**Soften**, featuring Jessica Earle, Mica Smith, Morganne Radziewicz, Nadiya Nacorda, Sarah Barnett, and Azzah Sultan.

Curated by June T. Sanders and Katie Brand, *Soften* showcases artwork utilizing softness of form and aesthetics within video, painting, printmaking, and collage. In opposition to traditional patriarchal methods of achievement, a posture of softness is a way to create a new societal embodiment of care, inclusivity and equality. This diverse group show centers on the work of six artists using softness as a strategy of strength and exploring themes including human-nature relationship, transwomanhood, intimacy of relationships, immigrant-American life, holding onto culture, and living with chronic illness.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Close your eyes and think of the word “soft” or “soften.” What images or feelings do you have? Next, think of the word “achieve”. What images or feelings come to mind? Do you see reflections of any of the things you imagined in the artwork on display?

2. What is the value of “soft” ways of relating to ourselves or others? For instance, care, comfort, belonging, compassion, or warmth?

3. What does it mean to take (or not take) care of yourself in a time of crisis or pandemic? How will the current crisis change how we view routine, normalcy, productivity, childcare, care, health, and home?

4. What are traditional patriarchal methods for achievement? What are non-patriarchal methods for achievement? Make a list of each. Can you find any examples of any of these methods in the work on display?

5. In what ways are systems of patriarchal achievement ingrained in how we work or relate to others? How might those systems serve to disconnect us from ourselves; for instance, our culture, traditions, or identified gender?

6. How do the different mediums these artists use influence the way you respond to each work? Do you feel yourself reacting to these works softly? Strongly? Gradually? Quickly?