

LOWELL RYAN PROJECTS

Born to Love

Alexandra Grant

Opening Reception: Saturday, June 1, 2019, 7-9pm
June 1 - July 6, 2019



Image: Detail - Alexandra Grant, *She said to Creon (5)*, 2018

Lowell Ryan Projects is pleased to present *Born to Love*, a solo exhibition by Alexandra Grant. The title for the show stems from Sophocles' play *Antigone*. In the ancient Greek tragedy, Antigone is brought before King Creon for disobeying his mandate against mourning the death of her brother, Polynices, who the King has labeled a traitor to the state. "An enemy is an enemy, even dead," Creon says, to which Antigone replies, "I was born to love not to hate." A blend of abstraction and text, *Born to Love* stands as an exploration of that radical stance—a stance that goes beyond its personal agenda to take on much greater social and universal implications.

The show will feature seven large-scale works on paper and two oil paintings on canvas from the Los Angeles-based artist's *Antigone 3000* series. These works simultaneously contrast and incorporate various forms of abstraction—geometric, gestural, color-field—with sepulchral wax rubbings of text. Through Grant's painterly nods to abstraction, the works achieve their harmony by juxtaposing visual language with textual quotation, repeating the phrase "I was born to love not to hate" throughout the works. *Born to Love* is a visual proposition that Antigone, in choosing love over hate, rises above all opposition with her steadfast conviction.

In creating each painting, Grant worked both on horizontal and vertical planes, ultimately giving both a feeling of mass and lightness to her forms. On the floor, she poured paint that both pooled and splattered, evidence of a natural, even violent series of events. The rubbings of Antigone's voice also happened on the horizontal—echoes that refuse to be silenced. Moving the paper to the wall, Grant inserted rigid bands of color that drip down and compete with the pours and splatters of paint for dominance. The visual antagonism is palpable; each painting contains a battlefield of abstraction.

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Known for her use of text, and collaborations with writers and scholars, recently Grant's works have grown more entropic, dense, and self-reliant. "I was born to love, not to hate" appears throughout these paintings, doubled over so that it can be read both right-to-left and left-to-right. The words bring harmony and take on a timeless quality, transcending the frenetic formal conflict taking place all around them. Instead of being restrained by one ideology or another, the textual element seems—radically, heroically—to step back and look at the larger picture, to bear witness to the full spectrum of ideological opposition.

Alexandra Grant is a Los Angeles-based artist who through an exploration of the use of text and language in various media—painting, drawing, sculpture, film, and photography—probes ideas of translation, identity, dis/location, and social responsibility. Grant frequently collaborates with other artists, writers and philosophers, often going so far as to have specific texts written as the impetus to her intricate paintings and sculptures. She has collaborated with author Michael Joyce, actor Keanu Reeves, artist Channing Hansen, and the philosopher Hélène Cixous, amongst others. Having spent significant portions of her childhood and adolescence living in Mexico, France and Spain, some of the basic questions that fuel her practice are: How do the languages we speak and the images we see form how we think and exchange ideas? How can artists and writers work to create and influence culture in an increasingly technology-driven world?

Grant has exhibited widely at galleries including Honor Fraser Gallery, Los Angeles; Night Gallery, Los Angeles; Galerie Lelong, New York City; Galerie Gradiva, Paris; and Harris Lieberman Gallery, New York City; and at institutions such as Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles, CA; The Broad Museum at Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI; the Contemporary Museum, Baltimore, MD; and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles, CA. Her work has been written about in the *Los Angeles Times*, *White Hot Magazine*, *Frieze*, *Art in America*, and *Artforum* amongst others. Awards include the COLA Individual Artist Fellowship and The Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant. Her works are included in museum collections such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada.

Grant is the creator of the grantLOVE project, which has raised funds for arts based non-profits including; Heart of Los Angeles (HOLA), Project Angel Food, Art of Elysium, 18th Street Arts Center, and LAXART. In 2017, Grant cofounded X Artists' Books, a publishing house for artist-centered books. Publications have included collaborations with Diane di Prima, George Herms and Eve Wood, among others, and are available online and in bookstores throughout Los Angeles, New York and Paris.