

Swim Lessons

Curated by Dasha Aksenova

April 3–May 2, 2026

Zhi Wei Hiu
Bradley Marshall
Montana Simone
Hanna Umin

You jump in the pool and it's too deep. Your swim coach lets you loose to thrash around for a minute before taking you back in their arms. Swimming doesn't come naturally. At first, one learns to kick just below the surface to build thrust. Then come the arms, and the particular contortions required to develop speed or lift. Finally, one learns to breathe in sequence, pacing their intake to complement their stroke. These disparate parts connect in one fluid moment when the swimmer feels the water channel perfectly from fingertips to toes and attempts to copy that flow in perpetuity.

The theme of "Swim Lessons" is drawn from a passage of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*. In visual art, as in swimming, learning occurs through repeated encounters, until the unknown becomes familiar—understanding cannot be gleaned from the imitation of a model. Similar to the first time one mounts a paddleboard in a lap pool, it is only through a repeated reckoning with the water that one really learns how to carry oneself and swim. We do not learn through the instruction of the teacher, but through an encounter with the waves.

Zhi Wei Hiu, Bradley Marshall, Montana Simone, and Hanna Umin approach their artistic influences as apprentices, channeling each lesson learned into sculptures and installations. In creating this new work, they build active relationships with the rhythms, tensions, and resistances of materials and concepts engaged. By repeating movements and observations in extended loops, they delve deeply into the internal logic of each medium, finding and bending their limits through returning confrontations.

To follow Deleuze's example, the artists decline the simplistic mandate to "do as I say," traditionally offered in basic instruction. Instead, they embrace the ethos of "do with me," repeatedly courting the difference of the object they first picked up from the new, unique form they reiterate upon. This process invites chance, unfamiliarity, and promise into their pieces, diving into encounters like a student jumping into a pool before a lesson.

– Theo Belci and Dasha Aksenova

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Bios on next page.

Zhi Wei Hiu (b. Singapore) is an artist based in New York. She treats analog photography as a vocabulary of events, techniques, chemical processes and industrially produced materials, dissecting and reconstituting its elements into a sculptural dialect. Her sculptures mirror the entanglement of language, image, gesture, object and place in the constitution of memory. Recent exhibitions include *Silvered Wake, A Cast Lance* at RAINRAIN, *Industrial Dry* at Jack Barrett, curated by Francesca Altamura, *Sin Fatigue* at Salma Sarriedine Gallery, and *If Silt Saw A Window, When A Wave Flared Blue* (with Max Popov) at Putty's Coronation. She received her BFA in Photography from The New School in 2016.

Bradley Marshall lives and works in Queens, NY. His studio practice uses photography, video, and sculpture to hold formal and material aspects of the built environment alongside the personal and the historical, visualized through technical languages of joinery, fabrication, and machining. Recent exhibitions include *The Haunting of A Place that Longs for Your Arrival* at LVL3, Chicago, and *Since when did streets have mouths?* At Below Grand NYC. His work has been supported by The Working Artist Fund and Makerspace NYC. He received his MFA from East Tennessee State University in 2018 and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture.

Hanna Umin is an artist based in NYC. She navigates desire, labor, and denial: she desires, she labors, she is denied. In her practice, stylized melodrama magnifies discrepancies between material and referent, precipitating a semantic thunderclap: Hanna Umin examines tragedy and dissociative experience, at one turn with misanthropic pathos, at another with dark humor and performative spite. She was recently included in a group show at Fall River Museum of Contemporary Art, a duo booth with Xxijra Hii at NADA NY, and in a group show *Correspondences* at François Ghebaly. Umin has had solo exhibitions at mcg21xoxo in Matsudo, Japan; at *Love in Manhattan*; and at *Mole End*, in Queens. She has participated in multiple projects with *Underground Flower*, *No Moon*, and *Gern en Regalia*. She received her BFA (honors) from Camberwell College of Art, London in 2013.

Montana Simone (French-American, b. San Francisco, CA) is an artist based in New York. Working in sculpture and installation, she engages industrial materials, geological matter, and sensing technologies to build improbable structures in oblique combat with reality, its silence, hierarchies and mythologies. Recent solo exhibitions include *A Slice If They Knock* at Hofstra University, *Threes* at CLEA RSKY, and *Gap Fill* at Transpecos. She has been included in group exhibitions at Yale CCAM, SPY Projects and Site.004. She received her BSFS from Georgetown University and is an MFA candidate in Sculpture at Yale University.

Dasha Aksenova (b. Moscow) is an independent curator based in New York. In her practice, she focuses on site-specific installations and interdisciplinary projects. She is the co-founder of curatorial projects *New Uncanny* and *mockba*. Her recent shows include D&T's *Happy Hut*, *mockba*, New York; *See you soon*, New Uncanny, Berlin; *Time and Again*, Particolare x Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; *AGGLOMERATE*, New Uncanny x Zero Point, New York. She received her BA from The University of Chicago.