

CODES OF SILENCE

February 12 - May 7, 2022

/ 1150 25th St, Building B San Francisco, CA 94107
Open Thursday - Saturday, 11am-6pm

Libby Black / Bryan Castro / Enar de Dios Rodríguez / Languid Hands
(Rabz Lansiquot & Imani Mason Jordan) / Cinque Mubarak / WORK/PLAY

Curated by Leila Weefur



Silence. A sound, which, more than any other sound, can transform in shape, bypass architectures, and crumble barriers. Silence has the power to be the loudest thing to fill a space, yet can create a deafening quiet, leaving still the earth and the bodies that inhabit it. Silence is a space with the capacity to hold all of humanity's told and untold histories, compressing time within a boundless form. Silence is black – like the color, like the cast of an opaque shadow, like a black hole, like the still of night.

Audre Lorde's legendary quote, "Your silence will not protect you," is a reverberant call to action, empowering language, bringing the voiceless out of a dark history of being silenced. For a moment, though, let's remove silence from this perceived political dormancy and awaken its possibilities. What if,

in silence, we could discover an empowering eloquence? A depth that is not weaponized to make the disempowered voiceless but used to bind together common struggles in a cacophony of energy. Just like silence must be recognized in its complexity, the resonance of an identity is meant to be heard and felt, not just seen. Let us remember the infinite possibilities of silence. Silence in the wrong context can be harmful, yes. However, in silence, there is a potential power and promise that can be heard.

"There is the dumb silence of slumber or apathy; the sober silence that goes with a solemn animal face; the fertile silence of awareness, pasturing the soul, whence emerge new thoughts; the alive silence of alert perception, ready to say, 'This... this...'; the musical silence that accompanies absorbed activity; the silence of listening to another speak, catching the drift and helping him be clear; the noisy silence of resentment and self-recrimination, loud and subvocal speech but sullen to say it; baffled silence; the silence of peaceful accord with other persons or communion with the cosmos."

— Paul Goodman, *Nine Kinds of Silence*

Codes of Silence addresses the incalculable ways we experience silence and how silence has been encoded in being. This is an attempt to reckon with the tension of discerning who should be heard and when; an attempt to shape how our conceptual world guides and limits our ability to listen. This exhibition challenges the hierarchies of perception, not only through an examination of political visibility but through the sensorial experience of sound— and its absence. *Codes of Silence* is designed to guide us through individualized and collective experiences, with a range of textual and visual explorations calling upon us to read between the lines. This selection of work emphasizes the subtleties of silence, bringing together interpretations that have been understood by the body. Silence is an unspoken code present in mechanisms of control and systems of oppression. Silence is a condition, a disruption, and a voice.

— Leila Weefur

Libby Black is a painter, drawer and sculptural installation artist living in Berkeley, CA. She has exhibited nationally and internationally. Black has been an artist-in-residence at Headlands Center for the Arts; Montalvo ArtsCenter; and Spaces in Cleveland, OH. Her work has been reviewed in Artforum, Art in America, ARTnews, Flash Art, and The New York Times. She received a BFA from Cleveland Institute of Art in 1999 and an MFA at the California College of the Arts in 2001.

Bryan Castro's (b.1994, Passaic, NJ) work blends writing and printmaking; drawing and painting; painting and installation; and performance, demonstration, and lecture, to create meaning out of difference. In 2017 he received a BFA in Visual Arts from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University-New Brunswick in New Jersey, and in 2020 he received an MFA in Fine Arts from the Painting and Printmaking Department at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia.

Enar de Dios Rodríguez (Spain, 1986) is a visual artist whose interdisciplinary and research-based projects reflect upon the production of space and its socio-political and environmental consequences. In her artistic practice, the selective process of existing visual and textual material serves as a starting point for an exploration of the poetic and its political applicability. Her work has been exhibited internationally in disparate places. She is a member of The Golden Pixel Cooperative.

Languid Hands is a London-based artistic and curatorial collaboration between DJ, filmmaker and curator Rabz Lansiquot and interdisciplinary writer and artist Imani Mason Jordan (fka Imani Robinson). Their practice explores collaboration, curation, Black study and experimentation across exhibitions, moving image, text, performance, publications and public programming, alongside peer-led artists development and residencies. In 2021, Languid Hands curated the Frieze LIVE programme and they are currently curatorial fellows at London's Cubitt Artists, delivering their programme *No Real Closure*.

Cinque Mubarak is a photographer out of Oakland, CA. He creates work that uplifts and empowers his community by capturing his people in a real and genuine light, as they are. He also ventures into the surreal in an attempt to communicate the intangible. His recent projects include *Blu Series*, which explores the fine line between spirituality and mental illness, and *Ineffable Mythology*, Downtown Oakland's first photo mural, which stands 40ft tall and addresses incomprehensible traumas in Black America.

WORK/PLAY is an interdisciplinary design/art studio started by Danielle and Kevin McCoy. Their practice spans across several disciplines such as design, printmaking, textile works, and the book arts to explore notions of identity, racial inequality, erasure, and redacted histories. WORK/PLAY has exhibited at institutions including the Luminary, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Volkschhochschule Stuttgart Photo Gallery, MCA Denver, and the Wassaic Project. They have also collaborated with organizations including the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, and the Aperture Foundation.

Leila Weefur (He/They/She) is an artist, writer, and curator. Through video and installation, their interdisciplinary practice examines the performativity intrinsic to systems of belonging. The work brings together concepts of sensorial memory, abject Blackness, hyper surveillance, and the erotic. Weefur has worked with local and national institutions including Locust Projects, The Wattis Institute, McEvoy Foundation, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, SFMOMA, Museum of the African Diaspora, and Smack Mellon. Weefur is a lecturer at Stanford University.

Image: WORK/PLAY, *Codes of Silence*, 2022, Newsprint