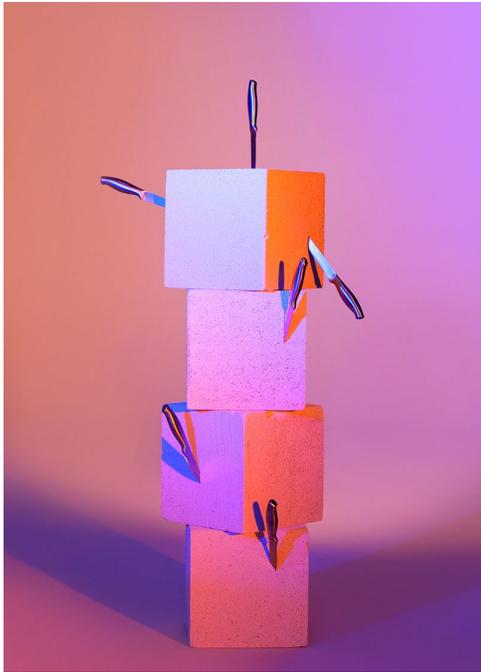


# MOUNTAIN

## *The Texture of Want*

Dalia Amara - Olivia Swider



Dalia Amara, *Fragments*, 2017  
Archival pigment print



Olivia Swider, *Hussey*, 2018  
Silkscreen ink on velvet

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**Opening Reception:** February 24, 2018 | 7-10 PM

MOUNTAIN is pleased to present *The Texture of Want*, an exhibition featuring artwork by Dalia Amara and Olivia Swider. The artwork on view explores constructions of femininity, vulnerable self-reflexivity, and fallacy in the truth of images. Both artists have a background in image-making and the study of photography, but the way they synthesize that knowledge into their respective practices varies. While Amara's work functions in the realm of photography, the content and context takes a more sculptural/performative turn. Conversely, Swider's practice incorporates physical works and found materials to ask new questions around what constitutes an image, appropriation/authorship, and the documentary/indexical capabilities of objects and the stories they hold. Together, these artists present a fascinating look at a postmodern approach to capturing and creating an image.

Dalia Amara's work hones in on the performance of femininity. In recent video works the artist turns the camera's voyeuristic eye on herself in an examination of learned behaviors, societal expectations, and the psychological struggles of being a woman. The mirror is a testing ground and the artist inhabits a duality as both photographer and model, audience and performer.

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Amara's photographic works use the conventions of photography, but the visual language of sculpture. In these works the camera captures domestic scenes and curious objects with a reference to the body in absentia. The lack of a protagonist gives these photographs an unsettling tension. Like a crime scene investigator searching for the last bit of evidence to solve the mystery.

Working through text, photography, assembled sculpture, and found imagery, Olivia Swider's autobiographical approach sits on the crux of truth and hearsay. Pulling events and incidents out of context, the artist uses words and stories told in person and derived from gossip transactions. Swider is interested in the nightmarish qualities lingering from love ghosts, the allure of oyster pearls, the beach, quantum entanglement, and the complications of failed love. She works in a variety of mediums while subtly suggesting questions of staged and candidness, found and created, and the truths and lies in authorship.

## **About the Artists:**

**Dalia Amara** (b. 1988, Illinois, USA) is an American-Jordanian multidisciplinary artist living and working in New York with a practice based in photography, video, and performance art. Her work uses the domestic space or photo/video studio as a staging ground for sites of trauma, desire, and banality. Amara's photographs and videos are invested in a personal visual language inspired by femininity, the everyday, horror, and commercial images and messaging to explore the anxieties of assimilating to cultural expectations. Born to multi-ethnic parents, and raised in the US, Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, and UAE, the ever-changing home, along with the varying and at times contradictory cultural expectations, have all been at the heart of Amara's motivations in her work. Amara received her MFA in Photography, Video, and Related Media from the School of Visual Arts in New York, and her BFA from Columbia College Chicago. Amara's work has been shown internationally. She most recently participated in *Skin Dips*, a two-person exhibition at Selena Gallery in New York, and the group exhibition, *In Pursuit of the Perfect Pose*, at Gallery 44: Centre for Contemporary Photography in Toronto.

<http://daliaamara.com/>

**Olivia Swider** (b. 1987, Illinois, USA) Named after Olivia Hussey from Zeffirelli's 1968 *Romeo and Juliet* film, Swider's work has a lust for romanticism and prose. She has a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and attended the New York Studio Program in 2008. She resides in Brooklyn, NY where she writes, curates and creates in various mediums. Swider cofounded Hungryman gallery (2008-2012) in Chicago, IL. Currently, she directs Selena in Bushwick, a gallery dedicated to exhibiting artists of color. Swider's exhibitions and curatorial projects have been featured in *The Art Newspaper*, *Artnet News*, *Art F City*, *Art Lovers NY*, *Burnaway*, *Bedford and Bowery*, *Bad at Sports*, *Editorial Magazine*, *New City*, *The Chicago Tribune*, and *The Visualist*. As an artist she has exhibited at the Verge Art Fair at Miami

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Basel, Miami FL; Kustera Projects, Brooklyn, NY; D Gallery, Chicago, IL; Three Walls, Chicago, IL, and Pentagon Gallery, Chicago, IL. In 2014, Swider performed at Panoply Performance Laboratory in Brooklyn, where she drank several bottles of Valentina hot sauce.

<http://oliviaswider.com/>

## **About the Gallery:**

MOUNTAIN is an artist-run apartment gallery in Bushwick presenting exhibitions, performances, and screenings by emerging artists. The gallery is open during scheduled events or by appointment only. MOUNTAIN was founded by Michael Fleming in 2016. For more information, please visit <http://mountain.xhbtr.com/> or contact: [mountain.bushwick@gmail.com](mailto:mountain.bushwick@gmail.com). Like MOUNTAIN on [Facebook](#) to hear about upcoming exhibitions and events.

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