



Air Kiss

January 22 - March 5, 2022

Alexa Almany, Kevin Bouton-Scott, Jane Dashley, Julia Dzwonkoski, David Johnson, Alex Lemke, Olivia Mole, Sean T. Randolph, Li Zeng, and Marcus Zúñiga

We have spent the past two years fearing what is floating in the air. I don't know about you, but it has left me feeling untethered. We are living our lives like ghosts barreling through the dark, camouflaged in night colored sedans, praying we don't hit a deer. But in the darkness we tune in, maybe better than we have ever tuned in before. Now we can hear past the radio, past the fuel pump, past the grip of the tires on the road and into our untapped capabilities. What we once considered a coincidence is now a prophecy.

Of all things, a commercial for the 2000 Volkswagen Jetta comes to mind. The commercial features a woman and man driving through the rain in what appears to be the French Quarter. When the passenger pops in the cassette tape and the beat drops everything outside the car follows with it: a yo-yo-er yo-yoing, a shopkeep sweeping, a basket baller dribbling, and of course, package chucks chucking. All in perfect synchronicity. Aside from being a memorable commercial and very dated at this point, it gives one the feeling that things can be connected by something as immaterial as music. This bit of automotive propaganda serves as a reminder, that although things are up in the air these days, we can find moments where everything falls into place rather than falling to pieces.

Air Kiss is a fresh start to the new year at Gattopardo. This exhibition features ten artists united by that which is suspended and motivated to make the immaterial tangible. A fluffy bear falls from grace only to be saved by the comfort of an air mattress; the most transient of all mattresses. A noble gas, otherwise invisible to the naked eye, is made visible by the artist in a neon sculpture that mimics a limp member or maybe it's a fin? We are in California after all. A cow print shag rug in giraffe tones moos the word "wow" with the "o" falling into place. A balloon levitates up off the page of a notepad, lighter than everything around it, soaring to the heavens. Its reflection is caught by a series of golden mirrored hexagons in a sculpture that was modeled after the components of deep space telescopes. If the truth is out there then the truth may just be right here. A painting inspired by Mysteries of the Unknown confirms this fact and suggests that nothing is coincidence. Under the stars the big cats come out in a pair of nocturnes. Followed by ghosts, all of the ghosts. Can a ghost catch an air kiss? If so, many have been intercepted I'm sure. My friend had this theory that if ghosts exist the earth must be bursting with them. If this is true we'd be swimming through ghosts without knowing it. Two swimmers dunk one another in a watercolor on the wall performing a ritual as old as time known as the teenage baptism. The ritual is sacred ceremony fueled by ice cold energy drinks. Our final encounter is with a black car that appears to navigate from one set of stripes to the next as if to fall off a cliff. Maybe the driver's blowing a kiss goodbye out the window.

At the end of the Jetta commercial a big truck stops the spell of the song with a splash on the windshield of the car, to which the man says, "That was interesting." I hope that in Air Kiss you will find what you were looking for. Maybe something that exists beyond that which is interesting. Perhaps you'll discover a missed connection or even some version of synchronicity floating in the air. I'll leave you with this, a poem I wrote a while back that seems fitting:

**In the rain everyone look like
they are breaking into cars**

If I could move my heart
in any direction
It would be vertical

then horizontal
and when my heart
is in my throat—

then I can taste it.

-Sean T. Randolph