

Claire Oliver Gallery

NEW YORK

Lauren Fensterstock: *Scrying*

VOLTA NY 2017 - Stand D4

Claire Oliver is pleased to announce the gallery's participation at the 2017 edition of Volta NY, with *Scrying*, a solo booth of new mixed media sculpture by Portland-based artist Lauren Fensterstock. The artist's newest works combine chromed and rubberized shell work with mouth blown and cold worked glass, conceptually questioning the current "selfie" obsession and a possible link between this and past social obsessions.

To navigate the intrigues of 16th century court life, Elizabeth I's astrologer John Dee obtained a black obsidian mirror carved by Aztecs from an early expedition to the New World. In a process called *scrying* Dee used this black handheld device to divine the future. Dee's mirror was seen as a magical contact point between present and future and the tangible and the metaphysical.



Scrying | work in progress

Two centuries later in the nearby English countryside, aristocratic tourists utilized another form of black mirror – named the *Claude Glass* after its alleged inventor Claude Lorrain- to momentarily capture the reflections of idyllic garden scenes. In this case, the black glass served as the means to view the world like a composed painting, with the viewer as the main subject. By holding the glass in an outstretched hand, one could look at ones' self in the idyllic pastoral landscape behind; the world could be seen through a carefully curated lens, rather than the naked complexity of lived experience.

In *Scrying*, Lauren Fensterstock's new body of work, the artist draws upon these diverse mirror histories to create a series of objects and installations that blend, upend, and poke fun at these precedents. Rendered entirely in black, Fensterstock's work casts a shadow blurring the logic of these seemingly distinct intellectual histories.



Scrying | work in progress

The installation is comprised of a large cabinet on the west wall of the stand, housing a series of handheld black glass objects that, when held up as a mirror, reflect an unnaturally large human in relation to the world around him. A series of rubber, glass and chrome wall pieces reflect and refract with black mouthblown glass mirrors. Viewed through today's lens of "selfie culture", we see man's continued struggle to hold dominance over nature and the natural world. Ultimately, mirrors provide a space for the viewer's own interpretation. *Scrying* will offer the visitor an opportunity to examine the cultural precedents that influence and shape our current worldviews; Fensterstock presents an opportunity to look out, beyond, and within.