



Melvin "GRAVE" Guzman, *CAVE*
Saturday, June 18, 2022, 7-9pm
Performance at 8pm

'a psycho-geographical impressed simulation exhorting the specters of interiority. a haunting; caricature emanations assaulting the orifices to sense – the counter initiation of the episteme's ritual spectacles of the self – the diffusion of objecthood and subjecthood; the imperceptible will.'

What is it to perceive or be perceived? To occupy space? To be present in a time? What of an age imprisoned by the hubris and authority given to percept orifices as the arbiters of what is? A luminal tyranny settles such orientation like sediment.

The epoch seeks to situate the Other as "just so" through various mediating luminal projections cohering an apparatus of kitsch, sustaining itself on the impersonal machinic surfaces of the technological age, emitting photons, synthesizing imaging, all to boot up and render a violence akin to the gnostic Big Bang – the vertices and virtualities of the spectacle. *CAVE*, ala *GRAVE*, an affectionate homage to Plato and his machinations in *The Republic*, is an attempt to repurpose the reductive units that serve as the muscle tissue and bone marrow of modern simulation to orchestrate a genuine encounter with the Other; an alignment of one's interior world with the "outer world." A captive audience not by chains or scrupulous presentation of the ideal, but by an enchanting exposition and conjuring of the absurdities of difference and the ritual reconciliation of such. A groove out of smooth leading to a petit salvation. – Woodson Legrand

On Saturday, June 18, PARTICIPANT INC presents *CAVE*, an installation and live performance by Melvin "GRAVE" Guzman. The site of performance will include a preliminary video projection premiering the coinciding short, *RUNS*, that regards the collection of metal elements that comprise the work's structure, a sculptural installation with an olfactory element, and a live score by Brian Close. A cage made of repurposed steel armatures serves as support for heavily layered paintings and reclaimed or 'saved' items of refuse, building an abbreviated lexicon of the immediate urban space. A scavenged satellite dish with flashlights taped to its antennae provides self-illumination of the performance.

Writer/curator Carlo McCormick notes that, “Guzman is everywhere in his work, just as he seems to be in the city itself, but it is an assembly of personae, the self infinitely split by some social schism, a phantom’s dissembling where the revelation is guised and coded, its truth but an allegorical fiction.” As the smoke of palo santo imbues the space and is imbricated with Guzman’s abstractions of New York City, the mimetic gesture of steam funneling from a fissure in the pavement reaffirms McCormick’s notion that Guzman continues to use “assemblage as a way of ‘building narratives for the people.’” Guzman’s performance, which also evokes the act of painting, draws from the relation between place and identity, the psychogeographical, and the evocation of mythic figures such as Rammellzee.

Melvin “GRAVE” Guzman (b. 1989, Harlem, NY) works in photography, performance and monumental mixed media. While Guzman pursues a range of distinct technical practices, his artwork consistently explores the oscillating relationship between city and self. The artist often collaborates with fellow cultural revolutionaries like Onyx Collective, Kiki Kudo, Miho Hatori, and Kembra Pfahler and the Girls of Karen Black. His work has been featured in publications including *High Snobiety*, *Hypebeast*, and *Whitewall Magazine*.

Image: Melvin “GRAVE” Guzman. Photo: Woodson Legrand. [A black and white photograph documenting the artist Grave Guzman wearing a winter puffer, protective eyewear, a hood over a baseball cap, and gloves as he picks up a piece of a metal structure (used for packaging bicycles) from a pile.]

Safety protocols: Visitors and staff must wear a mask and practice social distancing.

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PARTICIPANT INC is located at 253 East Houston Street between Norfolk and Suffolk Streets. Closest trains are the F (2nd Ave) and the J/M/Z (Essex/Delancey); closest wheelchair accessible stop is the 4/6 (Bleecker/Lafayette). Entry is on grade and the gallery is barrier free throughout with an all gender, wheelchair accessible bathroom. Service animals are welcome.