

## ALEAH CHAPIN WHAT HAPPENS AT THE EDGE

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**Opening Reception Thursday September 12, 6-8PM**

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Flowers Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Aleah Chapin, focusing on the unified depiction of the human body and the natural environment. In her latest work, Chapin describes a world concerned with 'in-betweenness and edges' - from the juxtaposition of soft human flesh against the hard contours of cliffs and rockfaces, to the symbolic representation of emotional edges and extremes.

The people and place of Chapin's home in the US Pacific Northwest are the foundation of her work, involving naked portraits of aunts, cousins, her mother and friends. Described by Painter Eric Fischl as "*the best and most disturbing painter of flesh alive today*," Chapin's bold and intimate portrayal of nude figures has broadened the debate around the visibility of aging or so-called imperfect bodies in images of everyday life.



*And it Caught Fire, 2019, Oil on Canvas*

Chapin describes her recurring cast of elderly women as having an energy and directness that demonstrates joyful resistance, reflecting her own desire to "*take up space, speak up and be loud*." They perform mysterious, playful dances (such as *Our Voices are Still Singing on the Margins*) and appear to howl, sing or roar. Monumentally scaled nudes such as *And it Caught Fire* appear powerful and confrontational, while intertwined groups of women supporting each other's bodies recall the solidarity of the 'Me Too' movement.

Since moving from New York to the Northwest, Chapin's realistic depiction of the landscape has become a highly significant attribute of her painting. Her scenes of pristine wilderness reflect the strong influence of nature and the seasons during her island upbringing, and a wider, growing concern for the environment and the future stability of natural resources. In recent paintings of dramatic mountain ranges and lush rainforests Chapin's palette is saturated by the indigo blue of half-light, bathing her figures with an opalescent moonlit glow. Two large-scale landscapes titled *Where the Edges Meet (Under/Over)* are entirely devoid of figures, allowing space for the viewer to occupy the scene.

In the self-portrait *Turning*, Chapin confronts fragility and change using her own image framed by fallen leaves. Shifting her gaze to herself, Chapin addresses the experience of transitioning from youth to womanhood and coming to terms with the onset of physical change. Further ideas of passage are explored in the painting of a close friend *Max*, who identifies as transgender (using the pronouns they/them). Chapin has explored the edges and boundaries of gender specificity and gendered expression in several previous paintings of close family and friends such as *Qwill* and *Emmett* (both 2016), countering the often-politicized view of transitioning bodies with striking empathy.

For further information and images please contact Brent Beamon, [brent@flowersgallery.com](mailto:brent@flowersgallery.com) or +1 212 439 1700.



Captions (Clockwise from left): *Splitting the Silence*, 2018, oil on canvas; *Our Voices are Still Singing on the Margins*, 2019, oil on canvas; *Max*, 2018, oil on linen; *We Held the Mountains on Our Shoulders*, 2017, oil on canvas.

## ABOUT ALEAH CHAPIN

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 *Aging Pride*, Belvedere Museum, Vienna, Austria; and *The Ingram Collection: Bodies*, Woking, UK. She has been a recipient of the Willard L. Metcalf Award in Art from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Posey Foundation Scholarship, Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant and a Postgraduate Fellowship from the New York Academy of Art; Chapin won the BP Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery in London in 2012. She lives and works in Seattle.

This exhibition is kindly supported by a grant from the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation.

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Exhibition opening hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10am - 6pm.