

# GREENE NAFTALI

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aria Dean

## *Show Your Work Little Temple*

May 7 – June 12, 2021

8th Floor

*And I went to the temple/Which portrayed nothing.*

Aria Dean's work across media is defined by what she calls "a fixation on the subject and its borders," and *Show Your Work Little Temple* extends that relentless questioning into new formal territory. Her first solo exhibition at Greene Naftali debuts two bodies of work that filter traditional art forms through digital means, using laser-cutting and 3D printing to produce hybrid objects that condense an array of sources.

A series of wall-mounted engravings feature Dean's doodles alongside digital images skewed with editing software, mechanically incised into whitish sheets of crepe rubber, a material found in sneaker soles or high-end erasers. A cartoon mushroom cloud grins from the corner of one panel, a victim of Georges Bataille's abattoir appears in another. The mix of high and low, hand-drawn and purloined motifs reflects Dean's interest in piracy and meme culture—the networks through which images circulate, accruing meaning as they shed it.

At the gallery's center, a pair of gleaming black silicone sculptures rest on columnar plinths, melding shapes both obvious and obscure beneath uniform surfaces, almost fetishistic in their sheen. Dean describes the sculptures as "impossible objects"—forms that could only be made by suturing the computer-generated, the hand-wrought and the found. 3D printing enables these strange composites that evade stylistic definition: brand names and body parts materialize and then quickly recede back into the nebulous whole. Each sculpture's design is anchored in a cubic form reminiscent of Robert Morris's *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making* (1961), a totemic object for Dean. She positions her work in desiring relation to avant-garde movements of decades past, channeling certain tenets of Minimal art while avoiding its austerity. As she writes in the exhibition's accompanying pamphlet, "insofar as minimalism evades the representational sphere almost entirely—pure play of forms and volumes and densities—it's like having an amusement park all to myself, with the lights out."

Dean has also constructed a freestanding wall to disrupt the flow of the architecture, gouged with the elongated face of a Gorgon, a Classical figure of transformation and vision's destructive power. Such obstacles—to the viewer's passage through space, to apprehension—are vital to Dean's aesthetic, which runs counter to the demand for easy legibility so often placed on the work of Black artists. Instead, *Show Your Work Little Temple* operates on the slipperier terrain of intuition and active inquiry. The exhibition finds her in the midst of "some sort of dialectic between me and materials and forms. Do the edges melt, sink, in and through my hands? I'm corrosive, as we know. Nothing I hold can remain constituted as simply itself for very long."

\*\*\*

Aria Dean (b. 1993) lives and works in New York. Her upcoming solo exhibition at REDCAT, Los Angeles (opening June 2021) will travel to the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Geneva in 2022. Recent solo and group exhibitions and performances include the Hammer Museum's biennial *Made in L.A. 2020: a version* (2021); Greene Naftali, New York (2020); Artists Space, New York (2020); MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2020); Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York (2019); Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia (2019); Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia (2019); Centre d'Art Contemporaine Genève, Geneva (2019); Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (2018); Swiss Institute, New York (2018); and the de Young Museum, San Francisco (2017). Her writing has appeared in *Artforum*, *Art in America*, *e-flux*, *Spike Quarterly*, and *Texte zur Kunst*, among others. Dean's work is in the collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York.

## GREENE NAFTALI

Aria Dean  
Show Your Work Little Temple  
May 7 – June 12, 2021  
8th Floor



**Aria Dean**

*Work (new eye rag), 2021*

3D print in polylactic acid, pigmented silicone  
Overall: 69 3/4 x 35 3/4 x 35 3/4 inches (177.2 x 90.8 x 90.8 cm)



**Aria Dean**

*Work (tout son col secouera cette blanche agonie), 2021*

3D print in polylactic acid, pigmented silicone  
Overall: 66 1/4 x 35 3/4 x 35 3/4 inches (168.3 x 90.8 x 90.8 cm)



**Aria Dean**

*Eraser (bum bum bum thwap), 2021*

Cryogenically engraved crepe rubber,  
aluminum  
16 1/4 x 13 1/4 x 7/8 inches (41.3 x 33.7 x 2.2 cm)



**Aria Dean**

*Eraser (plastic phenomena), 2021*

Cryogenically engraved crepe rubber,  
aluminum  
Each: 36 1/4 x 13 1/4 x 7/8 inches (92.1 x 33.7 x 2.2 cm)  
Overall: 36 1/4 x 41 3/4 x 7/8 inches (92.1 x 106 x 2.2 cm)



**Aria Dean**

*Eraser (specifics), 2021*

Cryogenically engraved crepe rubber,  
aluminum

16 1/4 x 13 1/4 x 7/8 inches (41.3 x 33.7 x 2.2  
cm)

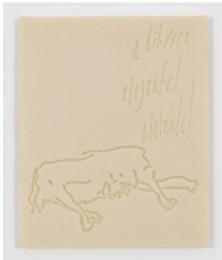


**Aria Dean**

*Eraser (a rude and awful form of eloquence),  
2021*

Cryogenically engraved crepe rubber,  
aluminum

16 1/4 x 13 1/4 x 7/8 inches (41.3 x 33.7 x 2.2  
cm)



**Aria Dean**

*Eraser (that's the abattoir!), 2021*

Cryogenically engraved crepe rubber,  
aluminum

16 1/4 x 13 1/4 x 7/8 inches (41.3 x 33.7 x 2.2  
cm)



**Aria Dean**

*Eraser (bad form), 2021*

Cryogenically engraved crepe rubber,  
aluminum

16 1/4 x 13 1/4 x 7/8 inches (41.3 x 33.7 x 2.2  
cm)



**Aria Dean**

*Eraser (nonsense poems for the rationalist),  
2021*

Cryogenically engraved crepe rubber,  
aluminum

Each: 36 1/4 x 13 1/4 x 7/8 inches (92.1 x 33.7  
x 2.2 cm)

Overall: 36 1/4 x 41 3/4 x 7/8 inches (92.1 x  
106 x 2.2 cm)



**Aria Dean**

*Figure Head, 2021*

Drywall, aluminum studs, wood, acrylic paint

Dimensions variable