

Dana Lok

## ***Words Without Skin***

13.09.2019 – 02.11.2019

OPENING RECEPTION  
September 13th, 2019  
From 7 to 9 pm

We speak of meaning as if it sits inside statements and images, carried in signs like contents in a box. The notion that meaning is “filling” runs so deep that you don’t even notice the metaphor when you use the word “content” to denote information. You might see meaning as something like butter—a uniform substance with no skin. It’s satisfying and rich, but it needs something to bind to before it’s consumed.

Metaphor is a conceptual device that helps you understand one idea by describing it in terms of another. You might say one idea swallows the other. Often, a metaphor takes something immaterial and grounds it in terms of something concrete and physical. This body of work offers up metaphors of this kind, e.g., “statements are organs”. But beyond that, this body of work aims to picture the very mechanics of metaphor: to show and examine what it looks like when abstract concepts become anchored in material forms at a human scale.

At their modest size, these paintings evoke spaces available to the hands and mouth: a table top, a desk, a bathroom mirror, a plate. These familiar spaces pull abstract notions within arm’s reach. Ideas and words wait to be touched, prodded, diced, digested, or wiped away. Within this framework, each letter of a sentence might sit like a piece of candy on the tongue. Thoughts might ooze out of the body like symptoms of an oncoming cold.

Like the words of a sentence, each painting in this show is roughly the same size and its interpretation depends on the pieces that surround it. Words, however, seem to want to usher their reader past the particulars of their form, straight to their meaning. A painting embeds meaning in layers of oily skin. Unlike words, paintings stall and coax a viewer to revel in their physicality: the gloss of a finish, the energy of a gesture, the touch of a precise mark. In its celebration of physical particularity, the practice of painting itself makes vivid how a sign can bind meaning to the concrete realm of material and touch.

Dana Lok

**Dana Lok** (b. in Pennsylvania, USA) lives and works in New York. She received her MFA from Columbia University, New York in 2015 and her BFA from Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh in 2011.

**Recent solo exhibitions:** Mind’s Mouth, Bianca D’Alessandro Gallery, Copenhagen; Soft Fact, Clima, Milan; The Set of All Sets, Chewday’s, London.

**Recent group exhibitions:** You haven’t started wondering about yet, curated by Lauren Marinaro, Halsey McKay Gallery, East Hampton, NY; The Changes Wrought, American Medium, New York; Listening at the See-through Door, DELI Gallery, New York; Dana Lok, Laura Provoust, Mia Goyette, Bianca D’Alessandro Gallery, Copenhagen; A night out of town, Clima, Milan; In Place Of, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York; The Crack Up, Room East Gallery, New York; Floating Point, Judith Charles Gallery, New York and The Columbia MFA Thesis Exhibition, Fisher Landau Center for Art, New York.

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