

:: GRANT WAHLQUIST GALLERY

Jennifer Locke: Spells

10/29/21 – 12/18/21

Grant Wahlquist Gallery is pleased to present “Spells,” a solo exhibition by Jennifer Locke. The exhibition will run from October 29 – December 18, 2021. **The gallery will host an opening reception on Friday, October 29 from 5 – 7 pm. Please note that the gallery will be closed November 24 – 27.**

Working in performance, video, installation, and photography, Locke creates physically intense sculptural actions that activate the relationships between camera, audience, and architecture. Her powerful meditations on intersubjectivity, spectatorship, and the construction of meaning are well known on the West Coast and have been exhibited widely nationally and internationally. “Spells,” her second solo exhibition on the East Coast and at the gallery, features new and recent single- and multi-channel video installations, all of them “technologically-manipulated vertically-oriented actions” intended to invoke specific states. For example, *Spells I (Power Cord, Candle, Ball, Mirror, Hand of Glory, Salt)*, is a six-channel installation intended to: “trap electricity,” “loop time,” “levitate,” “reverse looking,” “temporarily immobilize the viewer,” and “dematerialize/rematerialize.” Each channel features a single action, a few seconds to no more than a minute in length, that is in fact the product of repeated or lengthy effort in the studio. Objects levitate in the air, their up-and-down oscillations clearly a product of being tossed or thrown by the artist and subsequently edited; likewise, Locke holds a black candle while it burns down to the base, a feat of prolonged stillness reduced to a manner of seconds by the camera and post-production. These actions loop, repeat, and reverse, alternately compressing and dilating time as their visual and auditory rhythms produce hypnotic effects.

Locke has drawn on cultural and subcultural practices throughout her career, from wrestling to figure modeling to BDSM. In *Spells II: Séance for R.J. (Candle, Rubber, Levitation, Blood)*, presented here as a single-channel projection, she makes use of materials from witchcraft (another candle melts), safer-sex (a hand rolls a condom over a silicone phallus), athletics (the artist in white sweats at the apex of a leap into the air), and medicine/addiction (a syringe draws and reinjects blood). These actions are, to be sure, ripe with meaning if not fraught with a surplus thereof, and intended “to communicate with a deceased friend,” activist and proprietor of San Francisco’s legendary Kiki Gallery Rick Jacobsen. In *Spells III (Tree, Candle, Levitation, Moonstone)*, also presented in its single-channel form, Locke adds to the candle melting and leaping actions her holding of an extended pose in front of an ancient cypress tree as well as a moonstone ascending from her hand. However, as in all of her work, Locke abstracts these actions and tropes from their original contexts and uses in order to generate forms that function open-endedly, as nearly-but-not-quite empty signifiers. As with occult practices, the simplest of actions become something more through ritual and belief—or, as here, suspension of disbelief. Locke develops these actions to function as components of each work like a writer develops the rhyming structure or syntax of a poem, but with the aim of exceeding or escaping the written or spoken word in pursuit of

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pure visual experience, however fleetingly. Through intense concentration and attention to the camera's ability to structure time her work generates nothing less than magic.

Jennifer Locke received a B.F.A. (1991) and M.F.A. (2006) from the San Francisco Art Institute. She lives and works in San Francisco. Her numerous solo and two exhibitions include: Grant Wahlquist Gallery; the Berkeley Art Museum; Rocksbox Fine Art, Portland, Oregon and Pontiac, Michigan; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (collaboration with Tad Beck); Queen's Nails Projects, San Francisco; Hallwalls, Buffalo; Southern Exposure, San Francisco; and Kiki Gallery, San Francisco. Her work has also been featured in group exhibitions at venues including: the Berkeley Art Museum; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach; the Havana Biennial; the Venice Biennale; the Busan International Video Festival, Korea; New Langton Arts, San Francisco; La Panaderia, Mexico; Kunsthalle Basel; Et al, San Francisco; Canada, New York; and Air de Paris, Paris. She was twice nominated for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's SECA Award and is the recipient of a Fleishhacker Eureka Fellowship. Her work is in the collection of the Kadist Art Foundation.

The gallery is located at 30 City Center, Portland, Maine. Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 11 am to 6 pm, and by appointment. For more information, visit <http://grantwahlquist.com>, call 207.245.5732, or email info@grantwahlquist.com.