



Gaby Collins-Fernandez, Let's Talk About Taste

Appetitive Torque

March 25th - April 22nd

Opening reception Saturday March 25th, 2017, 7-10 PM

Gallery hours beginning Sat, April 1st, Sat-Sun 1-5 PM

Curated by **Loren Britton and Rocket Caleshu**

Artists:

Cheyenne Julien

Gaby Collins Fernandez

Christina Quarles

Writers:

Vanessa Baish

Rin Johnson

Martha Oatis

Matt Polzin

Appetitive

ap·pe·ti·tive

'ape,tɪdɪv/

adjective

adjective: appetitive

1. characterized by a natural desire to satisfy bodily needs.

2. "the appetitive behavior of animals"

Torque

tôrk/

noun

noun: torque ; plural noun: torques

1. a twisting force that tends to cause rotation.

verb

verb: torque ; 3rd person present: torques ; past tense: torqued ; past participle: torqued ; gerund or present participle: torquing

1. apply torque or a twisting force to (an object).

2. "he gently torqued the hip joint"

My love of the taste of blood, its sanguinary pleasures available to me only if I suck on the right part of a body hard enough: a form of desire, maybe even an aesthetic category, under which I want to locate myself. Like this, taste is embodied viscera, a locus of desire and invention. How do we identify what good (or bad) taste is? Does it taste good because it reminds us of something outside ourselves, something that exists in our accumulative memory? Does taste register in the body, an agent of desire, the accumulation of ceaseless experience?

Twisting forces of bodily desire make the images of patterned surfaces and submerged and emerged figures in **Christina Quarles**, **Cheyenne Julian**, and **Gaby Collins-Fernandez's** paintings and drawings in *Appetitive Torque*. From Gayatri Spivak's reminder of the importance of how to unlearn one's learning and to be aware of what to unlearn from one's expertise, these works suggest image making as a possibility for undoing reality. In Cheyenne Julian's paintings the plastic glow in the dark stickers from childhood ceiling have aged pink; now they decorate the fertile skies of flowers that smile back at you. Christina Quarles's work poses a constant transformation of pattern, figure and ground where a ceramic Hawaiian print mug can transfigure into a plastic picnic table cloth for bodies to melt through. In Gaby Collins-Fernandez's drawings I'm reminded of how it felt when I leaned into my lover, velvet shirt rubbing the wrong way to change color, first hot red then cool blue. Submerging and fragmenting a relation to: archive, childhood, desire and body, the paintings in this show satisfy the palette through juicy slips of legs/language & cigarettes.

Twisting forces of bodily desire mark the words of **Vanessa Baish**, **Rin Johnson**, **Martha Oatis**, and **Matthew Polzin**, contained herein. Matthew Polzin's characters seem motivated primarily by their distaste for one another: a protracted, banal yet provocative, workplace spat ends with one employee twisting the other's finger almost until it snaps and using a vending machine to barricade her in a bathroom. This is a drama of the everyday: low-key, yet almost boiled over. Poets (myself included) make much of the Keatsian notion of negative capability; that is, ask Keats himself put it, to be "capable of being in uncertainties;" to contemplate the world without trying to reconcile it. In this way, taste becomes a kind of negative capability: a projection forward into a space that can sustain the multiple and the uncertain. The poems of Rin Johnson ask a lot questions, and answer few: "How many U turns until I am going in the right direction?" Or, is it really the same body that moves through a space twice? A mysterious plant becomes the companion to Martha Oatis's elucidation of the phenomenological vitality of aliveness, an ally to Mystery: "My mouth and skull became the size of the field." Vanessa Baish reminds us that sometimes devotion is all we need to transform the bitter into the sweet, or that the sweet was there all along. Each of these writers leave themselves exposed to the crosswinds of taste

and all that it is made of: sense, aesthetic, sex, beauty, labor. The texts here are relevant to our questions of taste precisely because they dwell in uncertainty; each makes me ask, "Why do I hope for a poem to begin in delight and end in doubt?"

My love of taste is rooted in viscera, deep inward feelings rather than intellect. The structures of feelings that open remind me that there is no imperative for shared taste - how does taste create structure? In the space of uncertainty proposed by the artists and writers in this show Appetitive Torque suggests embodied intellect as a starting point.

Loren Britton & Rocket Calesh

Artists

Cheyenne Julien

www.cheyennejulien.com/

Gaby Collins Fernandez

www.gabycollinsfernandez.com/

Christina Quarles

www.christinaquarles.com/

Writers

Vanessa Baish keeps the taste of the first coffee of the day in her mouth for as long as possible.

Rin Johnson is a Brooklyn based sculptor and poet.

Martha Oatis is an artist and acupuncturist based in New York City.

Matt Polzin is a writer based out of Los Angeles.

Curators

Loren Britton is an artist who makes and thinks between locations.

Rocket Caleshu writes and lives in Los Angeles.