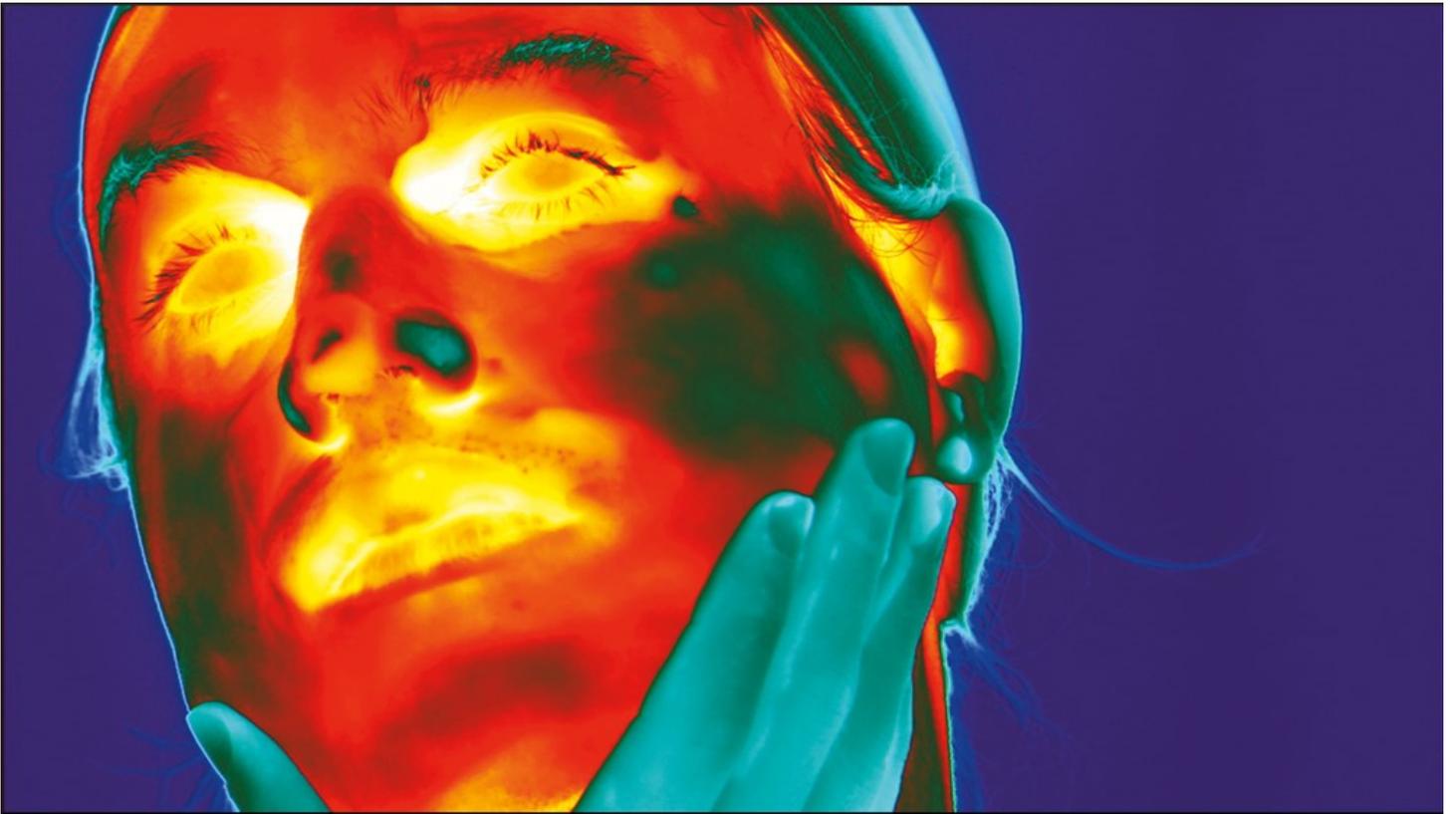


# CATHARINECLARKGALLERY



Above: Patrick Staff. Still from *Weed Killer*, 2017. Single-channel video with sound, multimedia installation. 17:00 minutes. Edition of 5 + proofs. Courtesy of the artist.

## Group Exhibition | *We Tell Ourselves Stories...In Order to Live*

Featuring work by **Sophie Calle**, **Leonora Carrington**, **Lenka Clayton**, **Edgar Martins**, **Patrick Staff**, **Stephanie Syjuco**, and **Katherine Vetne**

Plus, a special salon presentation of new paintings by **Timothy Cummings** | *Soft Targets*

**Organized by Anton Stuebner**

June 21 – September 1, 2018

Opening Reception: **Thursday, June 21, 2018** | 5 -7pm

**San Francisco, CA:** Catharine Clark Gallery presents *We Tell Ourselves Stories...In Order to Live*, an exhibition of works across media by **Sophie Calle**, **Leonora Carrington**, **Lenka Clayton**, **Edgar Martins**, **Patrick Staff**, **Stephanie Syjuco**, and **Katherine Vetne**. On view June 21 – September 1, 2018, *We Tell Ourselves Stories...In Order to Live* takes the first sentence of Joan Didion's iconic essay, "The White Album" (1979), as a proposition and point of departure for examining how narrative impacts our collective relationship to memory, family histories, and forms of social organization.

Didion's essay "The White Album" traces how the 1969 Manson family murders in Los Angeles brought the utopianism of the 1960s counterculture movement to an abrupt and horrific end. In trying to make sense of a cultural landscape that seemed incomprehensibly fractured through violence and discord, Didion writes, "we interpret what we see, select the most workable of the multiple choices. We

live entirely, especially if we are writers, by the imposition of a narrative line upon disparate images, by the ‘ideas’ with which we have learned to freeze the shifting phantasmagoria which is our actual experience.”<sup>1</sup>

Narrative offers a critical tool for self-representation in this cultural moment where facts are increasingly contested, and where vulnerable populations continue to be targeted through vitriol and conjecture. By extension, the artists included in *We Tell Ourselves Stories...In Order to Live* challenge ordering systems that we collectively take as a given — language, gender, citizenship — and encourage us to imagine more expansive possibilities for how we present ourselves to the world.

Viewers encounter **Katherine Vetne’s** melted lead crystal objects as they enter the gallery. For her new installation, Vetne sourced dinnerware sets from resale websites such as eBay, firing the crystal vessels in a high-temperature kiln until they began to melt into amorphous shapes that resemble surrealist forms. Mirrored with silver nitrate, the sculptures have a seductive luster that draws the viewer’s attention, while evoking how these objects lure consumers into a materialist fantasy that high-priced goods are necessary for securing domestic well-being.



Pictured above: Katherine Vetne. *Shadow Self*, 2018. Melted lead crystal pitcher, silver nitrate, lacquer, shelf. 9 ½ x 9 x 8 ½ inches. Photo: John Janca

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<sup>1</sup> Didion, Joan. “The White Album.” From the *The White Album*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979. 11.

Lithographs by **Leonora Carrington (1917 – 2011)** present fanciful, darkly dreamlike compositions in which the boundaries between the “corporeal and subconscious” are blurred. Although a contemporary of Surrealist artists such as Max Ernst and Andre Breton, Carrington’s work defies easy categorization, and instead reflects the amalgamation of biography, feminism, landscape, folklore, and mythology that informed the singular way in which Carrington perceived the world around her. Carrington’s creative output encompassed visual art, memoir, and short fiction, with phantasmagoric narratives that frequently appeared – and evolved - across multiple bodies of work and media.<sup>2</sup>

Two sculptures by **Lenka Clayton** reimagine everyday objects as installations. *Confetti Stack* (2014) features a column of 18,180 pieces of multi-colored tissue confetti that reaches from pedestal to ceiling, transforming an ephemeral and disposable material into a permanent form. Like Vetne, Clayton responds to the material culture that pervades marriage rituals and domesticity through creative invention. At the same time, Clayton describes her sculpture as an attempt to establish “order in an everyday moment of chaos,” a conceit that reflects how our self-imposed, even arbitrary, desires to organize the world around us are driven by a need to create meaning even in the most mundane of circumstances.

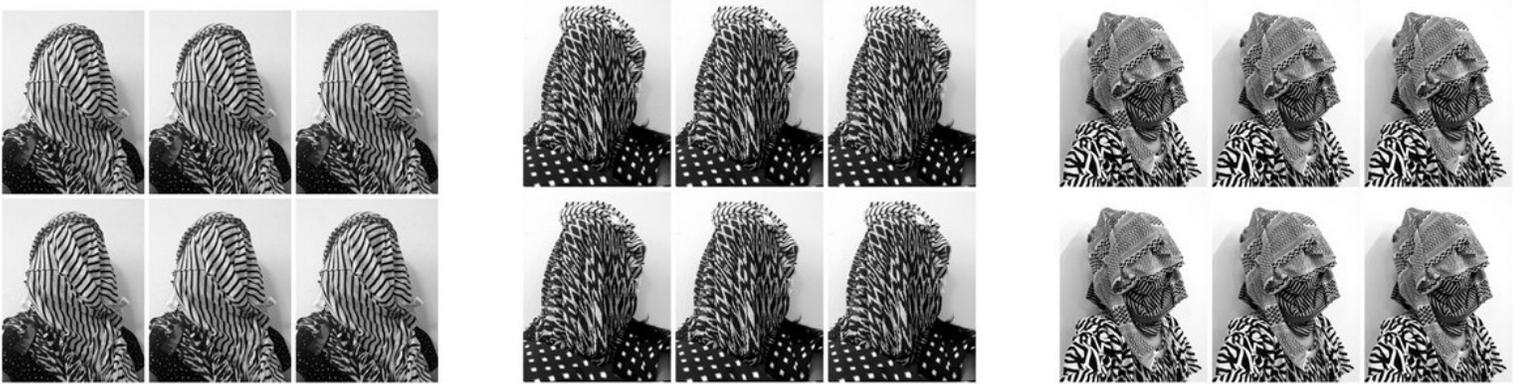
*50 Library Books* (2014), by comparison, presents a different kind of response to how we perceive order. The work is presented as a set of instructions that is reminiscent of Fluxus works such as Yoko Ono’s *Instructions for Paintings* (1961/1962): the exhibiting venue borrows fifty library books (the maximum allowed per circulation policy) with titles that begin with a number. The titles are then displayed in a stack and arranged by numerical order, an intervention that both reflects the loose and expansive ways through which we construct systems of information, and the highly subjective forms that these associations take.



Above left: Lenka Clayton. *Confetti Stack*, 2014. 18,180 stacked individual pieces of tissue confetti. Configuration is approx. 108 inches. Photo: Tom Little

Above right: Lenka Clayton. *50 Library Books*, 2014. Loaned library books. Dimensions variable. Photo: Tom Little

<sup>2</sup> Quotation sourced from Gallery Wendi Norris’ biography of Leonora Carrington: <https://www.gallerywendinorris.com/carrington/>



Above: Stephanie Syjuco. *Applicant Photos (Migrants) #1-3*, 2017 (L – R). Pigmented inkjet print. 3.6 x 4.2 inches unframed, 20 x 16 inches framed.

Stephanie Syjuco's series, *Applicant Photos (Migrants)* (2017), furthers her investigation into the relationship between critical race and photography at the fore of her 2016 solo exhibition, *Neutral Calibration Studies (Ornament + Crime)*. Syjuco notes that *Applicant Photos (Migrants)* "was developed in conjunction with the larger photographic series, *Cargo Cults*, and directly references standardized identification photos people are required to submit along with an application for immigration, travel, or asylum."

In staging the photographs, Syjuco purchased mass-produced clothing with geometric patterns, and restyled them into stereotypical "ethnic" costumes as a means of revealing how Western conceptions of the "exotic" are inherently constructed. With this new series, however, Syjuco fully obscures her face, thwarting the viewer's attempts to "read" her identity. This serves a conflicting, dual purpose: to elude identification and remain anonymous in an era of surveillance and tracking, and to also reference the many ways that migrants and refugees have been depicted as a faceless, anonymous mass.

Three works by French artist and author Sophie Calle investigate the relationship between narrative and expressions of loss. Photographs from her iconic series *The Graves* (1991) depict unnamed burial sites, where the deceased are unknown to the viewer aside from generic markers of familial affiliation, such as "mother," "father," or "son." Calle's poignant images invite viewers to consider how death is universalized, and to grieve for people outside of our blood lines, if only for a moment. By comparison, *Silent Heart Attack* (2017) depicts an image of a taxidermy ram's head, accompanied by a brief narrative about Calle's father, his physical decline, and her concurrent illness. Calle's text-based work is at once both deeply intimate and intensely private, raising deeper questions about how we do (and do not) share experiences of loss in public space. At the same time, Calle's highly constructed narratives suggest how autofiction and a self-determined approach to personal histories can serve as a device for managing grief.

Six photographs from Edgar Martins' series *Siloquies and Soliloquies on Death, Life, and Other Interludes* (2016 – 2017) consider the complicated relationship between documentary and fiction, as well as the ethics of photographing acts of violence. Produced in collaboration with the Institute of Legal Medicine and Forensic Sciences in Portugal, the photographs on view depict the stained and marked backsides of photo postcards from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century of individuals who committed, or were suspected of committing, violent crimes. Through his documentation of adhesive residue from where the photographs were placed in family albums, Martins attempts "to

scrutinize, expose, and hold in tension the gaps in understanding information and representation, as well as the deeply rooted anxieties and contradictions around ethics and aesthetics that arise when death, documentary photography, and questions of visibility intersect.”

Patrick Staff's video *Weed Killer* (2017), originally commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles, features a trans-identified actress delivering a monologue adapted from Catherine Lord's *The Summer of Her Baldness: a Cancer Improvisation* (2004), an irreverent and often darkly funny memoir about chemotherapy and its physical effects. The monologue is intercut with visually arresting shots rendered with thermal imaging, and a performance sequence that features a second actress (also trans-identified) lip-synching to the 1997 garage house song "To Be in Love" by Masters at Work to a distracted audience in a bar. In exploring trans and cancer experiences, Staff presents a profound meditation on biopolitics, disease, and the tensions (both social and physical) of what it means to inhabit a body.

Also, on view is *Soft Targets*, a special salon presentation of new paintings by Timothy Cummings. This small, exquisite grouping includes works from Cumming's recent residency in New Orleans, as well as *Soft Targets*, a new series inspired by gay pride month, and the violent culture that still plagues queer people.

Join us for an opening reception on Thursday, June 21, 2018 from 5 – 7pm.

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Upcoming Exhibitions and Events:

2018 SF Art Book Fair at Minnesota Street Project | Booth C6

Featuring publications and editions by Sandow Birk, Nina Katchadourian, Lenka Clayton, Wanxin Zhang, LigoranoReese, Katherine Vetne, and Masami Teraoka

July 20 – 22, 2018

Josephine Taylor | *Beyond This*

In conjunction with BOX BLUR 3.0 | Full schedule of performances TBA

September 8 – October 13, 2018

Sandow Birk | *Imaginary Monuments II* | Media Room: Rob Carter | *The Visitors*

October 20 – December 22, 2018

Paris Photo 2018 | Grand Palais

Featuring photography and video by Indira Allegra, Nina Katchadourian, Edgar Martins, Deborah Oropallo, and Stephanie Syjuco

November 8 – 11, 2018

Media inquiries contact Anton Stuebner | [associate@cclarkgallery.com](mailto:associate@cclarkgallery.com) | Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Friday from 10:30am – 5:30pm | Saturday from 11am - 6pm



Timothy Cummings. *Soft Targets* #3, 2018. Diameter: 2 inches.

SOPHIE CALLE uses the mediums of photography, video, film, books, text, and performance to pursue her sociological and autobiographical investigations. Calle represented France in the 2007 Venice Biennale, and three years later received the prestigious Hasselblad Award. A retrospective of Calle's work premiered at the Centre George Pompidou in Paris in 2003 and toured to museums in Berlin and Dublin. She has had solo exhibitions around the world, including at the Whitechapel Gallery, London; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston; the De Pont Museum in the Netherlands; and Hara Museum of Contemporary Art in Tokyo, Japan. Calle's work is graciously loaned by Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco.

LEONORA CARRINGTON (1917 – 2011), a British-born Mexico émigré, enjoyed a rich and remarkable artistic career spanning nearly seven decades. A pre-eminent artist of the twentieth century, Carrington painted, drew, made sculptures and textiles and wrote fiction and plays. She developed deep relationships with seminal artists of her time including Max Ernst, Remedios Varo, André Breton, and Luis Buñuel. Since Carrington's death in 2011, her work has been the subject of major museum exhibitions including, *Leonora Carrington* (2015) at the Tate Liverpool, and *The Celtic Surrealist* (2014) at the Irish Museum of Modern Art. In Spring 2018, the Museo de Palacio de Bellas Artes and the Museum of Modern Art in Mexico presented *Leonora Carrington: Cuentos Magicos*, the most comprehensive exhibition for Leonora Carrington to date. Works from the Carrington estate are graciously loaned by Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco.

LENKA CLAYTON is an interdisciplinary artist whose work engages with everyday situations, extending the familiar into the realms of the poetic and absurd. Clayton is the founder of An Artist Residency in Motherhood, a self-directed, open-source artist residency program that takes place in the homes and lives of artists who are also parents. In 2017, she was commissioned by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum to create a major new work in collaboration with Jon Rubin in which objects from six unique venues in New York City were circulated between sites, creating a network of social and material exchange. Clayton's work has been exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia, the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, and Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, amongst other institutions. In October 2018, **Clayton's work will be featured in the 57<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Carnegie International. This is Clayton's third presentation with Catharine Clark Gallery, in advance of her 2019 solo exhibition at the gallery.**

TIMOTHY CUMMINGS renders exquisitely crafted narrative and portrait paintings on panel which defy his lack of formal training. Reflecting influences as wide ranging as naïve, primitive art and the Renaissance, Cummings' subjects are often entangled at the intersection between childhood and adulthood. His work is represented in institutional collections such as 21c Museum Hotels, Louisville, KY; and the diRosa Center for the Arts, Napa, CA. Cummings has been represented by Catharine Clark Gallery since 1994.

EDGAR MARTINS is a Portuguese-born photographer based in England, whose work uses archival material to explore the limits between fiction and documentation. He has exhibited internationally at institutions such as MoMA PS1, New York; Centro de Arte Moderna, Lisbon; The Gallery of Photography, Dublin; and the Open Eye Gallery, Liverpool, among many others. In 2010, the Centre Culturel Calouste Gulbenkian in Paris hosted Edgar Martins' first retrospective exhibition. Martins was the recipient of the inaugural *New York Photography Award* in Fine Art, in May 2008, and a *SONY World Photography Award* in 2009 and 2018, amongst other honors. He was also selected to represent Macau (China) at the 54th Venice Biennale. In November 2018, his work will be featured in Catharine Clark Gallery's booth presentation at Paris Photo. Martins works and lives in England. **This exhibit is his first presentation with Catharine Clark Gallery, in advance of his 2019 solo exhibition at the gallery.**

PATRICK STAFF is an English-born artist based Los Angeles. Staff received their BA in fine art and contemporary critical studies from Goldsmiths University of London in 2009. They completed the LUX Associate Artists Programme and the Cunningham Method Contemporary Dance course at The Place in London, in 2011. Staff's work has been exhibited at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles; New Museum, New York; Walker Arts Center, Minneapolis; and the Tate Liverpool, amongst other venues. They have received the Paul Hamlyn Award for Visual Artists and the David and Margot Kitchen International Artist Fund, amongst other awards. Staff has completed residencies at FD13 Residency for the Arts, LUX, The Showroom, Fogo Island Arts, and Banff Centre. In 2017, MOCA commissioned the video work, *Weed Killer*, which was subsequently acquired by the museum, as well as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York. In 2018, they were selected as a featured artist in *Made in L.A. 2018* at the Hammer Museum. This is Staff's first presentation with Catharine Clark Gallery.

STEPHANIE SYJUCO creates photographs and sculptural works based on collected cultural objects, cumulative archives, and temporary vending installations. Her projects leverage open-source systems, shareware logic, and flows of capital, to investigate issues of economies and empire. Her *Cargo Cults* series of photographs are featured in "Being: New Photography 2018," curated by Lucy Gallun, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The exhibition has received significant press, and Syjuco's *Cargo Cults* photographs were reproduced in multiple publications in conjunction with the exhibition, including the *New York Times* and *Art in America*; the latter which reproduced her image, *Cargo Cults: Cover-Up*, on the cover of its April 2018 issue. In June 2018, Syjuco produced a new installation for the 6<sup>th</sup> Moscow Biennale for Young Art. In November 2018, Syjuco's work will be included in the Renwick Invitational at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C. Syjuco's work has been included in exhibitions at MoMA/P.S.1, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, among other venues. She is an Assistant Professor of Sculpture in the Department of Art Practice at University of California, Berkeley. Syjuco lives in Oakland, California and has been represented by Catharine Clark Gallery since 2008.

KATHERINE VETNE is a conceptual artist based in San Francisco, CA. She received a BFA from Boston University and an MFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. She is the recipient of SFAI's Graduate Fellowship in Painting as well as the Allen B. Stone Award. Vetne has exhibited her work at CB1 Gallery in Los Angeles; Samson Projects and 808 Gallery, in Boston, MA; and CCA Hubbell Street Galleries and 2nd floor projects, in San Francisco, CA. where she currently lives and works. In June 2018, Vetne's work will be featured in *Heavy Metal – Women to Watch 2018* at the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C. This is the artist's first presentation at Catharine Clark Gallery.