

SILVERLENS

By Force of Nature

James Clar

Silverlens New York
505 W 24th Street, New York
NY, USA 10011

9 March – 29 April 2023



Hidilyn Diaz, courtesy the artist and Silverlens, Manila and New York

Silverlens New York is pleased to present its first solo exhibition with James Clar, opening March 9, 2023. Titled *By Force of Nature*, the exhibition tracks the American artist's trans-pacific move to his parents' home country, the Philippines. This is the artist's third solo show with the gallery, following *Share Location* (2021), and *Noise Field #1* (2019) at Silverlens Manila.

Confronting the "American Dream," the show addresses disparities between Filipino and American cultures, honing in on geo-political power dynamics, cross-cultural (mis)translations, and individual versus communal identities. Lightworks and sculptures will be featured alongside new video installations and pieces made in collaboration with Olympian Hidilyn Diaz. In 2020, Diaz won the first-ever Gold Olympic Medal for the Philippines and has since become one of the nation's most beloved figures.

Clar's long-term practice fuses new media, pop-culture, and memory to explore the narrative potential of light and technology. Using themes of nationalism, globalism, and mainstream culture, Clar critiques the dissociative effects of technology itself in the age of mass information. Beyond his art career, he has three patents in the US for new engineering systems created while developing his light art. This upcoming exhibition marks a new phase for the artist as his work becomes more gritty and tactile than ever before. For Clar, this time it's personal.

Themes of matriarchal power are evident in Clar's collaboration with Olympic champion weightlifter and Air Force pilot, Hidilyn Diaz. Using a neurofeedback headset, Clar monitored Diaz's brainwave activity while she slept, exercised, and rewatched her Olympic victory, translating this data into lightworks. Walls are lined with towering sheets of deformed metal, which have been bent and crumpled by the force of Diaz dropping 250+ pound barbells on top. The piece is a monument to Filipino power and tenacity in the face of internal and external forces.

Other works in the show are more iconic of the artist's light- and technology-driven practice. A massive tetra grid light sculpture sits in the middle of the gallery. A video work mysteriously plays in a fish tank containing a live goldfish, featuring interviews with the parents of prominent Filipino artists. The parents speculate about their child's career, creating a tangential portrait of the artist and what is lost in translation between cultures and generations.

Clar's exhibition design guides the viewer through a narrative journey. He creates three distinct enclaves in the gallery as metaphors for different geographies, cultures, and phases in his own life. In one section he observes the Philippines as a self-defined outsider, looking in. Another area in

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the gallery comments on the geo-political and cultural relationship between the Philippines and its former colonizer, the United States. Bookending the two, where one enters and exits, the works come together as a portrait of the US and Clar's identity as an American.

By Force of Nature will open on March 9, 2023 and will be on view at Silverlens New York through April 29, 2023.

About Silverlens Galleries

Silverlens is an international gallery with locations in both Manila and New York. Through its artist representation, institutional partnerships, art consultancy, and exhibition programming including art fairs and gallery collaborations, Silverlens aims to place its artists within the broader framework of the contemporary art dialogue. Its continuing efforts to transcend borders across art communities in Asia have earned it recognition as one of the leading contemporary art galleries in Southeast Asia.

Silverlens was founded in Manila by Isa Lorenzo in 2004, and in 2007 she was joined by co-director Rachel Rillo. In September 2022, the gallery opened its doors in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York, broadening its international scope and bringing its diverse roster of artists to a new global audience.

About James Clar

James Clar is a light and media artist whose work has been included in numerous exhibitions at museums and galleries worldwide, as well as being in various private and institutional collections. His work explores the conceptual and narrative potential of light and technology. These systems are integrated into our daily lives, altering the way we receive information and communicate. They inform our perception of reality, time, and space. Every system for communication enhances certain types of information while limiting and simplifying others. These modulated effects to our perception have become a thematic focus to his works and a way to experiment with narrative forms. Clar was an artist in residence at Eyebeam Atelier in New York, Fabbrica in Italy, and the FedEx Institute of Technology/Lantana Projects in Memphis. His artwork has been included in exhibitions at Glucksman Museum (Dublin), The New Museum of Contemporary Arts (New York), Pera Museum (Istanbul), Cam Francis Museum (Barcelona), MACBA (Barcelona), and SeMA (Seoul). He has been commissioned to develop large scale installations for 21c Museum Hotels (Oklahoma), Parasol Unit Foundation for the Arts (UK), and Fraport Headquarters (Frankfurt).

Gallery Hours

The gallery is open Tuesdays to Saturdays, 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

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