

## Unyimeabasi Udoh: No Vehicles

21 May – 4 July 2026

Private View: Thursday, 21 May, 6-8pm

Alma Pearl is pleased to announce *No Vehicles*, a solo exhibition of new work by London-based Nigerian American artist Unyimeabasi Udoh (b. 1996, USA). Udoh is an artist working at the forefront of sign and symbol in contemporary art alongside their attendant materialities across a range of media. This exhibition brings together a series of wall-based sculptures fabricated from materials commonly associated with road infrastructure such as aluminium and retroreflective glass. *Diversions*, a series of screenprints based on photographs of advertising billboards and hoardings captured in London across the past year, complements and contextualises the broader concerns of Udoh's practice and its engagements with the materiality of language, image and sign.

The meticulously executed wall-based signs, made using cold wax medium, pigment and retroreflective glass beads, are activated by light and perception. As viewers move through the space, their surfaces shift in appearance—alternately luminous, opaque, or seemingly void. Subtle gradations of tone destabilise the surface, producing a flickering effect that resists a fixed reading, thus revealing the polysemy of the seemingly universal fluency of the pictographic image. With their low-contrast, waxen surfaces, these signs become estranged from their functional origins and instead operate as propositions about the absence of direction, the ordering of space, and ultimately the politics of visibility.

The exhibition's title, *No Vehicles*, refers to the language of prohibition embedded within road signage. The main group of circular works appear as signs without visible text. They are not, however, incomplete: the empty circle is the official symbol for 'no vehicles' as regulated by the UK's Department for Transport. The instruction thus enters the realm of the absurd: how might we be expected to recognise the absence of a symbol to signify a prohibition of presence? Devoid of explicit instruction, the signs occupy a space of suspended meaning—objects that signal without declaring.

Language remains present but displaced. This is contained within the titles of the works rather than inscribed on their surfaces:

*No Vehicles (O Petrol)*

*No Vehicles (Milkmaid)*

*No Vehicles (Sister)*  
*No Vehicles (Siren)*  
*No Vehicles (Maenad)*

The subtitles introduce narrative, intimacy, and metaphor without materially manifesting text. The signifier exists, but it is only ever deferred.

*Contemplazione*—a shift to Italian that relates to the artist's experience of linguistic dislocation and accommodation to new languages and systems of signs—stands apart within the presentation as the only work from the series that explicitly features text on its surface. Drawing from a personal moment of encountering the immensity of water—a pause marked by stillness and sublimity—and based off of an actual sign seen in the suburbs of Messina, the work compresses vastness into minimal form. A deep blue field evokes depth and distance. Yet here, the sublime is radically reduced: immensity translated into restraint, atmosphere condensed into surface.

Throughout *No Vehicles*, void and invisibility are not absences but active conditions. The works are evocative of atmosphere and location yet remain materially grounded in aluminium and glass. What appears blank is charged. What appears mute is structured by language. Colour operates as a signifier, even when language and text are suspended.

Unyimeabasi Udoh's visual vocabulary resonates with the perceptual and materially attuned traditions of Postminimalism and Light and Space, and these practices offer a context in which Udoh employs a minimal, stripped-back aesthetic to foreground the phenomenological experience of looking. Udoh's engagement with the materials of urban infrastructure introduces here a distinct tension between the poetic and the regulatory, the contemplative and the directive.