

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Sheryl Anaya: *Absurd Appetites (Tables for Two)* Opens at Cluley Projects with a Reception January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024

[Dallas, Texas – November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023] **CLULEY PROJECTS** is pleased to announce *Absurd Appetites (Tables for Two)*, an exhibition of new work by Fort Worth-based artist Sheryl Anaya. The exhibition will be on view January 6<sup>th</sup> through February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at Cluley Projects, 2123 Sylvan Avenue. **An opening reception will be held Saturday, January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, from 6 – 8 PM.** The gallery is open weekly Wednesday through Saturday, 12 – 5 PM and by appointment.

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*Absurd Appetites (Tables for Two)* follows Fort Worth-based artist Sheryl Anaya's thesis exhibition, *Let things taste of what they are*, for the completion of her MFA in Sculpture at Texas Christian University in 2023. Building on her previous work, Anaya's solo presentation at Cluley Projects deconstructs and reconceptualizes her multimedia installation piece; previously displayed as a single, large table, *Absurd Appetites (Tables for Two)* divides itself across the gallery space. Newly conceived ceramic dinnerware, video performances, and food confront themes of domestic labor, gender relations, and queer companionship with playful wit. Through organic craftsmanship and dramatic sincerity, Anaya distorts the archetypical "dinner table" into an environment where social, personal, and bodily consumption can be critiqued.

Anaya's ceramics and video performances make a game of their formal referents: *Absurd Appetites (Tables for Two)* casts everyday objects—spoons, forks, knives, plates, tablecloths—to both reflect and twist viewer's expectations. À la Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* (1974-9), Anaya utilizes familiar objects as a substrate to investigate the lived environment of gendered labor and women's historical invisibility. While Chicago exhibited individualized vulvas, giving women a "seat at the table," Anaya inserts *Minne di Sant'Agata*—Sicilian for *Saint Agatha's breasts*—a breast-shaped pastry that pays homage to the stomata of Catholic martyr Saint Agatha. After rejecting the Roman governor Quintianus, Agatha had her breasts forcefully removed leading to her eventual death. In *Absurd Appetites (Tables for Two)*, the story of Saint Agatha epitomizes the social consumption of women's bodies and compulsory heterosexuality.

In Sheryl Anaya's newest solo exhibition, absurd humor and historical reference probe ingrained social routines. Video performances projected onto small table settings reveal

the absurdity behind acts such as preparing a sandwich and playing with our food. The repurposing of men's button-down shirts as tablecloths and napkins reverses the association of femininity with domestic labor: Anaya suggests a way forward beyond viewing labor through a gender binary. In its newest arrangement, *Absurd Appetites (Tables for Two)* explores the intimacy of queer relationships, trading the banquet-style in its earlier iteration for bistro-style tables for couples. Through a thoughtful engagement with the body and food, Anaya's installation retools cultural objects into spaces for communal reflection.

*Absurd Appetites (Tables for Two)* will be Anaya's first solo exhibition with Cluley Projects.

### **About the Artist**

Sheryl Anaya is a Puerto Rican artist and educator based in Fort Worth, Texas. She received her Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art with an emphasis in Sculpture from Texas Christian University in 2023 and her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Texas Woman's University in 2013. Her work examines identity through the universality of the human experience, intimate relationships, and nostalgia, whether humorous or gut-wrenching.

Anaya has mounted solo exhibitions at Moudy Gallery, Fort Worth, TX; Browder Gallery, Dallas, TX; Blind Alley Projects, Fort Worth, TX, and Umbrella Gallery, Dallas, TX. Her work has been shown in group exhibitions, domestically and internationally, including The Arlington Museum of Art, Arlington, TX; The SOLUNA International Music and arts Festival, Dallas, TX; Kaktus Gallery, Akureyri, Iceland; The Latino Cultural Center, Dallas, TX, and The Washington Street Art Center, Somerville, Massachusetts.

### **About Cluley Projects and Erin Cluley Gallery**

Erin Cluley Gallery's satellite gallery Cluley Projects opened in April 2021 and is housed in an 1100 sq ft space on Sylvan Avenue within walking distance from the Belmont Hotel. Cluley Projects will act as an incubator space focusing on regional artists and providing a platform for discovery and mentorship.

Erin Cluley Gallery opened its doors in West Dallas in 2014, igniting a creative movement and acting as a hub for visual arts and community engagement. After nearly five years on Fabrication Street, the gallery moved its main operation to Riverbend – a development in Dallas' Design District celebrating the intersection between culture and commerce.

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