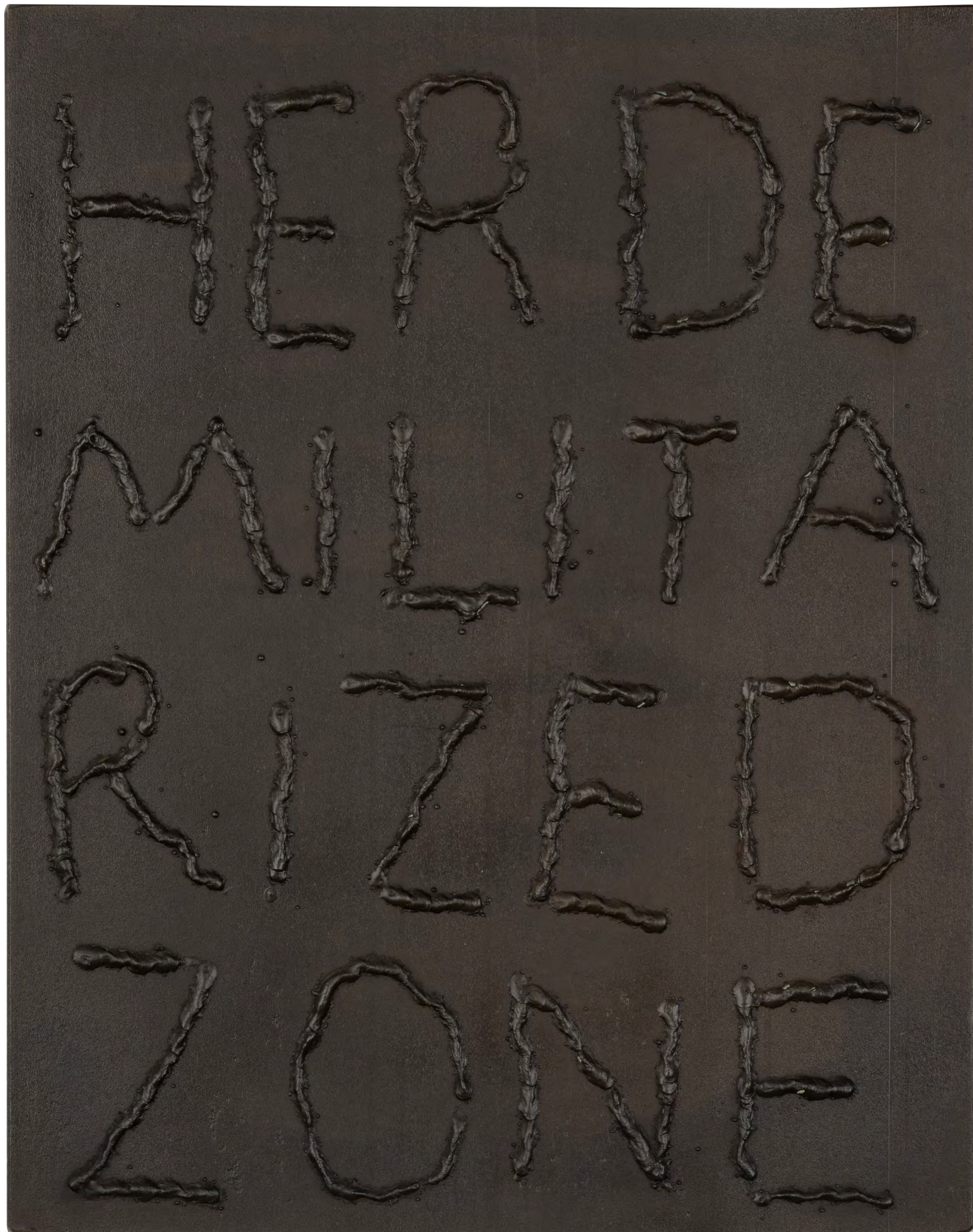
WATCH  
ARTWORK  
VIDEO



*“**her demilitarized zone** (2021) is the steel plate with welded text, related to the steel poem that stretches across the gallery floor, the rectangular plate is a condensed marker, solid and heavy, the title of the exhibition. The steel plate is the dimension of a traditional darkroom photograph (14 inches x 11 inches) the process akin to a photograph.*

*Both the steel plate and 17 steel bar sculpture with welded text began with the etymology of the word “photography” to write, draw, or record with light. Akin to analog darkroom photography processes, each work also went through a series of water and chemical baths (black oxide) to create a uniform dark tonal range, akin to both minimalist sculpture and mechanical machine part. A slow, steadfast process with heavy focus – each work is a singular and unique.*

*Her demilitarized zone does not heal – instead lays bare our current cultural moment on a global scale– scarred, wounded, seeking touch, in need of acute love. At once legible and illegible, words wrap, keloid, and mutate symbols of power.” - **GO***



**her demilitarized zone**

2021  
steel plate, welded text, black oxide  
14h x 11w in  
35.56h x 27.94w cm

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ZOTE



“At times, my photographs and sculptures adopt materials and forms that may reference fetish, BDSM practices: tape which wraps the body, a mouth gag. The image is fetish. (My images do not show acts of sex. Root definitions of the word ‘fetish’ could indeed be describing the image, “An object, the possession of which is believed to procure the services of a spirit lodged within it,” which also share origins with ‘magic’ and the Portuguese word *feitico* and the Latin root words for ‘artificial’ and ‘to make’ *facere*.) I simplify, amplify, lay bare the photographic field, a terrain of power – our global cultural and political landscape – dominance and submission, the two inextricably intertwined through looking. The photograph. **Pressing Against Looking** (2019) – depicts long black poles press into my eyes, activating the physical and conceptual pressure and pleasure of both looking and being looked at. The frenzy of vision.” - **GO**








## Pressing Against Looking, Movement

2019  
archival pigment print, framed under museum glass  
34h x 43w in • 86.36h x 109.22w cm  
edition 1 of 7

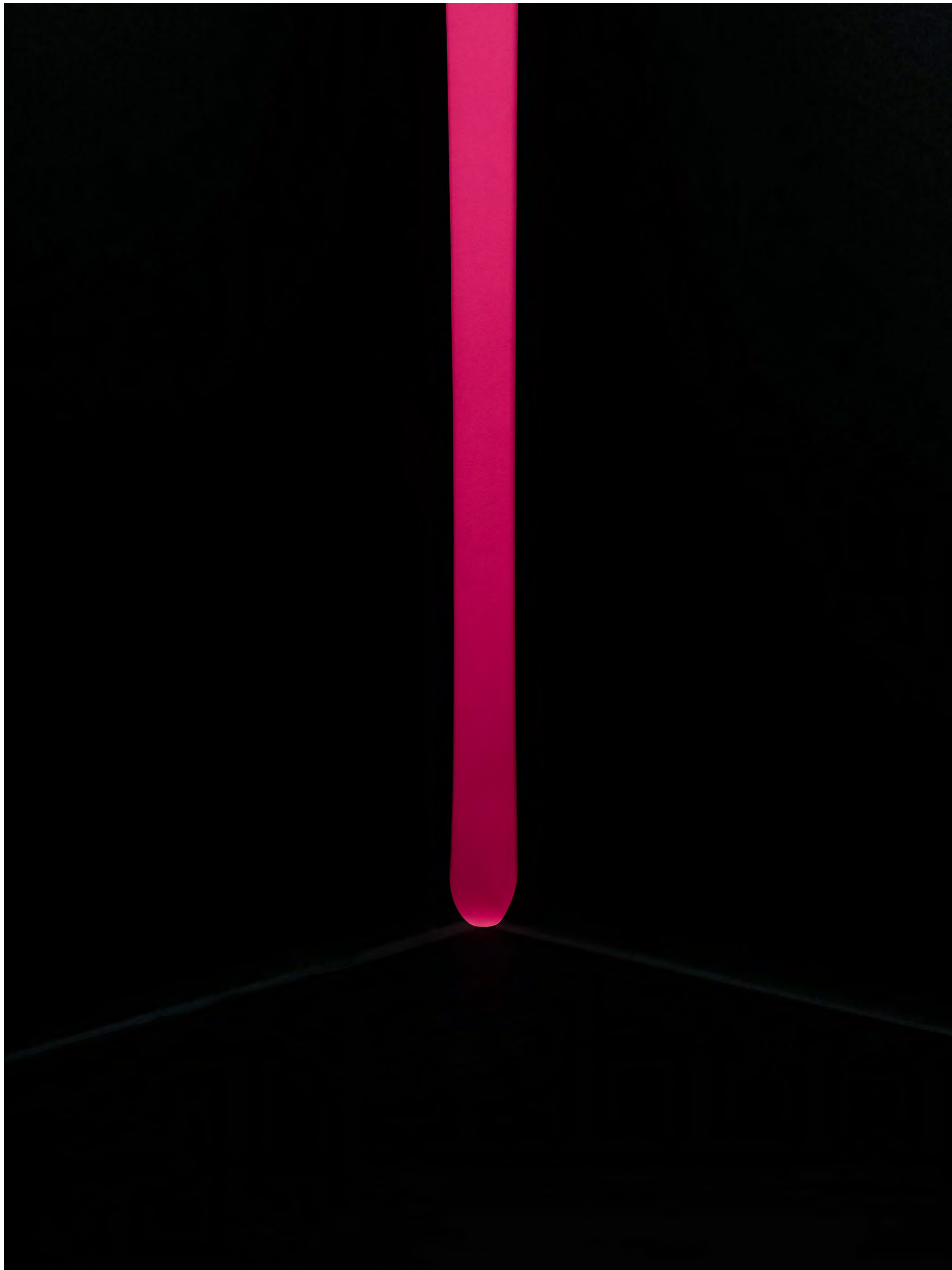
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*“**Psychic Drop, Pink and Gray** (2021) refer to the act of camouflage as a momentary loss of one’s individuality, a psychic drop in ego. A starting point early in my photographic oeuvre, this line of inquiry persists throughout my work and originates from both personal experiences growing up mixed-race Filipino German American (simultaneously experiencing passing and not-passing for a singular or particular racial identity) and reading philosophy and art theory texts that consider camouflage as not a tactic of war, but instead a strategy to inhabit and understand other points of view. To embody space, perceptual viewpoints beyond one’s inherited skin color or skin consciousness. In a recent conversation with curator and writer Yael Buencamino, Yael remarked, “Photography creates the potential for a momentary psychic drop, loss of ego.” -GO*



## **Psychic Drop, Pink**

2021  
archival pigment print,  
framed under museum glass  
27.52h x 20.64w in  
69.90h x 52.43w cm  
edition 1 of 7

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*“**Psychic Drop**, like a photograph may be a fleeting shift in consciousness, yet key to de-weaponizing ways of seeing.*

*In our fractured world pushed to rigid fixed extremes may **her demilitarized zone (HDZ)** infinitely grow, dismantle symbols and language of war, may we see the day that HDZ dissipates, is no longer needed. May we unleash a duration of love.” - **GO***

## Psychic Drop, Gray

2021  
archival pigment print,  
framed under museum glass  
27.52h x 20.64w in  
69.90h x 52.43w cm  
edition 1 of 7

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WATCH  
EXHIBITION VIDEO

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words wrap, keloid, and mutate  
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*Listen to Gina's Studio Tracks on Spotify:*



## GINA OSTERLOH

### Bio

Gina Osterloh's photography, performance art, and sculptures address the pleasure and pain of looking and interrogate presumed notions of identity. She is enthralled by the possibilities of blankness initiating psychic panic. Symbolic themes such as the void, orifice, the grid, and skin, in addition to a heightened awareness of color and repetitive pattern appear throughout her artwork.

Solo exhibitions and performances include Gina Osterloh at Higher Pictures Generation (NY); Shadow Woman as part of En Cuatro Patas at The Broad Museum (Los Angeles); ZONES at Silverlens, Manila; Slice, Strike, Make an X, Prick! at Ghebaly Gallery (Los Angeles); Nothing to See Here There Never Was at Silverlens (Manila, Philippines); Gina Osterloh at Higher Pictures; Group Dynamic at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), and Anonymous Front at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Group exhibitions include Multiply, Identify, Her at the International Center of Photography in New York City, Not Visual Noise at Ateneo Art Gallery, Ateneo University in Quezon City, Philippines; an idea of a boundary at the San Francisco Art Commission Gallery; Ours is a City of Writers at the Barnsdall Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery; Energy Charge: Connecting to Ana Mendieta at ASU Museum, Demolition Women curated by Commonwealth & Council at Chapman University and Fragments of the Unknowable Whole Urban Arts Space OSU. Reviews of her work have been featured in The New Yorker Magazine, Art in America, The Brooklyn Rail, Contemporary Art Daily, Hyphen Magazine, Art Asia Pacific, Asian Art News, Art Papers, Artforum Critics Pick, Art Practical, and KCET Artbound Los Angeles. Awards include an Ohio Arts Council Grant for Individual Excellence, the Wayne P. Lawson Columbus Museum of Art Acquisitions Award, a Fulbright in the Philippines, a Woodstock Center of Photography residency, and a Create Cultivate Grant with the LA



County Arts Commission and LACE. She is an Assistant Professor of Art at The Ohio State University. Gina Osterloh's work is represented by Silverlens Galleries (Manila) and Higher Pictures Generation (New York).

## GINA OSTERLOH Bio

b. 1973, Texas, USA



*Psychic Drop - Pink, 2021*

### RESIDENCIES & GRANTS

- 2012 Book Publication and 3-Month Artist Residency with LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions)  
Create Cultivate Matching Grant, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions and LA County Arts Commission
- 2011 Woodstock Center of Photography, Artist in Residency
- 2010 Durfee Foundation ARC Grant
- 2008 Silverlens Foundation Completion Grant
- 2007-2008 Fulbright Recipient, Manila, Philippines
- 2006 Medici Grant
- 2004-2005 Diversity Fellowship Recipient, University of California Irvine
- 2004-2006 Graduate Travel and Research Grant Recipient, University of California Irvine

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *Her Demilitarized Zone*, Silverlens, Manila  
*Presence Requested*, Pasadena, California  
*Substrata*, Epoch Gallery  
*Art Fair Philippines*, Makati, Philippines  
*Considered Gestures*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2020 *Gina Osterloh*, Higher Pictures Generation, New York
- 2019 *PRESSURE/PLEASURE*, Coco Hunday, Florida
- 2018 *Zones*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2015 *Gina Osterloh*, Higher Pictures, New York  
*Nothing to See Here There Never Was*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2014 *Press Erase Outline Slice Strike Make an X Prick*, François Ghebaly Gallery, LA
- 2012 *Group Dynamic & Improper Light*, LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions), Los Angeles  
*Photo Espagna*, Curated by Fumio Nanjo, Director of Mori Museum, Tokyo  
*Yerba Buena Center for the Arts*, curated by Juilo Cesar Morales, San Francisco
- 2011 *Body Prop*, Silverlens, Manila  
*Los Angeles, California to Manila, Philippines: You Are My Blindspot (Part I)*, Thirty Nine Hotel Residency Project, Honolulu
- 2009 *Shooting Blanks*, Chung King Project, Los Angeles
- 2008 *Shooting Blanks*, Green Papaya Art Projects, Manila
- 2007 *Blank Athleticism*, [ 2nd floor projects ], San Francisco

## GINA OSTERLOH Bio

### TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 Two-person exhibition with Brooklyn-based sculptor Brie Ruais, Gaa Gallery, Provincetown
- 2014 *Outside Crease of the Elbow (residency and exhibition with Paris-based artist Ana Vega)*, Commonwealth & Council, Los Angeles
- 2011 *Differentiate*, Allcott Gallery, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *Art Fair Philippines*, Silverlens, Manila  
*Considered Gestures*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2020 *Anticipating the Day*, Silverlens, Manila  
*Reaching for the Horizon*, Antenna Works, New Orleans.
- 2019 *Not Visual Noise*, Ateneo Art Gallery, Manila  
*Art Basel*, Silverlens, Hong Kong  
*Art Fair Philippines*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2018 *En Cuatro Patas: Performance Series*, Live performance of *Press and Outline* (2014), The Broad Museum, Los Angeles  
*Past as Present: Capturing and Archiving the Female Experience*, DAAP Gallery, Cincinnati  
*Kayumanggi: Post Colonial Filipinx*, Tipton Gallery, Tennessee  
*Liquid Dreams*, Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles  
*Multiply, Identify, Her*, International Center of Photography, New York  
*Art Fair Philippines*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2017 *Race, Love, Labour*, Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery, New York  
*An Idea Of A Boundary*, curated by Jackie Im, San Francisco Art Commission, San Francisco, CA  
*Ours Is a City of Writers*, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery (LAMAG), Los Angeles, CA  
*Translación*, Inaugural Exhibition, Curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, Silverlens, Manila
- 2016 *Energy Charge: Connecting to Ana Mendieta*, Arizona State University Museum, Arizona
- 2016 *Art Basel*, Silverlens, Hong Kong  
*Art Fair Philippines*, Silverlens, Manila
- 2015 *The Vexed Contemporary*, curated by Joselina Cruz, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila  
*Second Sight: New Representations in Photography*, Torrance Art Museum, California  
*Photography Sees The Surface*, Higher Pictures, New York  
*Drawings | Fridges*, Greene Exhibitions, Los Angeles
- 2014 *Race Love and Labor*, Samuel Dorsky Museum Of Art, State University Of

## GINA OSTERLOH Bio

New York At New Paltz

**Life Transmissions**, Guggenheim Gallery, Chapman University

**Material Object**, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles

**Frieze New York**, François Ghebaly Gallery, New York

**Paris Photo LA**, François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles

**Fragments of the Unknowable Whole**, Urban Arts Space, Ohio State University

**This Is Not America: Resistance, Protest and Poetics**, Curated by Julio César Morales, Arizona State University Museum of Art

2013 **NADA Art Fair**, François Ghebaly Gallery, Miami Beach, Florida

**Demolition Women**, curated by Commonwealth & Council, Guggenheim Gallery Chapman University, California

**Show and Tell**, Curated by Irene Tsatsos, Armory Center For The Arts Pasadena, California

**Color Consciousness**, Torrence Art Museum, California

**War Baby, Love Child**, Depaul University, Chicago and Wing Luke Museum Of The Asian American Seattle, Washington

**Asia Serendipity**, traveling group exhibition curated by Fumio Nanjo of the Mori Museum, Tokyo: Sala de exposiciones San Benito, Valladolid, Spain

**La Termica**, Malaga, Spain

**Ley Hunting Pt. 2**, curated by Gary-Ross Pastrana, Silverlens, Singapore

2012 **Ley Hunting**, Silverlens, Manila

**Paris Photo**, Silverlens, Paris

**Asia Serendipity**, La Fabrica | Photo Espana, Madrid, curated by Fumio Nanjo, Mori Museum

**Out of Sight, Out of Mind**, Workplace Gallery, Gateshead, United Kingdom

**Art HK 12**, Silverlens, Hong Kong

**Francois Ghebaly Gallery**, Art Cologne 2012, Cologne

**Los Angeles Contemporary Tendencies**, Curated by Annka Kultys, Helene Bailly Gallery, Paris

**Anonymous Front**, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco

2011 **NADA Art Fair**, with François Ghebaly Gallery, Miami Beach, Florida

**Paramount Reality**, Latned Atsär, Los Angeles

**Territories of the Real and Unreal: Contemporary Photography in Southeast Asia**, Langgeng Art Foundation, Jakarta

**Gathered in a Clearing**, Level / Gallery Three, Brisbane

**Transitions: Time based Asian American Art**, Whitman College, Sheehan Gallery, Washington

**On Forgery: Is One Thing Better Than Another?**, LA ART, Los Angeles

2010 **The Unnamable**, Manila Contemporary, Manila

**Let Them Eat Lacma**, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles

## GINA OSTERLOH Bio

*Summercamp Project LA*, Cypress College, Los Angeles

*Psychic Outlaws*, Luckman Gallery, Cal State LA, Los Angeles

*New Editions*, Pepin Moore, Los Angeles

*Commonwealth*, PØST, Los Angeles

*Group Show: Daniel Bayles, Gina Osterloh, and Patrick Jackson*, Kate Werble Gallery, New York

*Group Show*, Art Los Angeles Contemporary, Los Angeles

2009 *Uncommon Sense (trauma, interrupted, too)*, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila

*Cut09: Figure (New Photography in Southeast Asia)*, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Singapore

*Cut09: Figure (New Photography in Southeast Asia)*, Valentine Willie Fine Art, Kuala Lumpur

*beyond frame: philippine fotomedia*, La Trobe Visual Arts Center, Australia

*FuturaManila*, Osage Gallery, Singapore

2008 *Silverlens Grantee Exhibition*, Silverlens, Manila

*Swarm in the Aperture: Recent Photography in the Philippines*, Museum of the Filipino People, Manila

*Strain Extension*, MO Space Gallery, Manila

*beyond frame: philippine fotomedia*, UTS Gallery, Sydney

*FuturaManila*, Osage Gallery, HongKong

*Galleon Trade*, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco

*Truthiness*, California Museum of Photography, UC Riverside

*Tints of Majesty*, Lizabeth Oliveria Gallery, Los Angeles

*Whatcha See Is Whatcha Get, What You Don't See (Is Better Yet)*, Five Thirty Three, Los Angeles

2007 *Trauma, Interrupted*, Cultural Center of the Philippines, Manila

*Galleon Trade*, Mag:net Gallery, Manila

*Marfa-the B sides*, Queen's Nails Annex, Marfa, Texas

*Body Double*, Luckman Gallery, Los Angeles

*The Pyramid Show*, Monte Vista Projects, Los Angeles

*Outside In*, LACE, Los Angeles

*MFA Thesis Exhibition*, UC Irvine, Irvine, California

2006 *Good Times For Never*, Queen's Nails Annex, San Francisco

*Video MixTape 5* (curated by Chris Bassett), Kunstraum Innsbruck, Austria

*There, There*, New Langton Arts, San Francisco

*Satellite* (video screening, curated by Natasha Garcia-Lomas)

Elojo Atomico/Antimuseo de Arte Contemporaneo, Madrid

2004 *All-City*, Lizabeth Oliveria Gallery, (Project Space), Los Angeles

*Subject to Oneself*, Playspace, California College of the Arts San Francisco

2003 *All-City*, Luggage Store Gallery Annex, San Francisco



## GINA OSTERLOH

### Bio

*Infinite Booty*, Galeria de la Raza, San Francisco

2002 *12 Artists-2minutes*, SF Arts Commission, San Francisco

*Axis of Good*, Ze Dos Bois, Lisbon, Portugal

#### **CURATORIAL PROJECTS**

2011 *Support>System*, co-curated with Marco Rios, Luckman Gallery, California State University, Los Angeles

*Each of Our Erasure*, San Francisco Arts Commission and The Luggage Store Gallery

*Collection Rotation*, SF MOMA Blog Archive online

2010 *Minimum Yields Maximum*, Monte Vista Projects, Los Angeles

2006 *Glitch*, LACMA LAB, Los Angeles

#### **EDUCATION**

2007 University of California Irvine  
Masters of Fine Arts, Studio Art

1996 De Paul University - Chicago, Illinois, USA  
Bachelor of Communications/Media Studies

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

"The Vexed Contemporary." La Sallian Education Innovators Foundation. 2017.

Osterloh, Gina & Dixon, Michelle. "A conversation on Transitional Identity and the Subtleties of Being Seen." 4 September 2002

Dambrot, Shana Nys. "Gina Osterloh at Francois Ghebaly Gallery." Art Ltd. September/October 2014.

Datuin, Flaudette May V. "Shooting Blanks." Ctrl+P. July 2008. p. 20-21

Marcelo, Sam. "Visual Haiku." Business World. 16 July 2008. p. S2/8

Gibson, Prue. "Beyond Frame: Philippine Photomedia." Art Monthly Australia. December 2008. pp. 31-33

#### **AWARDS**

2021 Ohio Arts Council, Individual Award for Excellence

2020 Women's Place, Coca-Cola Critical Difference for Women Research Grant, The Ohio State University

2015 Creative Capacity Fund, Quick Grant Program

2012 Create Cultivate Grant, LA County Arts Commission (with LACE)

Artist Residency and Book Publication with LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions)

2011 Woodstock Center of Photography, Residency

2008 Silverlens Completion Grant, International Photography Award for Philippine

**GINA OSTERLOH**

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**Yael Buencamino**

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