



Steven Beckly *Meirenyu*

January 18 -
February 24, 2018

Opening reception:
Thursday, January 18
6 - 8 pm

Daniel Faria Gallery is pleased to present *Meirenyu*, Steven Beckly's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

Meirenyu is a transliteration of the Mandarin word for mermaid [美人魚]. Found in the myths of many cultures, mermaids are aquatic hybrids: half-human, half-fish. Neither fully belonging to land nor sea, they are transitional figures with transformative abilities. Closely entwined in human affairs, they are beautiful and seductive, dangerous yet vulnerable

Drawing on symbols and themes from Beckly's favourite underwater tales, *Meirenyu* casts an intimate gaze on the mermaid mythos to re-imagine our contemporary relationships with the ocean and the unknown. Working with images of light, water, and skin, Beckly cultivates a visual language of colours and textures by revealing poetic links between image and object, surface and space. Beckly's photographs delicately hang, suspended in the gallery space, taking on three-

dimensional forms that twist the orientations of up and down, left and right, front and back. Straddling photography and sculpture, his images connect the hybridity and fluidity of mermaids to broader issues of gender and sexuality. Printed on iridescent, opalescent, and translucent materials, they reflect an ethos of light, glamour and transformation. In broader strokes, *Meirenyu* points to the power of myths in our understanding of the ocean and the unknown, while underscoring the need for new myths to reflect the global and environmental issues of today.

Steven Beckly (b. 1981, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam) completed his MFA at the University of Guelph in 2016. Recent solo exhibitions include *A tender touch can bend the straightest of things* at Eastern Edge Gallery (St. John's) and *Of you, unfolding*, his MFA thesis exhibition presented at Daniel Faria Gallery (Toronto). Beckly's work was also included in the 2017 VICE Photo Show at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montreal. Most recently Beckly was Artist-in-Residence at the Doris McCarthy Artist Residency in the Scarborough Bluffs (Toronto) and the Philadelphia Photo Arts Center (Philadelphia) as well as producing public installations for CONTACT Photography Festival (2017) and the City of Toronto's Jack Layton Ferry Terminal (2017). Beckly lives and works in Toronto.

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