

**A CURVE OF MANY**

**CUDELICE BRAZELTON IV**

**MARCH 19 – MAY 1, 2022**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

*Asceticism allows subjects to focus on their life as the core of their own practice, by structuring it according to a self-chosen form made of specific habits and rules. Asceticism also enables the self to achieve autonomy from systems of power in a process that ‘often involves architecture and design as a device for self-enactment.’*

Pier Vittorio Aureli, *Less is Enough*

---

Murmurs Gallery is pleased to present *A Curve of Many*, a solo exhibition by Frankfurt-based artist Cudelice Brazelton IV. The new body of work includes site-specific paintings, collage, sound, and sculpture which often engage with the surrounding architecture by acting on the contours of walls or intervening in the infrastructure of the warehouse gallery space. Brazelton’s work explores the implications of “self-enactment” as a practice potent enough to pierce through existing power structures. This exhibition outlines a connection between the effacement of individuality in labor-driven economies and the self-fashioned codes of expressions that affirm subjectivity.

Cues from the gallery building’s past life as an industrial warehouse pervade the *A Curve of Many*: *Contrails* and *Public Breakage* appear to be remnants of specialized machinery, partially disassembled and abandoned, but still integrated into the guts of the warehouse. Long, threaded steel rods covered in graphite and suspended at an unnatural angle from the ceiling suggest the functionality of an unknown tool activated by the repetitious movements of a blue collar laborer. The tools beg to be acted upon—moved, swiveled and swung. Without a body to use them, they cease being tools and are instead just strange objects. Nowhere in the gallery is there a figure of a person but the cast-off residue of humanity is all around, and it is these signifiers of subjectivity that Brazelton chooses to focus on.

Skin is the outermost layer of personhood, the canvas for first impressions and assumptions about race, beauty, even class. An inkjet print of an eye in *Out of Reach* is almost imperceptible against the black wall, hinting at an abstracted figure that could be camouflaged in the dark. It is impossible to define where skin ends and shadows begin. The entire wall becomes a painting, with a peephole that someone is gazing through. In *Three Quarters*, the black surface is a magnetic primer that changes patina as it collects residue, much like skin. *Ice and Soul*, the diptych at the back of the gallery features cut out words that reveal inkjet scans of the artist’s skin, enlarged to show the granular texture. Similarly, the technique of denim-burning used to create *Hood* penetrates the “skin” of the wall to expose a subcutaneous strata of old paint in the shape of a head adorned with a patterned shave. Brazelton’s self-devised method is a cross between tracing, scarification, and tattooing. Tattoos are a classic self-fashioning practice of individual expression. From stick-n-pokes to prison tattoos, the practice of pushing ink into one’s skin is a way to convey secret codes, hidden messages or meanings legible only to those who are members of the same subculture.

Brazelton specifically chose the black ABS plastic used to make *Hardcover* because the grain was reminiscent of his own skin texture. The stacked plastic boxes read as a cartridge-like oversized case for 10 cassette tapes that contain the music of Chicago Afrofuturist jazz musician Angel Bat Dawid. In the small room, Dawid’s jarring clarinet sounds play via a schematic mechanism of speakers, wire, thread, and audio parts that is based off of a ‘Scream Generator’ circuit alarm. Just as an alarm transmutes one mode of information into an audible output, *Apart-Playing* creates a new method of audio signification. It was important to the artist that the sound of the music be spatially severed from its source with incompatible types of equipment: cassette and MP3, like a signal that is transmitted and erroneously received. Language, beyond the written or spoken word, is the collective meaning that charges the human-made objects around us. *A Curve of Many* is an exploration of how the language of selfhood is dependent upon the outside world. How might the sets of codes that can be expressed through our bodies—our skin, clothing, hair, habits, interactions, etc. pave a path toward liberation?