



## GISELA COLON: ATMOSPHERES

April 20 - June 17, 2017

**Artist Reception:** Thursday, April 20 from 6 - 8 PM

McClain Gallery is pleased to present *GISELA COLON: ATMOSPHERES*, the artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery. Colon (b.1966, Vancouver) was raised in Puerto Rico, and now lives and works in Los Angeles, California. She will be debuting several new free-standing sculptures as well as a selection of her enigmatic *Pods*, biomorphic, incandescent "non-specific objects" which are in a constant visual flux. The artist will be attending the opening reception.

Colon's work explores concepts of form, color and surface, while also navigating the more formal and influential aspects of Op-Art, Minimalism, California's Finish Fetish, and Light and Space movements. The work is striking upon first sight. Its enigmatic beauty gradually reveals itself as the viewer moves around the sculptures and the dimensional effects become apparent. Colon began experimenting with plastics in 2012 and has now perfected the process of blow-molding acrylic. She refines the inner layers which allow her to uniquely imbue her work with seemingly self-generated light. Art critic Mat Gleason explains, "Rather than have some technological trick embedded into the art, she has made objects that are

altered by the world around them yet never stop being themselves. The artist has thus delivered a meditation on the flexibility of the feminine as antidote to the rigidity of the masculine."

Colon moved to Los Angeles after receiving her BA from the University of Puerto Rico. She is one of the few female artists working in the Light and Space Movement. Unlike many of her California Minimalism predecessors, Colon does not outsource the production of her sculptures and instead sketches and produces her *Pods* in a small plastics facility outside Los Angeles. Being hands-on throughout the fabrication has allowed Colon to innovate and push the boundaries of her sculpture to a fetishistic level, while still maintaining a connection to natural forms. This area of warm hyper-minimalism is distinctly her own. Colon mentored under Minimalist veteran De Wain Valentine early in her career and often cites Donald Judd, Dan Flavin, Larry Bell, John McCracken, and Robert Irwin as other sources of inspiration. Puerto-Rican by origin, her work also reflects an early influence of Latin American artists such as Carlos Cruz-Diez and Jesús Rafael Soto. Colon's work thus also continues a conversation with the legacy of Op Art and the tradition of Latin American geometric modernism.

Colon's work is also an unabashed celebration of color. Her piece entitled *Ultra Spheroid Glo-Pod (Iridescent Lilac)*, initially reads as a transparent lilac and transforms to a deep teal or shimmering gold when viewed in differing ambient light. The ever-changing hues of Colon's pieces heighten the ethereal nature of each work. Critic and Art in America Contributor, Robert Mahoney specifies, "Colon's seamless colorations defy even the clear-cut divisions of the colors of the natural spectrum in a rainbow: it is this odd, even "unnatural" color flow that may account for the sometimes otherworldly "vibe" of her pods. Colon emphasizes the fact that the refusal of the color to subdivide into tones forces the eye to all but Platonically take in the multicolored wonder of the whole visual experience. By shifting seamlessly from color to color there is a hypnotic purpose underlying Colon's practice, rendering the viewer slack in front of a presence that, refusing to define itself, still, or only, in the end, registers as beautiful."

Colon's work is the subject of a traveling solo exhibition entitled *PODS* which has been presented at The Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH; International Museum of Art & Science, McAllen, TX; Castellani Art Museum, Niagara, NY; Museum of Arts & Sciences, Macon, GA; and will continue on to the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, San Angelo, TX; South Dakota Art Museum; Brookings, SD; Daum Museum of Contemporary Art, Sedalia, MO; Hilliard Art Museum, Lafayette, LA; and the Foosaner Art Museum, Melbourne, FL. Colon's work has also been included in thematic group exhibitions at the Chabot Museum, Rotterdam, The Netherlands; the Kunstmuseum Wilhelm-Morgner in Soest, Germany; and forthcoming at the Palmer Museum of Art, PA and the Kunstlandung, Aschaffenburg, Germany. Colon's sculptures are part of the permanent collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD), Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM), The Butler Institute of American Art, and Palm Springs Art Museum (PSAM), among others, as well as private collections such as The Fredrick Weisman Foundation, The Jarl Mohn Family Foundation, and The Rudin Foundation. Her sculptures were first introduced to Houston during McClain Gallery's 2016 group exhibition, *Radiant Space*.