

# moniquemeloche

451 N Paulina Street, Chicago 60622  
312 243 2129 moniquemeloche.com

## **Candida Alvarez** ***Estoy Bien***

February 1 – March 21, 2020

Opening reception: Saturday, February 1, 4 to 7pm

moniquemeloche is thrilled to present *Estoy Bien*, an exhibition of new Air Paintings by Candida Alvarez. This is Alvarez's first exhibition with Monique Meloche and her first solo gallery exhibition in Chicago.

The work of Candida Alvarez is imbued with both personal and formal aspects which evolve through her relationship to color, light, and architectural elements. These unique paintings originated as proofs intended for an installation as part of the inaugural Chicago Riverwalk Year of Public Art program (2017). The images took on a new resolve after a series of critical events, including the passing of the artist's father, followed shortly by Hurricane Maria, and her mother's decision to relocate from Puerto Rico to the United States. Amidst this period of transformation, Alvarez found herself drawn to the comforts of her studio, exploring the shifting panorama of Puerto Rico. Drawing inspiration from a specific phrase widely spoken by the hurricane's survivors, *Estoy Bien* (I'm Fine) and the solastalgia of the island as her muse, her proofs took on new life as a series of paintings, serving as a palimpsest of growth and fortitude.

Drawing from the narrative of place, Alvarez pulls from materials in her immediate world and her travels to build dreamlike narratives existing somewhere between fact and fiction. Patterns on the floor, memories from childhood, and photographs function as ways of infusing her world into each painting. This new series of work suspends carefully within an aluminum frame, allowing the image to grow beyond conventional restrictions, presenting as a dual-sided painting. Light plays a crucial role; the use of a paper-thin pvc mesh as a canvas allows for light to permeate each image, creating the sensation of color and form existing without boundary, as if each painting can live unrestricted, floating within space.

When creating each image on view, Alvarez engaged what she calls an active search, exploring the world around her with unremitting curiosity, investing thoughtful attention into that which is often deemed ordinary. This process offers Alvarez a unique way of seeing, incorporating material from her immediate world and everyday experience, arranging it in a way that is organic and surprising.

"My work stumbles through what I think of as chatty abstract spaces to reboot both light and space so that they can conjure shape shifting and dream catching. These investigations allow for my paintings and drawings to build abstract narrative structures that mix and remix themselves, interweaving the narrative with the pictorial. My aim is to expand the hybrid space of painting all the while maintaining a crucial connection to daily life."

- Candida Alvarez

Coinciding with the opening of *Estoy Bien* is the release of Alvarez's much anticipated and comprehensive monograph, "Candida Alvarez: Here. A Visual Reader", published by Green Lantern Press. The monograph follows her first major institutional exhibition, "Here", which was on view at the Chicago Cultural Center in 2017, and will celebrate the artist's creative career, spanning over four decades. Contributors include Terry R. Myers (Curator of "Candida Alvarez: Here"), Dr. Kellie Jones (Columbia University, New York), and Elizabeth Alexander (President of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation).

# moniquemeloche

451 N Paulina Street, Chicago 60622  
312 243 2129 moniquemeloche.com

**Candida Alvarez** (b. 1955 in Brooklyn, NY) received her MFA from the Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT 1997. Alvarez was commissioned by the City of Chicago to create four large paintings, installed along lower Wacker Drive on the Riverwalk in downtown Chicago, as part of the inaugural *Year of Public Art*, an ongoing city-wide public art initiative. Alvarez was also tapped by Rei Kawakubo, founder of international fashion house Comme des Garçons, who transformed six of her paintings into prints featured in their Fall 2017 menswear collection.

Alvarez was honored with a solo retrospective at the Chicago Cultural Center, *Candida Alvarez: Here* (2017), curated by Terry R. Myers. The exhibition marked the first major institutional exhibition, reflecting forty years of her painting. Other solo exhibitions include the Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL (2012-13); Rena Bransten Gallery, San Francisco, CA (2003); New Britain Museum of American Art, New Britain, CT (1996); The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, NY (1992); The Queens Museum, Flushing, NY (1991); and Galerie Schneiderei, Cologne, Germany (1990). Her work has appeared in group exhibitions at the DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, IL (2018); the Kemper Museum, Kansas City, MO (2017); CAM, Houston, TX (2003); The High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA (1990); The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY (1985); and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, NY (1980). Her work is included in the collections of the Addison Gallery of American Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and El Museo del Barrio, New York City. Reviews of her work have appeared in various publications, including ArtForum, Art in America, Artnews, and The New York Times. Alvarez is a recipient of the 2019 Joan Mitchell Foundation, Painters & Sculptors Grant.

She currently lives and works in Chicago, IL where she holds the F.H. Sellers Professorship in Painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.