

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JAMI PORTER LARA, ERIN MICKELSON, KATE RUCK

April 29–June 24, 2022

OPENING RECEPTION

Friday, April 29, 5-7pm

ARTIST TALK & WALKTHROUGH

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(April 2022) Despite its abbreviated title, the three-person exhibition *** (pronounced “asterisks”) is **humming with language**. Words and symbols alternately illuminate and divide: a neon asterisk blinks in a corner, and a wall of flour sacks emblazoned with the phrase “White Fear” blocks a doorway. Medium tangles with message: a soft tapestry reads “Speak, Friend and Enter,” while a weapon and sculptures crafted from porcupine quills communicate sharper ideas. **New Mexico-based artists Jami Porter Lara, Erin Mickelson and Kate Ruck are speaking—in whispers, shouts, pleas and battle cries—but the meaning behind their words is intentionally maze-like. Enter the labyrinth at the opening reception of *** on Friday, April 29, 5–7pm.**

“Each piece in this exhibition reveals the structures surrounding it,” says Gallery Director Jordan Eddy. “The artists are literally calling attention to the walls that enclose the show, but also to broader societal structures that seek to define and constrict the significance of their work.” Lara, Mickelson and Ruck maintain artistic practices that are idiosyncratic and interdisciplinary: the exhibition features found objects, forged metal, textiles, wall drawings, neon signage, and letterpress prints. From many different angles, the show confronts the interlocking paradigms of art space as white space and personhood as fixed or nameable. Harnessing personal and cultural meanings, they usher the peripheral and parenthetical to the foreground.

Lara says, “I feel like I’m finally in the terrain of what I want art to do, which is to be that layered, that complicated. It’s been a journey.” Her 2021 solo show at Gerald Peters Contemporary, *Terms and Conditions*, marked an important shift in her artistic practice. Best known for hand-built ceramic vessels depicting plastic bottles, Lara turned to a variety of materials and techniques—embroidery on furniture, neon signage, lithography, dresses sewn from flour sacks—to examine the role of mothering and the domestic sphere in propagating the social behaviors and ideologies that comprise whiteness.

“*Terms and Conditions* was a major source of inspiration for ***,” Eddy says. “Jami seized the asterisk as this minimal but potent symbol that could either call attention to something or sideline it. Asterisks filled that show, and spilled over into ours.” A neon sign of an asterisk from Lara’s solo show appears in ***, along with two new works by Lara that further explore the currency, weaponry and armor of whiteness.

“Protection as a theme was clearly an immediate connection between all of our practices,” says Mickelson, who experiments with hand-gilded porcupine quills for the first time in this show. Mickelson is a mainstay at form & concept, with three exhibitions under her belt including her 2021 solo display *PAST PERFECT FUTURE*. “There are literal and indirect ways in which we all grappled with our own visual vocabulary within this artfully unnamed show, but the word we found was defense,” she says.

Ruck, who also regularly exhibits her work at the gallery, presents textiles, a wall sculpture and a Skunkbush Sumac weapon in ***. Drawing inspiration from the connection between the digital and physical worlds, Ruck explores mass cultural media, object memory and the use of virtual tools IRL. “My approach to this show was to address the different thresholds I’ve balanced between,” she says. “And play is an essential component in the construction of our projected self.”

continued

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435 S. Guadalupe St., Santa Fe, NM 87501 | info@formandconcept.center | 505.780.8312

Director Jordan Eddy continues, “This exhibition possesses an essential fluidity of language, a fluidity of meaning,” says Director Jordan Eddy. “There is structure to these works, but nothing on view is truly fixed, which is a source of strength.”

Jami Porter Lara is a conceptual artist interested in the ways humans use ideas about what is natural to naturalize human political constructs. Through a broad range of formal approaches such as sculpture, printmaking and drawing as well as sewing and embroidery, Porter Lara explores how fictions of identity create lived reality. Her work is in public and private collections across the US and Mexico, and has been featured in Art 21 Magazine, American Craft, Hyperallergic, and on PBS. In 2017, Artsy named her one of the artists shaping the future of ceramics. Exhibitions include the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, DC, the New Mexico Museum of Art in Santa Fe, NM; and Craft Contemporary in Los Angeles, CA. Fellowships include MacDowell, Yaddo and the Tamarind Institute. She is represented by Gerald Peters in Santa Fe and Simon Breitbard in San Francisco.

Erin Mickelson’s work includes printmaking, bookbinding, new and mixed media, artist books, and micro-press publishing. Mickelson’s imprint is Broken Cloud Press. She earned her BFA with a concentration in book arts at Oregon College of Art & Craft, and holds a degree in graphic design as well. Erin includes both traditional techniques as well as digital and experimental processes in her work, which is held in various private and public collections including the libraries of Seattle Art Museum, Yale University, Reed College, Baylor University, and Minneapolis College of Art & Design. Mickelson’s premiere solo show at form & concept, titled *PAST PERFECT FUTURE*, opened in the fall of 2021.

Kate Ruck, born 1982 in Detroit, draws from mass culture and collective object memory to render virtual avatars and their tools with materials from the natural world. She has exhibited works at The Bruce High Quality Foundation and Amy Li Projects, and is a former artist-in-residence at Rule Gallery. Ruck received her BFA in Video Game Design from The Illinois Institute of Art, and has since managed the studios of Charles Ross and Camille Henrot. Ruck currently lives and works between New York, NY and Las Vegas, NM.

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For press or image inquiries, please contact Marissa Fassano at marissa@formandconcept.center.