

Press Release

## BLUE

Barbara Benish, Edgar Cruz & Kim Dingle at 515 gallery.

Opens February 18<sup>th</sup>, 5 p.m. runs until March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Located at the Bendex Building in downtown Los Angeles, 1206 Maple Ave.

Three uniquely individual artists come together under the theme of “Blue” for an exhibition at 515 gallery in downtown Los Angeles this month. The color simultaneously evokes emotions of melancholy and joy, beauty and solitude. Blue is a color that was rare in traditional dyes, imbuing it with a certain royal attitude in art. Blue is the color associated with the sea and water bodies, reminding us of our own bodies and connection to an eternal life-giving force. Blue is the color of jazz, and music as a protest to systemic racism. Blue is the color given to male organs. It is the color the body turns when it is beaten by another human.

Barbara Benish, who emigrated from L.A. to Czechoslovakia in 1992, and recently set up a studio again in California, has been working on a series of water-themed works for several decades. Engaged with issues of the environment and human impact on it, the use of black oil marks a stain and a presence that represents our dependence upon fossil fuels. Based now on the shores of the Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary in Northern California, this new series of paintings and collages reflect the abundant sea life in the protected waters, where the black bodies of whales and seals dip in and out of the blue horizon. Benish met recent art school graduate Edgar Cruz at a group show at VSF gallery last summer, curated by the late eco-artist Newton Harrison. Oaxacan artist Cruz’s lush cyanotypes portray human body parts in dancing shadows of sustained mobility. These connections are random, and yet perhaps not. Benish’s works have for decades addressed the disconnect of the human from nature and present a regenerative reconnection of our human bodies with that of the ‘natural’. Cruz’s cyanotypes are of the color that paper turns when exposed to sunlight, as in the harsh South Central light he grew up in, when chemicals and natural light react with an object in front of it. They present an integrative “incorporating materials and resources that are not only more accessible, but more connected to the natural processes of this world. Whether that’s through growing plants used for natural dyes, extracting natural pigments from fruit and flowers or salvaging and collecting plants.”

Veteran L.A. painter Kim Dingle extends the dialogue in blue with a strangely provocative new sculptural work, “Blue Balls” (2022). Known for her longtime portrayal of physically charged oil paintings depicting little girls in white dresses, this new piece continues the artists’ project to finish every work in her studio. Assembling the random objects laying around into art, (as always, with dark humor) like these blue chalk carpenter balls, the viewer is invited to ponder *blue balls*, on a pedestal. She concurs that the balls portray a motorcycle, some dogs, a horse, and a hamburger.

Each artist brings the reflections of the color blue: historically, systematically, chemically, environmentally, and symbolically into play in this evocative meeting of three artists with L.A. roots. Please join us on February 18<sup>th</sup> at gallery 515, in downtown Los Angeles at the Bendex building.

Barbara Benish [www.barbarabenish.com](http://www.barbarabenish.com), [instagram.com/@benishbarbara](https://www.instagram.com/@benishbarbara)

Edgar Cruz [www.edgarcruzart.com](http://www.edgarcruzart.com); [instagram.com/stuckoncentral](https://www.instagram.com/stuckoncentral).

Kim Dingle <http://www.kimdingle.net/about.html>; [instagram.com/@kimdingleart](https://www.instagram.com/@kimdingleart)