

Exhibition: Dana Lok
As Syllable from Sound

Location: 88 Eldridge Street, New York, NY 10002

Dates: November 14 – December 21, 2024

Reception: Thursday, November 14, 6 – 8PM

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce the opening, on Thursday, November 14th, of Dana Lok's second one-person exhibition at the gallery, *As Syllable from Sound*. The show will be held at our 88 Eldridge Street location.

Dana Lok's newest paintings are playfully analytic. They quite literally say *Ah*, engulfing us in imagined mouths that study the architecture of human sound and vibrate with diagrammatic tiers of fleshy color. The paintings set a stage for the tongue—shown in numerous cross sections and cutaways—or the tongue is staging painting, giving a performance that coaxes us toward attaching words to image. The flexible tissue of the mouth, the scaffold of the skull, and our labyrinth of neural circuitry reverberate with a currency that transmutes private thought into public statement. Can a painting follow such a weaving train of thought or braided chain of reason? Surfaces give way to substructures, outer appearances fold in on themselves, roll up, and are suddenly peeled away. Then internal space blooms and becomes vibrant; ambience hums in an oral amphitheater of tone. As much as they produce an anatomy, these paintings inhabit orifices, cavities, and vanishing passageways. While physical constraint seems to so clearly shape signal as it travels from mind to muscle to material as sound, the emergence of meaning relies just as much on what cannot be wholly made visible, its source a remainder in obscurity.

An 1863 Emily Dickinson poem lends its final line to the show's title:

The Brain is just the weight of God –
For – Heft them – Pound for Pound –
And they will differ – if they do –
As Syllable from Sound –

One definition of knowledge could be a picture of the world neatly mapped by relating scales of measurement, leading from the smallest atomic unit to immensely constructed surfaces. But such a nesting-doll picture of the world loses focus when that which suggests likeness reveals its incongruence. As in Dickinson's conjoining of mortal mind and divine maker, for she cannot think her world without one invoking the other. They hold nearly equal weight while repelling all equivalence. In Lok's paintings, brain, the body, and speech in their uneasy equation miraculously compose meaning as language. Neural networks, acoustic musculature, and sound shapes act as one to embed us, or enchant us, in shared sociality. And the eye strives to image how sound makes of an idea in mind meaning materialized, *as syllable from sound*.

Across the exhibition, a subtle transposition takes place at the level of sensory orientation. Whereas her previous work emphasized painting's play of visuality in relation to the mind's capacity to append representations to

thought, Lok's latest paintings foreground sound—the most remote sense to painting—as a medium enwrapping bodies in meaning. *As Syllable from Sound* brings visuality's teasing of the seam between image and idea to bear on the wrestled symmetry of tongue and tongues, examining the physiological ground from which utterance leaps toward rendering the world intelligible. Both synthetic and synesthetic, these paintings delve into a surreal interface where mind and mouth touch, straddling the mental and the manifest through the insight that every sensation, idea, and emotion depends infinitely upon shifting scales of composition.

Dana Lok (b. 1988, Berwyn, PA) received an MFA from Columbia University in 2015 and attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2016. Solo exhibitions of her work include Closer to the Metal, Clima, Milan (2023); Part and Parse, Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (2022); One Second Per Second, PAGE, New York (2020); Words Without Skin, Clima, Milan (2019); Mind's Mouth, Bianca D'Allessandro, Copenhagen (2018); Soft Fact, Clima, Milan (2017); and The Set of All Sets, Chewday's, London (2016). Selected group exhibitions include Eye of the Blackbird, Bo Bartlett Center at Columbus State University, Columbus, GA (forthcoming in 2025); Double Lift, organized by Janine Iversen, David Petersen Gallery, Minneapolis (2024); Emotional Intelligence II, polina berlin gallery, New York (2024); darling, your head's not right, François Ghebaly, New York (2023); Anything can pass before the eyes of a person, Derosia, New York (2023); X PINK 101, X Museum, Beijing (2023); The future perfect will have arrived, Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles (2023); Le Biscuit à Soupe, High Art, Arles, France (2022); Gravity, a proposal, Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York (2022); Jahresgaben, Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany (2021); Regroup Show, Miguel Abreu Gallery (2021); Fifteen Painters, Andrew Kreps Gallery (2021); PAGE (NYC), Petzel Gallery (2021); and In Place Of, curated by Leah Pires, Miguel Abreu Gallery (2016), all in New York.

For more information or for visuals, please contact the gallery.

Miguel Abreu Gallery

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Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10:00AM to 6:00PM or by appointment

Subway: F to East Broadway; B, D to Grand Street; J, M, Z to Delancey / Essex Street

Bus: M15, M15 SBS (Express) to Allen / Grand Street