



GENEVIEVE GAINARD
**To Whom It
May Concern**

September 1 - October 29, 2022

ROWAN UNIVERSITY
ART GALLERY

To Whom It May Concern is an ensemble of Gaignard's photography, collage works, and her signature constructed domestic spaces. In these works she confronts perspectives of American culture to elicit dialogue around the intricacies of race, beauty and cultural identity, which are often viewed through a lens of nostalgia and sentimentality. The associations created by her imagery and objects challenge socially accepted narratives to provoke self-reflection and reexamination.

As a biracial woman Gaignard has consistently grappled with others' acceptance of her mixed race. She probes this notion of "passing" by positioning her own female body as the subject in her photographs and staged with familiar objects and "props" that blend eras, economic class, and race. Her poses are amplifications and performative that teeter between symbolic and autobiographical realms to push against stereotypes. The exhibition title reinforces a nostalgic social norm used to address an ambiguous group of people or persons that would be most responsible for action or reaction to Gaignard's explorations.

- **Mary Salvante, Curator**
Rowan University Art Gallery Director



White Lies, 2020, mixed media on panel



She Was Everything Real in a World of Make-Believe, 2018 (detail), mixed media installation



Darker The Berry, 2022 (detail), mixed media installation



Can I Call You Rose? (Cuz Your Fragrance Takes Over the Room), 2022, mixed media on panels





"As an interdisciplinary artist I investigate personal histories, popular culture and racial currents through my lens as a biracial woman navigating unsettling American realities. I insert myself into the work by mining my experiences, implementing soft color palettes, humor and domesticity. My goal is to create environments and experiences that awaken critical thinking and offer a shift in perspective. Activating spaces with haunting nostalgia for America's past-as-present, I beckon viewers to dig into the imperfect relationship between our inner worlds, public lives, and modern events.

Each of the mediums I work with is a conduit for introspection. My photographs are staged self-portraits presenting a spectrum of invented yet recognizable "selves," which undermine social hierarchies and beauty standards. Vintage wallpaper is a motif throughout my collages, sculpture, and installation work. This material, a childhood sentiment, serves as an accent or backdrop to the found objects and images I use to assemble my work. In the collages, I embrace xerography, a meditation of sifting through historical news media, magazines, and portraiture.



Through sculpture and installation, I showcase antique furniture, decor and figurines reimaged into unexplored psychological spaces. Installation is my channel to create imagined domestic environments as sites of sanctuary and resistance. In doing so, I expand on the vernacular of found objects and settings found in my photography and collages. Sculpture allows me to reanimate the personifications of society's deference to Whiteness into symbols of objection. The scope of my work is an ensemble of visual renderings that affirms Black livelihood and provokes reflection on the often hostile realities of the outside world."

- Genevieve Gaignard



Genevieve Gagnard is a multidisciplinary artist who uses self-portraiture, collage, sculpture and installation to elicit dialogue around the intricacies of race, beauty and cultural identity. Referencing regional and historical events as well as a personal archive as a biracial woman, Gagnard creates environments and performances that teeter between symbolic and autobiographical realms. She cleverly interrogates notions of skin privilege while challenging viewers to look more closely at racial realities. In recent work, Gagnard renders unsettling and violent stories, imagery, and trends of American culture into provocative objects of various mediums, including sound. The ensemble of her work shatters viewers' perceptions of culture and race, compelling them to piece together novel ways of perceiving the world and their place in it.

Since 2019, Gagnard has debuted six solo exhibitions and participated in numerous national group shows. Her most recent solo exhibition, "Strange Fruit," opened with Vielmetter Los Angeles in March 2022 and marks her most ambitious body of work to date, both in scale and subject matter. Gagnard's work has been exhibited at: The Broad, CA; Stephen Friedman Gallery, UK; The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, TX; The Smithsonian National Portrait

Gallery, DC; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, CA; The Getty Center, CA; The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY; Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, MA; and Prospect.4, LA. Gagnard received her BFA in Photography from Massachusetts College of Art and Design and her MFA in Photography from Yale University. She splits her time between her hometown of Orange, Massachusetts, and Los Angeles.



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-Genevieve Gagnard



Acknowledgements

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Photography courtesy of Constance Mensch www.constancemensch.com



Front Cover: *Vanilla Ice*, 2016, chromogenic print