

ALEAH CHAPIN

BODY / BEING

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Opening Reception Thursday May 12, 6 - 8pm

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"I paint the body, but what I have always tried to do is capture that essence of an individual that is not definable nor describable. It's like creating a bowl out of clay that can hold water. I can't create the water, but I can create the space for that water to exist." - Aleah Chapin

Flowers Gallery is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Aleah Chapin, exploring representations of identity through the physical manifestations of gender and the aging of the body.

Following on from her internationally renowned series 'Aunties', which presented a frank and revealing depiction of the bodies of women she had known throughout her life, Chapin's new series of monumentally-scaled nudes navigates the boundaries of gender specificity, exploring both the male and female experience of the body.

This line of inquiry first began when Chapin witnessed the transition of her cousin Qwill, who recently came out as gender neutral. The painting that she produced of Qwill shortly after breast-removal surgery, led to a new painterly investigation of the union of identity and physical form, also exploring the potential area of division between the two. Balancing a sense of absence from the delicate surgical scars with the determination and self-awareness implied by Qwill's upright posture, the painting appears to be charting an inner as well as physical journey.

Paula, the title of a painting of a young male nude, proposes further complexities inherent in the outward projection of gendered identity. The subject of the painting (born Paul Angelo) has described the chosen name 'Paula' as reflecting a total unity and balance between both a feminine and masculine sensibility. Captured within the painting, the relaxed pose of the nude figure, with gently closed eyes and unclenched fists, signals a sense of internal poise.

Painting her subjects throughout the cycle of life, from birth to old age, Chapin traces the passage between youthful strength, and the gradual gravitational shifts and slippages evident within the body over time. Presented against a white background, with skin tones diffused by a pale light, the nude subjects appear to radiate a quiet energy. Through this, Chapin articulates ideas of the body as both a channel through which we experience and connect with the world, and as a vessel, containing something less knowable and certain.

Of Chapin's work, Eric Fischl has said: *"Aleah Chapin is the best and most disturbing painter of flesh alive today. The precision of her details, her insistence that no blemish, wrinkle, mole or lump be glossed over or hidden, she fearlessly observes aging and the reality of our physicality without any sense of regret or disappointment. In these times where plastic surgery, breast enhancement, anti-aging creams, and Spanx are the preferred solutions to dealing with the complex feelings and fears that come with diminishing power and the inevitability of death, Chapin's paintings have to be seen as heroic and radical."*



Qwill, 2015,
Oil on canvas, 84 x 50 in

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in 1986, Aleah Chapin grew up on an island north of Seattle, WA. She received her BFA from Cornish College of the Arts in 2009 and her MFA from the New York Academy of Art in 2012. Chapin attended a residency at the Leipzig International Art Programme in Germany and has exhibited her work in the US, the Netherlands, Germany and the UK. Recent exhibitions have included the *2016 Invitational Exhibition of Visual Arts*, American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York; *The Ingram Collection: Bodies*, Woking, UK. Aleah has recently won the Willard L. Metcalf Award in Art from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She has been a recipient of the Posey Foundation Scholarship, Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant and a Postgraduate Fellowship from the New York Academy of Art; and won the BP Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery in London in 2012. She lives and works in Seattle.



Paula, 2015,
Oil on canvas, 84 x 50 in



Cece, 2015
Oil on canvas, 84 x 50 in



Sera, 2015
Oil on canvas, 84 x 50 in

NOTES TO EDITORS

For more information and images, please contact Brent Beamon: Brent@flowersgallery.com
Opening Hours: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 6pm

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