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## Candida Alvarez: *De Colores*

November 2 – December 21, 2019

GAVLAK Palm Beach is pleased to present a selection of new paintings by the Chicago-based artist Candida Alvarez (b. 1955, Brooklyn, New York). *De Colores* is the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery, and the inaugural exhibition for the new Gavlak Palm Beach location in The Royal Poinciana Plaza.

The influences and ideas behind Candida Alvarez's complex and colorful abstract paintings range from art history to her rich Puerto Rican heritage and observations of her daily surroundings. Everything from the black and white checkered pattern of her studio floor and the vibrant colors of her mother's *bata* to the De Kooning painting *Excavation* at The Art Institute of Chicago occupy equal space on the canvas.

By incorporating quotidian patterns and palettes with formal abstraction, Alvarez delicately balances abstraction and representation. Shapes resembling flowers, a faceted jewel, bird wings or the form of a bumble bee are carefully woven into fields of pure, heightened color inspired by a bowl of mangos on the kitchen table. More carefully planned than gestural, the compositions of her paintings still retain a sense of motion, from the movement of people on the sidewalk below in Brooklyn to the movement of palm trees swaying in the tropical breezes. Lush and vibrant colors are layered with contrasting flat surfaces and depths that move between hard edge abstraction and flowing color field painting. The title of the exhibition, *De Colores*, is taken from the name of a popular Spanish folk song that was a strong influence on her parent's spiritual life. The song describes finding happiness through the vibrant colors and living beings found in nature. In this same sense, the song and her personal relationship to it guides Alvarez's own introspective search through painting and drawing.

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The writer and independent curator Terry R. Myers, in the forthcoming book *Candida Alvarez: Here. A Visual Reader*, describes Alvarez's paintings and process as "shapeshifting" in nature:

*Some time ago I concluded that Alvarez is not only a proficient pattern-maker but also a powerful shapeshifter in her work. Painting across the formal and personal aspects of everything from the procedures of her construction to the stories of her life, Alvarez interweaves the actual chronology of her work with a perpetual rearrangement of its various components to merge past, present, and future over and over again in painting after painting. Her work is kaleidoscopic and teleidoscopic in nature because its patterns are created from material found inside and outside of how the work itself can be seen as a measuring device. Paintings may be made with instruments, but they can be instruments, too, measuring all types of relationships between art and the world. Alvarez grabs tangible, meaningful, and colorful pieces of her life and situates them in open-ended structures that stay active even in a painting that, after all, stands still.*

- Terry R. Myers, "Recognize," in *Candida Alvarez: Here. A Visual Reader*. Green Lantern Press, Chicago, 2019.

For *De Colores*, a selection of recent paintings and works on paper exemplify this continued morphing nature of Alvarez's work, bringing in to focus some of the more personal moments in her life through travel, relationships, and familial bonds. The ten small 12 x 9 inch drawings on vellum were created in *plein-air* on location in both Ireland and Puerto Rico. One of the larger paintings, *Popsicle*, uses architectural motifs from her studio, the circular form and spokes from Marcel Duchamp's famous Bicycle Wheel sculpture, and the shape of a ring given to her by her son, among other things. The title itself, like many of her titles is a play on

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words, meant to add to the rich palette of colors in the painting itself, expanding upon the meaning and intended mystery of Alvarez's colorful style.

CANDIDA ALVAREZ (b. 1955, Brooklyn, NY) is a Puerto Rican-American artist and educator based in Chicago, IL. She holds the distinguished F.H. Sellers Professorship in Painting at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Alvarez's work has been featured at The Chicago Cultural Center, Chicago, IL; Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL; River-side Art Center, Riverside, IL; Museo de Arte, Santurce, Puerto Rico; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO; The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Houston, TX; The Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH; and The Bronx Museum of Art, Bronx, NY. Alvarez is a recipient of the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, the New York Foundation for the Arts Artists' Fellowship, and Mid-Atlantic-NEA Regional Fellowship. In September 2019 she also received a Painter & Sculptor Grant from the Joan Mitchell Foundation. Her work is included in the collections of The Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; El Museo Del Barrio, New York, NY; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, among others.

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