

# Fluid Karma

**Petra Cortright, Cecilia Granara, Hart Lëshkina, Estrid Lutz, R. Lord, Gabriel Mestre Arriola, Bryan Morello, Andrew Norman Wilson, Victor Nwankwo, Amy Steel**

**Curated by Ché Zara Blomfield**

**Private View: Wednesday, February 28, 3-6 PM**

**February 28 - March 10, 2024**

Set in 2024, when society in the United States has grown unstable due to climate change, growing wealth inequality, and corporate greed, Fluid Karma takes the form of an exhibition staged in a modernist gem in the Hollywood Hills, simulating Richard Kelly's 2006 film *Southland Tales*.

The film sets an uncanny picture of now: a dystopian California where the role of media shapes our perceptions, celebrity culture infiltrates the U.S. political system, wars are waged, resources are dwindling, exploitation is rife, Earth itself is destabilised, and escapism is normalised.

In the film, Fluid Karma is both a perpetual energy generator and a drug. Both are created by the German company Treer utilising a compound that encircles the planet like a serpent beneath the Earth's mantle – discovered off the coast of Israel. The drug – initially trialled on the U.S. military in Iraq – causes psychic ability and telepathy.

The exhibition revels in the coexistence of idealism and dystopianism, utilising modern Hollywood architecture as a scene to place artworks as protagonists to stimulate discourse on the supposed fork in the accelerating conical helix of time.

**Sapling** is a curatorial studio and art advisory based in Los Angeles and London. Sapling began as a series of experimental exhibitions in Mayfair, London in 2021 where it built a community through exhibitions with emerging artists and canonical figures such as Albrecht Dürer, along with special projects including *Spread your Seed* with Gilbert & George, which distributed limited edition wildflower seeds. The founder Charlotte Call relocated to Hollywood in 2023 where the HQ is now based in the landmark home designed by Richard Neutra, open by appointment.

**Petra Cortright** (USA, 1986) is a contemporary artist whose multifaceted artistic practice stems from creating and manipulating digital files. She first gained attention for webcam self-portrait videos altered by animated gifs that she would post to her YouTube account and caption with spam text. This famously resulted in her work VVEBCAM (2007) – which is now in the collection of MOMA – being removed from YouTube in 2010. Cortright’s digital paintings have earned her the title “Monet of the 21st Century” - she laboriously crafts digital paintings by creating layer upon layer of manipulated images in Photoshop constructing impactful gestural landscapes that have informed the legacy of Post Internet painting.

Solo exhibitions include Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara; Soci  t  , Berlin; Doota Plaza, Seoul; LIMA, Amsterdam; 1301PE, Los Angeles; Foxy Production, NY; UTA Artist Space, Los Angeles; and the University of Edinburgh. Group exhibitions include Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; MoCA, Los Angeles; KM –Halle f  r Kunst & Medien, Graz; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Kunsthaus Langenthal, Langenthal; New Museum, New York; and the 12th Biennale de Lyon.

**Cecilia Granara** (Saudi Arabia, 1991) is interested in cultural attitudes to bodies, spirituality and nature, and the use of colour as a vehicle for emotions. Through drawing, painting and installation she refashions self-fiction, poetry and symbolic iconography. Many of Granara’s paintings aim to express the sensations of love, leading to her pairing with the Italian artist Carol Rama (1918–2015) who is known for depicting female sensuality.

Exhibitions include institutional shows at Triennale, Milan, Fondation Ricard, Ch  teau La Coste, CAC Passerelle, Centre d’Art Parc Saint L  ger, Mus  e C  r  s Franco, in France, ps120 Berlin as well as Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Jousse Entreprise, High Art, Brigade, Copenhagen. Gallery shows include Cassina Projects, Milan; Exo Exo Gallery, Paris; Sapling Gallery, London; MFA Hunter College Galleries, New York; MAXXI, Milan; and Hua International, Berlin. She was a finalist in the Antoine Marin Prize in 2019 and was nominated for the Cairo Prize in 2021. Granara studied at Central St. Martin’s School of Art and Design in London and at the   cole Nationale Sup  rieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris and Hunter College, New York.

**Hart L  shkina** (est 2014) are a Los Angeles-based interdisciplinary artist duo whose work explores themes surrounding media lives, the construction of identity, power dynamics, and avatars. Their practice traverses the contexts of art, culture, fashion and advertising.

Hart L  shkina’s work has been commissioned by such publications as The New York Times, New Yorker, The Face, Dazed, A Magazine Curated By and many others. Exhibitions include The Community Gallery, Paris; Benaki Museum, Athens; K-Gold Gallery, Lesbos; Art4 Gallery, Moscow and Preteen Gallery, Mexico.

**Estrid Lutz** (France, 1989) works with resistant and lightweight materials including aluminium honeycomb, carbon fibre, and epoxy resin to create sculptures and wallworks. Conflating the high-tech with images of the natural environment, such as space, coral, and seaweed, Lutz's work speaks of our Anthropocentric epoch, investigating the interactions between the human-technological and the forces of nature.

Solo exhibitions include La Citadelle Museum, Villefranche-sur-Mer, FR (2024); CFAlive, Milan; Everyday Gallery, Antwerp; Moco, Montpellier (Curated by Nicolas Bourriaud); Kunstverein Arnsberg; and The Composing Rooms, Berlin. Group exhibitions include Museo Anahuacalli, Mexico City; Paradise Row, London; and MAMO, Cité Radieuse Le Corbusier, Marseille. Lutz graduated with a BA with honors from the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris and MA from Art Center College of Design, LA.

**R. Lord** (USA, 1986) is an artist, free-surfer, and surfboard builder by trade. Her paintings explore conceptual abstraction, figurative history, and contemporary myth-making. She is interested in the intersection of performance and art, be it through her surfing, shaping, or painting.

Exhibitions include The Composing Rooms, Berlin; Dem Passwords, Los Angeles; Rainbow in Spanish, Los Angeles; American Medium, New York; The Hole, New York and New Museum Triennial, New Museum, New York. Lord has a BFA in Painting from Rhode Island School of Design. R. Lord has collaborated extensively with Ryan Trecartin and has Trecartin has been included in two programmes curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist.

**Gabriel Mestre Arrijoja** (México, 1974) is a self-taught artist and independent curator who has focused his projects on the critical exploration of the relationships between locality and globality. Mestre collaborates with composers and choreographers to incorporate dance and music to activate his installations, investigating the temporality of his geo-anthro-techno-pological objects.

Since 2002, Mestre has presented his work in museums and institutions in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Finland, the Baltic States, Russia, Poland, Germany, the UK, Canada and Japan. Recent exhibitions include Espacio México, Montreal; Museo Morelense de Arte Contemporáneo Juan Soriano, Cuernavaca, México.; and at Cabaret Voltaire, Zurich. Mestre has been a guest lecturer at the Reykjavik Art Museum, Iceland and a guest lecturer at the Tromsø Art Academy, Norway.

**Bryan Morello** (USA, 1988) Bryan Morello (USA, 1988) is a multidisciplinary artist who experiments with performance and various modes of documentation and display to explore relationships between bodies, systems, and the framing of time. Emergent from an ongoing

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series, his works on paper catalogue their own encounters with his ever-changing inventory of mark-making behaviours in which impulsive movements and motions meet their materials to trace questions of time, memory, and language.

Solo exhibitions include Gern en Regalia, New York, Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin; Bad Reputation, Los Angeles; Mission Comics, San Francisco; Rodi Gallery, New York; and Important Projects, Oakland. Group exhibitions include at Mortadelle, Arles; Kodomo, New York; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Museum, San Francisco; Interstate Projects, Brooklyn and Yoga Center, Goteborg. Morello has a BFA from California College of the Arts and is currently completing an MFA in the Art and Technology program at CalArts, Valencia.

**Andrew Norman Wilson (USA, 1983)** works between the art world, the film industry, and advertising. Festival screenings include Sundance, the New York Film Festival, and Rotterdam. His work is in collections such as the Museum of Modern Art New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, The Getty Museum, and The Centre Pompidou.

Exhibitions include LUMA Arles, MoMA PS1, and the Gwangju and Berlin Biennials. He has taught at UCLA, SAIC, and Cooper Union, and lectured at Oxford University, Cambridge University, Harvard University, and Yale University. His work has been featured in Artforum, ArtReview, BOMB, Frieze, The New Yorker, and Wired, and he has published writing in Artforum, The Baffler, and the Paris Review.

**Victor Nwankwo MD (USA, 1984)** is an artist, doctor and data scientist focused on voice and dialogue through the revisiting of anachronistic media and technology. Nwankwo works across moving image, sculpture, and code, to create immersive experiences that employ sampling, remixing and reappropriating to better speak to the deep mind.

Exhibitions and projects include Shoreditch Arts Club, London; 'Spirit House', New York; 207 Front Street, New York; and Harold Arts, Chicago. Nwankwo has collaborated on code and artwork with the Twilite Tone & Gorillaz, Nicholas Jaar, Chuck English, and Naum House. He is working on upcoming projects with Flosstradamus and LD Deutsch.

**Amy Steel (UK, 1981)** explores feminist subjectivity and asks how it could affect established structures of power and patriarchal influence. Her paintings are mostly populated by women engaged in a private, sexual world where visceral pleasures are enacted.

Exhibitions include Tabula Rasa Gallery, Beijing; Bim Bam Gallery, Paris; Graduate Gallery, London; John Moores Painting Prize, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; and Haze Projects, London. Steel completed her MFA with distinction from the Slade School of Fine Art and her BA in Fine Art from Goldsmiths University London. Steel was awarded the ACME Post Graduate Studio Award.

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## Enquiries

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## Visit

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## Links

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