

CATHARINECLARKGALLERY



Above: Nina Katchadourian, composite of stills from *Orientation Video*, 2020; single-channel video with sound.

Nina Katchadourian: *To Feel Something That Was Not of Our World*

January 9 – February 20, 2021

Opening reception: Saturday, January 9 from 12 – 6pm; social distancing protocols and limited capacity will be in effect

Please Note: As the exhibition contains a critical audio component which is only accessible via QR codes, visitors are asked to arrive with a QR-compatible smartphone or tablet and a personal headphone set

San Francisco, CA: Catharine Clark Gallery opens its 2021 program with *To Feel Something That Was Not of Our World*, a solo exhibition of new work by multi-disciplinary artist Nina Katchadourian, on view January 9 – February 20, 2021. The artist's first solo exhibition at Catharine Clark Gallery since 2014, Katchadourian's long-awaited presentation invites viewers into an immersive and deeply personal work about resourcefulness, hope, and creative capacity under duress.

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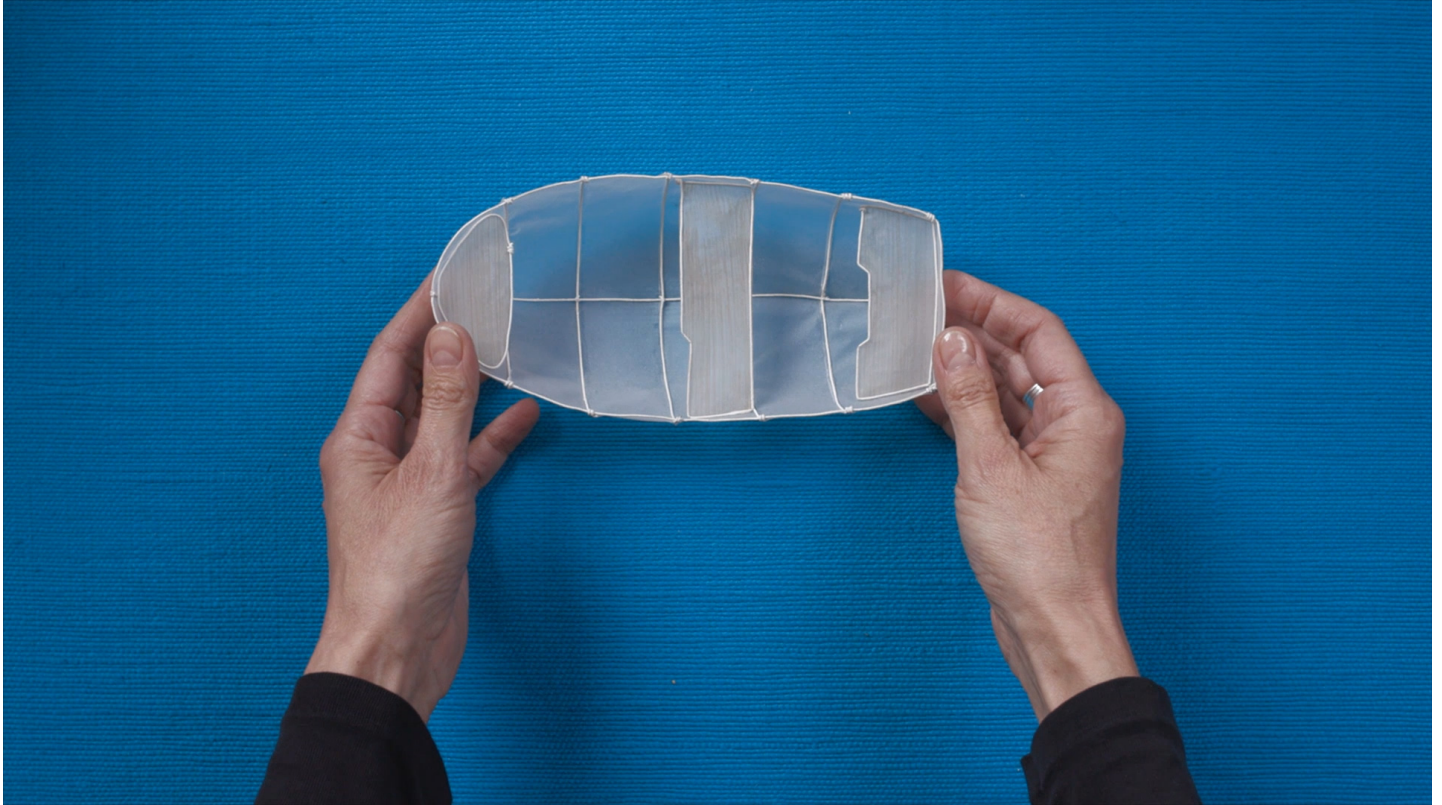


Above: Nina Katchadourian, *I Mailed Him a Life-Size Orca*, 2020; detail from a text message exchange, C-print.

When Katchadourian was seven years old, her mother read a book aloud to her titled *Survive the Savage Sea* (1973), the true story of the Robertsons, a family of farmers in England who sold all their possessions to buy a sailboat, with the intent of sailing around the world for several years. In June 1972, the Robertsons lost their sailboat in a remote part of the Pacific Ocean when a pod of Orca smashed the hull, leaving the four adults and two children adrift for 38 days. After their inflatable life raft grew too leaky to be safe, they abandoned it for their nine-foot fiberglass dinghy, *Ednamair*, a vessel so small that with everyone aboard only six inches of the boat remained above the waterline. The family navigated to areas where they could collect rainwater and survived by finding ways to catch sea turtles, dorado, and flying fish until they were spotted and rescued by the crew of a Japanese fishing boat. *Survive the Savage Sea*, written by Dougal Robertson, the father, was published the following year, based on the log book he kept while adrift.

The Robertson family's narrative was subsequently translated into 14 languages and adapted into a 1992 television movie. Katchadourian has fixated on this story since childhood, rereading the book nearly every year. In 2011, Katchadourian traveled to see the dinghy *Ednamair* in the National Maritime Museum of Cornwall, England, which houses all the remnants of the Robertson family's ordeal. In the spring of 2020, Katchadourian wrote to Douglas Robertson, the family's oldest son, to ask if he would agree to an interview as part of the project the artist intended to undertake that summer between June 15 – July 22, 2020, the time period corresponding to the 38 days of the Robertson family shipwreck. "We really should speak every day," was Douglas Robertson's response. "No one has ever done that before."

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Above: Nina Katchadourian, still from *Orientation Video*, 2020; single-channel video with sound.

This 38-day conversation took place across a series of daily recorded phone calls from the artist's home in Berlin to Robertson's home in London. Katchadourian and Robertson discussed the details of each day's events for the castaways, as well as deeper questions around the mental shift from rescue to survival, and how invention and resourcefulness function in a situation where the stakes could not be higher. These accounts of ingenuity under pressure are central to the story's ongoing magnetism for Katchadourian and resonate with the artist's continued explorations of the relationship between creativity and constraint. *To Feel Something That Was Not of Our World*, by extension, invites viewers into a personal-museological exhibition of videos, sculptures, photographs, drawings, text message exchanges, and excerpts from the nearly 50 hours of audio recordings. As a way trying to understand the scale of the animals they hunted for food, Katchadourian made life-size paper models of every animal the Robertsons caught and ate, often mailing them to Douglas for feedback and further discussion.

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Above: Nina Katchadourian, *Flying Fish #1*, 2020;
Hand-fashioned metal wire sculpture; unique.

The installation transforms the gallery space into ocean and vessel for both the story of the shipwreck and the intimate conversation between Robertson and Katchadourian that took place. There is particular resonance to the subject of a shipwreck at the end of the year that has just passed, as so many have experienced isolation and uncertainty, unsure of what rescue and survival will require. The title of the exhibition is a phrase from one of the interviews, where Douglas Robertson expresses his feeling of disbelief at the sight of the ship that rescued them, refusing to believe it was possible even once the ship turned their way. When Katchadourian asks at what point he finally believed it, he answers, “The rope... To feel something that was not us, that was not of our world—that was so good.”

To Feel Something That Was Not of Our World opens on January 9, with a limited capacity, socially distanced reception from 12 – 6pm. [Click here to book](#) an advance reservation to view the exhibition, or contact Anton Stuebner, Director at associate@cclarkgallery.com.

Please note that the exhibition contains a significant audio component via QR codes; viewers are asked to bring a QR code compatible smartphone or tablet and a personal headphone set during their visit.

Advanced Exhibition Calendar:

January 9 - February 20, 2021: Nina Katchadourian | *To Feel Something That Was Not of Our World*

March 6 - April 10, 2021: Stephanie Syjuco | *Native Resolution*

April 17 - May 29, 2021: Jen Bervin | Solo Exhibition

June 5 - September 11, 2021: Summer Group Exhibitions

September 18 - October 30, 2021: Shimon Attie | Solo Exhibition in Conjunction with BOXBLUR

November 6 - December 23, 2021: Deborah Oropallo and Andy Rappaport | Collaborative Exhibition

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NINA KATCHADOURIAN (born 1968 in Stanford, California; lives and works in Berlin, Germany and Brooklyn, New York) is an interdisciplinary artist whose work includes video, performance, sound, sculpture, photography, and public projects. Her video *Accent Elimination* was included in the 2015 Venice Biennale as part of the Armenian pavilion, which won the Golden Lion for Best National Participation. Exhibitions have included shows at the Serpentine Gallery, Turner Contemporary, de Appel, Palais de Tokyo, Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, Turku Art Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, ICA Philadelphia, Brooklyn Museum, Artists Space, SculptureCenter, MoMA, and MoMA PS1. Katchadourian has been widely published nationally and internationally, including *Sorted Books*, published by Chronicle Books in 2013.

The Tang Museum exhibited *All Forms of Attraction*, Katchadourian's first museum survey in 2005. In March 2017, a traveling survey exhibition of her work titled *Curiouser* opened at the Blanton Museum in Austin, Texas, with an accompanying monograph. Following the Blanton, *Curiouser* opened at the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University in September 2017, and Brigham Young Museum of Art in Provo, UT in March 2018.

Photo credit: Zach Hilty/BFA.com

In Fall 2020, Catharine Clark Gallery and Pace Gallery co-presented Katchadourian's major public installation *Monument to the Unelected*, which was installed at both galleries in San Francisco and New York, respectively, as well as the Scottsdale Museum of Art, Arizona; Grand Central Art Center, Santa Ana, CA; Transformer Station, Cleveland, OH; Museum of Contemporary Art (moCa), Cleveland, OH; Roots Community Health Center, Oakland, CA (produced by BOXBLUR); and the Abrahamson Family Trust and Collection, Madison, WI (produced by BOXBLUR).

Katchadourian has received grants and awards from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Anonymous Was a Woman Foundation, the Tiffany Foundation, the American-Scandinavian Foundation, Grönqvistska Stiftelsen, and the Nancy Graves Foundation. Her work is in public and private collections including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York; the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas; the Morgan Library and Museum, New York, New York; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California among others.

Katchadourian is Clinical Full Professor at the New York University Gallatin School of Individualized Study. She has been represented by Catharine Clark Gallery since 1999 and has been co-represented by Pace Gallery since 2019.