

The approach

Slip

Olga Balema, Heidi Bucher, Sophie Bueno-Boutellier, Alice Channer, Nicolas Deshayes,
Patrick Hill, Magali Reus, Richard Serra

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Slip explores artist's engagement with sculptural materiality, production processes, allusions and connections between corporality and architecture, liquids and surfaces, nature and artifice and two vs three dimensionality. The exhibition takes as a point of reference Marcel Duchamp's concept of the 'infra-thin', the minimal sensory space which he describes as 'the warmth of a seat that has just been left, when tobacco smoke smells also of the mouth, or the difference between two mass produced objects from the same mould'. Each artist navigates a space through a materiality of anatomy and environment, be that industrial, technological or organic. In each case there is a dynamic tension between the intrinsic transformative states of matter.

Olga Balema (b. 1984 Lviv, Ukraine, Lives and works in Berlin) presents a series of sculptures consisting of raw materials, found items, and hand made parts submerged in water and sealed in an outer shell of soft PVC plastic. Assembled on site, the sculptures are low, malevolent looking objects changing appearance during the course of the exhibition. The process of mutual agitation between water, concrete, and steel affects their colour and internal texture. The sculptures possess a physical presence that not only absorbs space but also insists on the objects existence in reality outside the human. Balema's work explores materiality, in particular as it relates to objects and subjects that exist on the border between the alive and the inanimate.

In the mid-1970's, Heidi Bucher (b. 1926, Winterthur, CH, d. 1993 Brunnen, CH) began to dip old underwear, shirts and aprons into latex, transforming the garments into smooth pictorial surfaces. She soon extended her practice to creating latex 'skins' of furniture, architectural features and whole rooms. The intensely physical process of skinning the rooms is a performative action, which the object is only one part of. The objects themselves have a unique quality, as the casts are taken from very personal spaces known to the artist and are psychologically resonant as such. Often her latex works are covered in a pearlescent pigment that distances them from the original. Like very few artists of her generation, Bucher emphasises how strongly the human body remains bound up with architectonic reality and how memories, obsessions and dreams are materialised in the surface of interior spaces.

Alice Channer's work (b. 1977, Oxford, UK, Lives and works in London) traces the disappearance, mutation and possible evolution of a body and of materials in post-industrial environments. *E-Lites* is comprised of stretched elastics that extend from the floor to the ceiling of the gallery. Suspended from the elastics are aluminium casts of clothing's edges or entranceways, like an arm hole or waistband, reflecting Channer's on-going concern of revealing the absent or negative space of the body. The stretched oval shape of the waistband doubles up for a 'smoke ring' – an object consumed and then exhaled to form a temporary residual shape in the air. The casting process transforms the object through various toxic, liquid-solid states to finally being chromed—entering into a highly industrial manufacturing process. Machined and hand polished marble cuffs at the base anchor the work and add to the dynamic tension. This is coupled with the digitally printed silk work *1 Terabyte*. This work shifts from human to non-human scale and from condensed technological data to expanded silk materiality.

The works of Sophie Bueno-Boutellier (b. 1974 FR, Lives and works in Berlin) sit between the materiality of painting and sculpture. The two gestures that make up Bueno-Boutellier's work are the painting and the folding of the canvas. Both intuitive and induced by the materials, they seem to complete each other, each following a different characteristic of the material, its malleability, its severity and its potential entropy. There is a liberating ambivalence as to what they are: as minimal surfaces, they have no direct pictorial reference, but create a sensual textural reality. At the same time, Bueno-Boutellier's engagement with the surfaces and edges of the canvas, gives them a sense of inhabiting the wall they hang on, a relationship of contact to another surface. Conscious of their architectonic presence, as well as their physical creation, the works seem to carry the memory of the manipulation they have been subject to.

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Nicolas Deshayes (b. 1983, France, Lives and works in London) explores the architectural surfaces and 'skins' of our bodies as a parallel threshold, drawing connections between the human subject and its residual traces and the industrial, corporate landscape. His works often have an organic quality but are created using mass production techniques. For example in his work in this exhibition, a visceral, textured, vacuum-formed clear plastic mound is made by pouring plaster into a mould and moving it around when it was in a state between liquid and solid. It stretches and slumps, eventually coloured in the toxic palette formed by a chemical reaction with the aluminium. This mould reappears in various incarnations in different works, as mass production becomes customised.

Patrick Hill (b. 1972, Royal Oak, MI, Lives and works in Los Angeles) makes concrete paintings which traverse the relationship between two and three-dimensional space. In both his sculptures and his paintings, a view of the 'whole' is never possible; the viewer is forced to physically navigate the space and different views onto and through the work. The paintings are covered in heavily applied concrete, a classic building material staple, which brings them closer to relief than traditional painting. When wet, the concrete is changeable and Hill captures in its form a sweep of movement, which then sets as a preserved action. The pink, purple and blue palette of bruised flesh tones reoccurs within Hill's abstract, bodily sculptural vocabulary of pierced, leaking, hard and soft surfaces.

Magali Reus (b.1981, Den Haag, Lives and works in Amsterdam) is interested in the dynamics of sculptural materials and the aesthetics and architecture of our movement through transitional and public spaces. In her video *Highly Liquid*, the body of a male figure is shot in slow-motion high definition. The video features a man's body in extreme close-up: the details of his figure are in friction with a continuous flow of water from an unspecified source. The man himself remains neutral and detached; his age, character and whereabouts undefined and irrelevant, as the fragmented vignettes of image flatten what might be a full body, into a single plane of focus. In a kind of mechanised voyeurism, the camera pans his abstracted contours, obsessively trained on the dips, outlines and sculpted moments of skin. This is combined in this exhibition with the sculpture *Parking (Window)*, a resin version of a modular stadium chair, a common feature of public architecture. All the works in this series refer to the form of the original, but deviate in their colour, texture and appendages. Instead of inviting the activities of sitting or rest, these chairs act as platforms for further object interruptions: things that prop open, divide, hold locked and surround, are integrated in and around the forms.

Richard Serra's (b.1939, San Francisco, Lives and works in New York) film *Hand Catching Lead*, 1968, reconfigures a transitory action as a sculptural form. Serra's hand continuously attempts to catch falling lead elements. When he does catch one, he immediately lets it go. The artist's hand becomes blackened by the lead over the course of the film, emphasising the hand as the sculptural form as well as the object. There is an echo of his early process based works *Splashing* and *Casting* created by throwing lead against his studio floor, the act of aggression creating casts from the impact and exposing the physical properties of industrial materials. In *Hand Catching Lead*, the gesture is fleeting rather than fixed and the object has a fluid rhythm of perpetual falling. On this loop, it is never captured and instead is forever in a state of potential materiality.

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