

## WALLSPACE

### SOFT MATTER

Curated by Justin Beal

Archizoom Associati

Becky Beasley

Hans Breder

Tom Burr

Talia Chetrit

Gaylen Gerber

Luisa Lambri

Enzo Mari

Carlo Mollino

Michael E. Smith

June 26 - August 1, 2014  
Reception: June 26th 6-8pm

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Wallspace is pleased to announce *Soft Matter*, a group exhibition organized by New York based artist Justin Beal. The show borrows its title from a classification of material including organic matter, plastics, and foams used as a curatorial subcategory in Ezio Manzini's 1989 survey of postmodern design, *The Material of Invention*. Manzini takes the term from French physicist Pierre-Gilles de Gelles, who used it to describe matter, both biological and synthetic, which self-organizes into physical structures whose behavior cannot be predicted by their microscopic constituents or their macroscopic whole. Tracing Beal's interests in his own sculptural practice, this grouping of work expands the notion of soft matter to include the unconventional manipulation of rigid architectural forms, the indexical relationship between body and furniture and the physical presence of objects that have the plasticity to shift between disciplines. The exhibition includes works by Enzo Mari, Carlo Mollino, Luisa Lambri, Tom Burr, Talia Chetrit, Gaylen Gerber, Becky Beasley, Hans Breder, Michael E Smith and Archizoom Associati.

Perhaps closest to the physical definition of soft matter, Gaylen Gerber's *Support* appropriates the expanded polyurethane *Puffo*, designed by the Italian collective Gruppo Strum, into his own monochromatic lexicon with a coat of white oil paint. In the same room, the iconic rubber, chrome and leather, *Mies Chair*, by the design collective Archizoom Associati, is presented disassembled on the floor as it was pictured in an early production photograph.

Luisa Lambri's photographs of Erich Mendelsohn and Serge Chermayeff's *De La Warr Pavilion* and Carlo Scarpa's *Brion Cemetery* capture "the synthesis of structural economy and ergonomic form" that Kenneth Frampton describes in his seminal essay *Carlo Scarpa and the Adoration of the Joint* and which embody Scarpa's distinctly organic reinterpretation of late modernism. While Carlo Mollino regularly referenced the female body as a generative form in his architectural work (most notably Turin's *Teatro Regio*), he transformed his own domestic environments into elaborate and enigmatic sets for hundreds of polaroids of models and prostitutes taken over the course of a decade beginning in the late sixties. In contrast to Mollino's portraits, Hans Breder's photographs from the same time present fractured limbs and mirrors in the unadorned studio, exaggerating the haptic relationship between body, furniture and sculpture.

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This relationship is present in different ways in the work of Talia Chetrit, Michael E. Smith and Tom Burr, where mundane objects are imbued with a metonymic relationship to the body. A similar metonymy emerges in the cucumber forms photographed and cast in brass in works from Becky Beasley's recent exhibition *Spring Rain*. In all cases, a restrained or sexualized body is alluded to but not present in the physical material of the work or the object pictured.

Finally, a selection of Enzo Mari's *Bambu* and *Pago-Pago* vases (the latter pictured above), manufactured by Danese in the late 1960's, exemplify the literal exploration of the plasticity of soft matter within the history of industrial design.

As a whole, the works in this show evoke moments when the corporeal enters the restrained space of architecture and design, succinctly described in Mark Wigley's essay, *Untitled, The Housing of Gender*: "Before it can defend the body, architecture must defend itself against the body by ordering it... place is not simply a mechanism for controlling sexuality. Rather, it is the control of sexuality by systems of representation that produces space."

For more information or for images please contact Nichole Caruso:  
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Please note the gallery will be closed July 4<sup>th</sup> and thereafter will shift to summer hours: Monday - Friday and closed Saturdays.