

In case my mind [betrays] me, let me say one last thing.

Alexa Kumiko Hatanaka

Nov. 7 - Dec. 14, 2024

Opening Event Thursday Nov. 7th, 5-8pm

168 Suffolk St.

New York, NY 10002

www.trotterandsholer.com

Wednesday to Saturday: 12:00 - 6:00pm

Monday and Tuesday by appointment



Alexa Kumiko Hatanaka's, *In case my mind [betrays] me, let me say one last thing.* curated by **Anne-Laure Lemaitre** marks Hatanaka's first solo exhibition with Trotter&Sholer. This exhibition is an exploration of personal experience with bipolar disorder. Offering nuance, specificity, and knowledge of the misunderstood condition, this exhibition highlights our often-tenuous grasping for stability and efforts to adapt to uncontrollable uncertainty.

The title of the exhibition, *In case my mind [betrays] me, let me say one last thing.*, refers to a quote from writer Naomi Jackson, describing her own relationship to having bipolar. Jackson notes that she knows "just below these heights of creativity, there is a winding staircase that leads to mania." She evokes the feverish urge to create, which comes with a deep understanding of the fragility of any one moment.

Materially, Hatanaka intentionally engages in processes rooted in generational relationships to lands. Lemaitre notes that Hatanaka's practice of reciprocally learning for prolonged periods in places like Nunavut in the Canadian Arctic, Vietnam, and Japan, has allowed her to connect with the communities and ancestral practices of these places. Her time with seventh generation papermakers in Japan has been a way of connecting to her personal heritage through her art, and the regional paper that she has used for 15 years, made from a process that dates back over a thousand years.

Hatanaka's work explores the correlations between experiences of physical and mental health and the growing instability of our natural world. The materials she uses both require and contribute to a clean environment. These now outlying ways of making and being are deeply relevant traditional knowledge. What we consider disabled ways of being are also outlying, yet important wisdom. The exhibition invites us to consider the value of the lived experiences that are often cast aside.

For this exhibition Hatanaka has created a site-specific work, representative of her larger practice, that veils the gallery's large windows. Its installation leaves partial views into the gallery space from the outside. She uses paper handmade in Japan and southeast Asia alongside paper she herself handmakes, in combination with ink drawing, relief printmaking and *gyotaku*, the historical Japanese method of using real fish and non-toxic ink to create prints. Using traditional techniques, she stitches the paper, with draw

ing and print elements, in this case to create a textile which embeds a graph of the increasing prevalence of the word “instability.” These works are both delicate and deceptively strong, perhaps a fitting metaphor for someone living with bipolar.

In case my mind [betrays] me, let me say one last thing. will be on view at **168 Suffolk Street from Nov. 7 through Dec. 14th.**

Alexa Kumiko Hatanaka is a Japanese-Canadian, queer and disabled artist based in Toronto, an identity that sculpts her practice. Hatanaka draws from her training in print and papermaking techniques, connecting to her intentional use of historical land-based materials and processes. Her adaptations of traditions, in the form of large-scale print installations and wearable sculptures, address contemporary questions of climate change, mental health, and survival. Recurring motifs related to landscape, fish, and bodies of water together speak about personal and collective experiences of struggle and resilience. Hatanaka’s practice is informed by her experience-based research and collaboration, including long term community-engaged projects in the high Arctic, and performances that integrate and reinterpret kamiko, garments sewn out of washi, Japanese paper. Hatanaka has exhibited her work at the National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa, CA), Art Gallery of Ontario (Toronto, CA), The British Museum (London, UK), Toronto Biennial of Art (Toronto, CA), the Guanlan International Printmaking Base (Shenzhen, China), Nikkei National Museum (Burnaby, CA), Ino Cho Paper Museum (Kochi, Japan), and Harper’s (New York, USA).

Anne-Laure Lemaitre is a New York based curator, writer and creative strategist who specializes site specific and in-situ art. With more than twenty years of experience designing global art infused activations, large scale installations and complex site specific programs around the world, she believes in the importance of anchoring art in its context as a means to further its impact, trigger new perspectives and explore new conceptual territories. Anne-Laure Lemaitre separates her time between consulting for a variety of corporations and institutions, writing about practices she believes in and executing curatorial programs focused on emerging art. She serves on the advisory committee of Civil Arts and Beverly’s.

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