

Keisha Scarville

Hot/Slow/Step

21 September - 11 October



WITHIN/BETWEEN/CORPUS, 2022
KEISHA SCARVILLE

Huxley-Parlour is delighted to announce an exhibition by American artist, Keisha Scarville. Scarville's exhibition turns conceptually on the Caribbean limbo dance as a symbol of thresholds, the liminal, and the inbetween, through both abstract photography and sculpture. Using both narrative frameworks and archival material, *Hot/Slow/Step* explores black subjectivity through metaphors of movement, negotiation and exchange.

Scarville's exhibition takes an imaginative departure from writing on the Caribbean limbo dance, described by Guyanese author Wilson Harris as 'a metamorphosis or new spatial character' born of the Middle Passage - the forced voyage of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas. Here, 'the limbo dancer moves under a bar which is gradually lowered until a mere slit of space, it seems, remains through which with spread-eagled limbs he passes like a spider'. Harris sees the limbo dance as a folk manifestation of the Caribbean imagination, and a 'gateway or threshold to a new world', but also crucially as a matrix which encompasses histories of conquest and imperialism across civic boundaries, namely Caribbean, African, and Amerindian experiences. Scarville uses the limbo dance to explore notions of movement, thresholds, and inbetween-ness, both in her own movements between New York and Guyana, and in the Caribbean diasporic imagination more broadly.

The limbo line runs - both figuratively and imaginatively - through the exhibition. Scarville uses abstract photography to explore the picture plane as a space in which the body can be rearticulated, shifted, and re-calibrated. Some works consider landscape as a physical threshold, such as *Seawall #19*, which abstracts the sea wall which surrounds Guyana, others consider imaginative thresholds, such as *Composition/Journey/Plantation* - a photograph of Scarville's nephew's school textbook, where he is asked to speculatively imagine life on the plantation. At the centre of the exhibition is *Phantom/Limb, 2020*, a sculptural limbo line with a thread suspended between two concrete casts of Scarville's hands. The line is symbolically charged, hanging impossibly low. The sculpture's hands are nestled in Cowrie shells, a symbol that thematically references the passage of black bodies over water. The exhibition ends with a photograph in which the limbo line becomes entangled, like a spiderweb, relating to the 'human spiders' of Harris' limbo imagination.

Hot/Slow/Step takes its title from the final lines of Caliban, a poem by Barbadian poet Kamau Braithwaite.

Keisha Scarville (b. 1975) earned her BS from the Rochester Institute of Technology and studied at Parsons School of Design/The New School. Recent group exhibitions include *If I Had a Hammer - Fotofest Biennial*, Houston (2022, curated by co-curated by Steven Evans, Amy Sadao, and Max Fields); *SeenUNseen*, LA Louver, Los Angeles (2021, curated by Alison Saar); *I Belong to This*, Huxley-Parlour Gallery, London (2021, curated by Justine Kurland); *We Wear the Mask*, Higher Pictures Generation, New York (2020, curated by D'Angelo Lovell Williams); and *All of Them Witches*, Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles (2020, curated by Dan Nadel and Laurie Simmons). Her work is held in the collections of the FSU Museum of Fine Arts, Tallahassee, FL; the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, Washington, DC; the Center of Photography at Woodstock, NY; Yale University Art Gallery; the George Eastman House, among others. She lives and works in Brooklyn.

Notes to Editors

Hot/Slow/Step

Keisha Scarville

21 September - 11 October

Private View: 20th September, 6-8pm, at Huxley-Parlour, 3-5 Swallow Street. RSVP [here](#).

Nettle Grellier, *She Always Does Have a Good Time*, will open at our new gallery - Huxley-Parlour, 45 Maddox Street - at the same time.

Keisha Scarville, *Hot/Slow/Step* exhibition page linked [here](#).

More information about the gallery can be found [here](#).