THE POET-ENGINEERS

Or how to deploy and artwork's truth procedure to contemplate its real effects

YUJI AGEMATSU, AMERICAN ARTIST, NAIRY BAGHRAMIAN, DEXTER SINISTER, TRISHA DONNELLY, ISA GENZKEN, TISHAN HSU, PIERRE HUYGHE, FLINT JAMISON, JONATHAN LASKER, SAM LEWITT, SCOTT LYALL, HELEN MARTEN, K.R.M. MOONEY, JEAN-LUC MOULÈNE, R. H. QUAYTMAN, FLORIAN PUMHÖSL, WACŁAW SZPAKOWSKI, CHEYNEY THOMPSON

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88 Eldridge Street & 36 Orchard Street

88 ELDRIDGE STREET

JEAN-LUC MOULÈNE
Pyramid'os, 2020
Bronze, green patina
21 1/4 x 30 3/8 x 25 5/8 inches (54 x 77 x 65 cm)
Edition of 3 + 2 APs
[JM1771.20]

Note:
The human body, its organs and its limbs constitute a lexical repertoire on which many tongues have drawn to form many picturesque expressions. From Leonardo da Vinci to Corbusier, the human body has also served as a reference, as a measure. It can be its own standard or part of geometry, or even serve as a unit in a space structured by its proportions.

Echoing this history and these uses, Jean-Luc Moulène has constructed a pyramid with the long bones of the four human limbs. The leg bones—femurs, tibiae and fibulae—join the arm bones—humeri, radii et ulnae—in the pyramid's skeleton. Thus each of the four joints at the figure's four vertices—elbows and knees—suffers a dismemberment to follow the laws of geometry.

The form erected by Moulène is empty in its heart. This absence reveals the margins to which the lower and upper limbs have been relayed, leaving to the heart, the lungs and the brain their dominant function. The artist defines his pieces as documentary sculptures. This composition bears witness to the representations that constitute our bodies.

— Balthazar Lovay

INQUIRE

K.R.M. MOONEY
Deposition c. (iii), 2021
Electroplated steel, silver, cuttlebone, aluminum
10 5/8 x 2 1/8 x 3 inches (27 x 5.4 x 7.6 cm)
[KM1005.21]

Note:
Cuttlebone is a biogenic material. It is composed primarily of aragonite. Its chambered, gas filled shell is used for buoyancy control. The material's early human uses include grinding it up for polishing powder, which was used by goldsmiths. The powder was also added to toothpaste and used as an antacid for medicinal purposes or as an absorbent. Today, cuttlebone is commonly used as calcium-rich dietary supplements for domestic animal species.

Because cuttlebone is able to withstand high temperatures and is easily carved, it serves as a mold-making material for small metal castings for the creation of jewelry and small sculptural objects. Jewelers prepare cuttlebone for use as a mold by cutting it in half and rubbing the two sides together until they fit flush against one another. Then the casting can be done by carving a design into the cuttlebone, adding the necessary sprue, melting the metal in a separate pouring crucible, and pouring the molten metal into the mold through the sprue. Finally, the sprue is sawed off and the finished piece is polished.

Cuttlebone as an integrated material in this new series of works takes on a center position. Using vertical forms installed to act as an environment or partial enclosure consisting of cold-rolled steel that is electroplated with silver. The result is an iteration of forms that indexes the multiple histories of their production while still sensitive to the future conditions of their display. Atmospheric qualities, the forms' assembly, handling, exposure to light, air, moisture, subtly and continuously affects the unfolding of each surface. The dimensions of the channel are taken from vertical lighting ballasts. Silver electroplating is a large part of the energy and power distribution industries, which rely on plated surfaces to improve corrosion protection and surface conductivity, lubricity and solderability between forms and circuits. The channel, clip and cleats have been machined and fabricated as to be plated as all one piece - ensuring its total primacy, its assembly makes no distinction between sculptural form and the supports required for its display.

The integration of cuttlebone itself is derived from its use as a mold and formalizes the material as a diagram of flows, evidenced by metal throughways including notches and marks made for each dependent counterpart.

Registration lines and keys, pouring channels, scaffolding which engages the natural structure of the form, breaking off shapes and fragments with a certain guide uses the inherited behavior of the soft, brittle, foam line nature of the cuttlebone versus its rigid and stable backing.

— K.R.M. Mooney

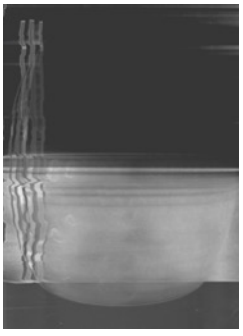
ISA GENZKEN
Untitled, 2017
Two mannequins, clothes, shoes, fabric, leather, glass, metal, paper bag, spray paint
Overall dimensions installed: 75 5/8 x 78 3/4 x 39 3/8 inches (192 x 200 x 100 cm)
[IG1000.17]

Note:
Genzken has created works of complexity that draw upon a rich body of autobiographical images culled from her entire life history. Her visage is captured in informal snapshots, more formally composed portraits, and staged, theatrical poses. Collaged and inserted among the materials and sculptural vocabulary that have typically defined her practice in recent years, these images and their inclusion seem to mark an accelerated interest on Genzken's part in positioning, quite literally, her body, image, and, indeed, her self into her work.

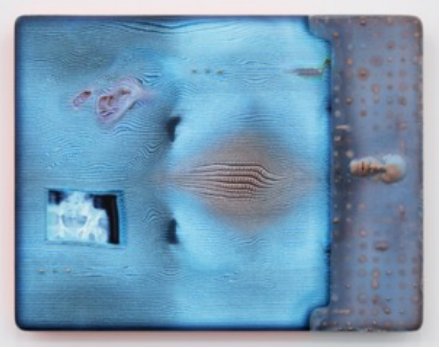
This tendency has taken on a fascinating complexity in the very recent bodies of sculpture that Genzken started producing in 2012 that use commercially produced mannequins of various shapes, sizes, and colors as their elemental foundation. These Schauspieler (Actors) are stylized, humanoid forms that give structure to a parade of characters Genzken has costumed not only with her signature materials, including foils, plastics, reflective materials, eyewear, and fashion accessories, but in an ultimate act of self-identification and self-inscription, she also often clothes the models in spectacular garments from her personal wardrobe. Designer jeans and blouses and brilliant yellow and leather jackets custom made for Genzken and worn by her for years now take their place in her art as sculpture, alongside unusual garments she buys specifically for these works, each of which she identifies variously as characters, such as "Death," "urban cowboy," and "alien." These powerful acts of autobiography, dense with physical and psychological significance, have escalated in recent years, taking on an increasing relevance as Genzken continues to dissolve the borders that separate the artist's practice and her body.

— Jeffrey Grove, Isa Genzken's Homage to Herself (excerpt), in *Isa Genzken: Retrospective* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2013)

TRISHA DONNELLY
Untitled, 2015
Digital image, still projection
Dimensions variable
Edition of 3 + 2 APs
[TD1001.15]



TISHAN HSU
Breath, 2021
UV print, silicone on wood
48 x 62 x 4 inches (121.9 x 157.5 x 10.2 cm)
[TH1209.21]



Note:
In this latest work, Tishan Hsu extends motifs from his visual vocabulary, here warped and morphed by the use of an advanced image processing software. His use of a metal screen and silicone merging with an image of part of a naked body, in combination with this subtle new technological intervention, produces a kind of concrete memory effect consistent with Hsu's long-standing interest in probing the cognitive and physical effects of transformative technological advances on our lives. Bodies morphing into hardware and screens become part of a larger corporeal entity.

YUJI AGEMATSU
zip: 11.01.18 . . . 11.30.18, 2018
Mixed media in cigarette pack cellophane wrappers (30 units)
on wood backed acrylic shelf, latex paint wrappers
each approx.: 2 1/2 x 2 1/8 x 1 inches (6.3 x 5.3 x 2.5 cm)
shelving unit: 26 1/2 x 34 1/4 x 5 1/4 inches (67.3 x 87 x 13.3 cm)
[YA1346.18]

Note:
One of the distinguishing features of the singular art that Yuji Agematsu has been creating in New York for over thirty years is that within his work the distance separating the activity of collecting from that of making art has collapsed once and for all. What brings the two together, what makes one equal to the other, if you will, is the primacy of the artist's incisive and sustained acts of observation.

In the ongoing *zip* series, Agematsu collects urban detritus on his daily walks and arranges his findings in cigarette box cellophane wrappers. The ensuing mini-sculptures are then displayed in calendar formation on acrylic glass shelving units.

FLORIAN PUMHÖSL
Warped Relief (UC), 2021
Acrylic and pigment on folded metal sheet mounted on Dibond
63 x 84 inches (160 x 213.4 cm)
[FP1319.21]

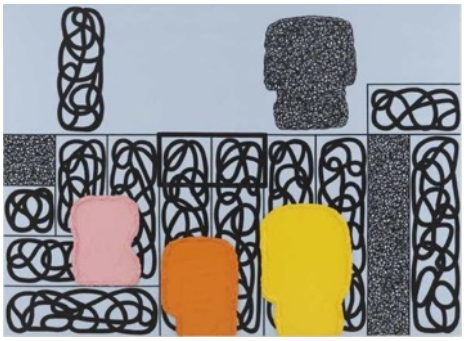
Note:
This new large-scale, folded metal sheet relief is an advancement of Florian Pumhösl's work with this material. He furthers his interest in abstract structures, which now bring to mind containers rather than graphic composition. The exquisite hand-mixed pigment invokes a seascape merging with marshland greenery crossed by field lines, such as the geographic formations of a coast. This aesthetic vocabulary marks a formal engagement with the nature of boundaries through the core interaction of the line and the basin.

JEAN-LUC MOULÈNE
Trophy - Soft Core 1 (Paris, 2019), 2019
Foam and epoxy resin
31 x 14 x 15 1/2 inches (78.6 x 35.7 x 39.3 cm)
[JM1503.19]

Note:
This complex object manifests a body without organs, using a 3D scan of the interior of a wild boar's ribcage to make a negative mold by which the final sculpture is then produced. The ribcage's cavity is turned into a volume and milled. "There's one in which the rib cage is more developed and the belly is a little more contracted," Moulène notes. "With the other, it's the inverse. It's a bit like the phenomenon of breathing." Rather than creating an arrested object, the resulting forms constitute the embodiment of a process.

JONATHAN LASKER
Universal Affect, 2008
Oil on linen
75 x 100 x 3 inches (190.5 x 254 x 7.6 cm)
[JLR1001.08]

Private collection



Note:
Jonathan Lasker's paintings separate and objectify to their respective limit the basic elements of painting, such as drawing, figuration, color, foreground and background, as well as the material of paint itself. Slowed down and reduced to an existence as identifiable, finite ingredients, they recombine in striking compositions that stretch the eye towards a new visuality.

FLINT JAMISON
Applicate 3.1, 2020
Red oak wood, aluminum, hardware, motors, controller, power supply
25 1/2 x 28 1/2 x 5 3/4 inches (64.8 x 72.4 x 14.6 cm)
[AJ1053.20]

Note:
This motorized sculpture features a moving wooden shelf that cycles through the collection of the Jacob Lawrence Gallery at the University of Washington in Seattle. The shelf is programmed to move up and down according to the ideal viewing height for each work in the collection. While the collection is housed within the University's School of Art, where Jamison is a member of the faculty, the wood itself was sourced from the school's wainscoting.

NAIRY BAGHRAMIAN

Big Valve, 2016
Zinked metal, painted polyurethane, polycarbonate
72 7/8 x 72 7/8 x 13 inches (184.9 x 184.9 x 32.9 cm)
[NB1001.16]

Note:
While most of her earlier works tended towards architectural, abstract, or theatrical forms, in more recent years they progressively revealed organic alliterations, in the form of bones, teeth, vertebral columns, heart valves, and other fibers that ensure bodily functions between the skeleton and skin. The timeliness of using the body as a point of reference for three-dimensionality — its absence being the essential point of departure for all artistic sculptural practice — remains as unbroken as ever.

Big Valve is an erect formation of hinged acrylic glass objects, formally reminiscent of police protection shields and heart valves, which directs visitors further along their route, as if they were the blood requiring regulation in order to flow.

R. H. QUAYTMAN

I Love–The Eyelid Clicks/I See/Cold Poetry, Chapter 18, 2010
Oil, silkscreen ink, gesso on wood
32 3/8 x 20 inches (82.2 x 50.8 cm)
[RQ1281.10]

Note:
This chapter draws on two sources, the photography collection of SFMOMA and the poetry of San Francisco poet Jack Spicer (1925–65). Apsara DiQuinzio and I decided to include our correspondence—which was written while I was working on the paintings—in the exhibition brochure. The following is an excerpt:

Dear Apsara DiQuinzio,

... The core issue of "Chapter 18" involves the following: how to bring the two "damned mediums," as Spicer calls them—photography on one hand and language on the other—into a painting, one receiving the static transmission of the other and hopefully losing in the transmission some of its claim to authority. The painting further tries to counter the almost overwhelming pull of both the photograph and the text into the space of the viewer.

All but one of the photographs I am using from SFMOMA's collection are by unknown photographers. Copyright considerations originally limited me to this group, but in retrospect the anonymity of these photographers is apt in relation to Spicer, paralleling as it does the eclipsing of self so evident in his practice.

[...]

For Spicer, the camera was often used as a metaphor for how the arrival of the poem occurred: "Poetry, almost blind like a camera." In other words, the poem isn't inspired by the deepest self or by ego, but rather is received the way a radio picks up signals. The self of Spicer is not entirely lost, however, being heard usually in the form of anger, or a mordant humor with which the poet is displaced from the traditional or assumed space of the author to a space in which one looks at the unfolding of the poem from outside the poem. As Spicer writes: "Invasion itself might be a better metaphor for poetry than inspiration."3 When this happens, the poet has no choice but to transmit the invasion: "If this is dictation it is driving me wild."4 This transmission or dictation is frightening, dangerous even: "It is as if we conjure the dead and they speak only through our own damned trumpets, through our damned medium."5 The fairylike transmission back to Spicer, via the poem, is "you can't see us in spiritland, and we can't see at all."6

I am trying to "take dictation" from the materials at hand, but realize, and this is the hardest issue, that when words appear near images they supplant the painting. Language wins all the time over image. I want to delay or suppress this phenomenon through optical manipulation. This chapter is a battle between words and images. I realize that text on or above an image is a title, text over an image is an advertisement, and text beneath it is a caption. None of these orientations is right for this poetry. I also realize that a picture is not worth a thousand words and that its worth is based in its very departure from language. It is through this linguistic absence that the picture can counteract the radical unresponsiveness or indifference of nature/"the outside" toward the individual. One interesting footnote is that Spicer showed his poems hanging on a wall as if they were paintings at the Six Gallery. Having studied linguistics, Spicer, believed in the materiality of language—its flatness as opposed to its communicative function.

— R. H. Quaytman

PIERRE HUYGHE
Mind's Eye (L), 2021
Synthetic and biological material aggregate, micro-organisms, generative adversarial network, 3D print
Materials: glass, synthetic resin, silicone, copper alloy, colophonium, minerals, bone, calcium, protein, sodium, sugar, agar agar, bacteria
39 x 69 x 32 1/4 inches (100 x 175 x 82 cm)
[PH1502.21]

Note:
Mind's Eye (L) is a materialized deep image reconstruction, a mental image output from *UUmwelt*, first presented at the Serpentine in 2018. *UUmwelt* is a co-production of imagination between human and machine, using a brain-computer interface.

A set of elementary components – building blocks of a speculative situation – were given as images or descriptions to be imagined by a subject, among them biological entities, prehistoric tools, machines, code, and artworks. As the subject imagines these components, brain activity was captured by an fMRI scanner and an engineered deep neural network learned to recognize the brain-data patterns and then attempted to reconstruct the mental images.

Mental images can circulate from mind to mind, outside the realm of appearance, as synthetic telepathic conversation, or be externalized from the subjects' minds and manifest themselves physically.

Mind's Eye (L) is an artefact of the imaginary realm, a precipitate occupying the space. It lies in an ambiguous continuity between human visual imagination, artificial intelligence, data and matter.

The aggregate of materials modifies itself and the environment at its own pace.

— Pierre Huyghe

SAM LEWITT
Stock (Bombyx Mori), 2021
Archival pigment print in raw shantung silk wrapped frame
19 3/8 x 24 1/8 inches (49.2 x 61.3 cm)
Framed dimensions: 28 7/8 x 30 3/8 x 1 inches (73.3 x 77.2 x 2.5 cm)
[SL1333.21]

Note:
Stock (Bombyx Mori) depicts isolated fragments of the anatomy of an average domesticated silk moth. These images are drawn from a 3D model of the moth produced with software made for the advertising and film/television industry. Lewitt has rendered views of this model into static prints, abstracting its surfaces with varying levels of detail and focus. Here tessellated camber comes up against fleshy reveal, false light spilling in at a resolution beyond any camera's reach. Encased in raw silk frames, the material that supports and encloses these prints point to the intermediate product – the cocoon – of the work performed by the depicted creature. The moth model, native only to the environment of production software, is a precise kind of abstraction, sheathed in its silk frame's promise of reality.

The broad connotation of the word 'stock' commonly evokes a store of goods or share of wealth. One immediate association with Lewitt's work might be the invocation of stock images: context free pictures available for use in promotional material – held in reserve as intermediary to some yet to be determined meaning. The images in *Stock* (*Bombyx Mori*) might themselves be considered something like generic appearances of intermediacy, transitioning between inanimate goods and livestock.

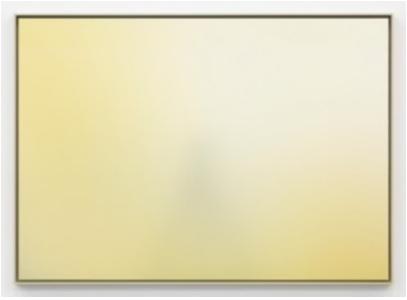
This is appropriate to the subject of the silk moth, an ancient example of animal husbandry, whose instrumental role in generating silk issues from its natural process of transformation. Bombyx mori is a living inversion of the telos of means and ends, where its cocoon, the natural byproduct of metamorphosis, is the central element of the textile production process. The long history of harvesting this animal's silk cocoons has caused such dramatic genetic changes in both morphology and behavior that the animal is unable to survive without human aid. Both caterpillar and moth's bulky size hinder it from concealment, exacerbated by its loss of camouflaging pigmentation. It is also flightless and cannot feed. Fully dependent on patterns of human industry, the moth's wings and mouthparts have atrophied to residual ornaments. Its survival depends on a highly designed and formatted environment that facilitates its orchestrated rhythms of reproduction.

The moth model in *Stock* (*Bombyx mori*) might then be understood as the technically fabricated appearance of a biologically engineered species. These images result from a calculated modeling of nature. But the nature that is modeled is itself formed by the technical needs of the production process. Lewitt treats these as inextricable and irreducible moments in a circuit, belonging to the same uneasy movement by which natural processes become encased in social forms, and social forms appear as if they were natural: presumably having sprung whole from some cocoon.

Stock (*Bombyx Mori*) might then be understood not simply as images of a model, but as models of an image, where life appears as an immense accumulation of calculations.

SCOTT LYALL

Talent 17, 2021
Gold nano particles and acrylic gel medium on ink printed glass, mirror
48 x 67 1/2 x 2 inches (121.9 x 171.5 x 5.1 cm)
[SL2256.21]



Note:
Lyall's *Talents* are comprised of two compressed sheets of glass. The back sheet is a mirror; the front pane is printed on the inside with a unique, yet potentially infinite progression of colored pixels to constitute a polychrome surface that calls to mind a monochrome. A mixture of gel medium and Nano-particles of gold is then applied by the artist's hand to the outside surface to complete the work – the painter, perhaps, as window cleaner. Activated by the mirror's reflective play of light, the pixels produce a diffused hue or colored aura. In containing gold, the mixture also recalls the etymology of talent (in Latin, the amount of metal in a coin). Akin to golden backgrounds in Cimabue paintings, the gold creates an effect of groundlessness, the fundamental reality of abstraction itself. Simultaneously reflective and absorbing, the painted *Talent* oscillates between a world-reflecting image and an adventure of embodiment. At its core, the work both engages and subverts the two essential categories of contemporary art: the mirror, and the monochrome.

HELEN MARTEN

Knockoff Venus, 2015
Screen printing and painting on leather, suede, cotton, velvet; stained and sprayed Ash; inlaid Formica; Walnut; cast Jesmonite
118 x 98 1/2 x 4 1/4 inches (299.7 x 250.2 x 10.8 cm)
[HM1004.15]

Jill and Peter Kraus collection

Note:
When archaeologists dig with hopes of unearthing nameable fragments, they seek to return latent abstractions to figuration. Bones, buildings, cups and spoons are entered into a new jig of re-articulation. Gathered and spat back out as collaged chronologies, the collected warmth of real-life perforations sieve these findings out of buried flatness and back into daily language. Once concealed by mud and foliage, sought-out areas become marked sites, places with contemporary traction.

The erased strokes of ancient activity are put back to work: vector grids symbolically allocate meaning or position to animals and humans alike. The enigma of labour necessitated by gravity – the haptic investments in making buildings stand upwards – is provided with a solid topological outline. Handwriting, numbers and vocabulary enter into new formal logic. The discovery might be intense or fragile and it is almost certainly ringed with a hallucinatory outline, which is at once a tracing of signs and alchemical process.

The drawing of a floor plan can also be read as the abstraction of an idea. Fantasy and philology allow mutation: sociological procedure, technological metaphor, erotic image, or surreal apparition bond as a muttering mass. This might be something to do with making images that have an imposed itinerary quality, but are also disassembled to the point where they can be allowed to be non-committal if required. Flatness allows a literal description of movement, of A to B navigations, with the vector line being a suitably fast mechanism of delivery. But the point at which things become husked down to geometric memories of themselves is also the point when definition gets flabby: this tree is a drunken tree; that house has a pain in its side. Even the dismal colloquialisms of workplace melodrama can be exported, metaphors in essence: think of a spoon, jugs, stones, all invested with personality enough to converse with human crassness.

So of course it is a common idea that if we witness a foreign entity, we perceive it for the pure abstraction of its difference. A visible suspension of particles in the air – the smoggy, wispy blotch of smoke or burning – provides alien stimulation. There is something exotic in the fear and energy possessed by substance so closely linked with an extinguishing of inhalation. The puff-of-smoke is smoke-as-object, a clearly defined spectacle of the miracle of the atomic. So what is the essential nature of smoke? Obfuscator? Comic enabler? Sympathist?

When we apologize, the depth of sincerity can be deliberately fuzzy. A drip – of paint, of piss, of ice – is treacherous, but really sorry too. It is pure tragicomedy. In painterly form, the "apology" is a grim reflection of the human body, a caricature: beaded broken lines, little blobs and libidinous squiggles retain an elastic firmness. They are materially treacherous, with the paint itself playing plasticity made fixed substance; it is immutable and precisely without the warmth of flesh. But it is an extension of intension and we can apologize preemptively on its behalf. This is validation: Apologies! There is calculation and further archaeological gathering. Colour participates as though queered or gendered; the simple action of doubling forces tautological

shortcut and collapse of definition; dysfunctional eyes are clouded by an auditory film and ears by a diagrammatic mapping of sensory importance. The mouth, the hand, the tongue are all involved. Our vast gray milkshake of information flexes and bends at will, a planktonic swarm of signs where merchandise, language, and spirituality all participate proudly in the stew of reality.

— Helen Marten, *Eucalyptus, Let us in* (excerpted from press release),
Greene Naftali, New York, 2016

K.R.M. MOONEY

Radial (i), 2021
Rotary motor, glass, water, steel, cast silver, grounding wire
46 1/4 x 17 x 4 1/4 inches (117.5 x 43.2 x 10.8 cm)
[KM1002.21]

Note:
Radial (i) engages the use of rotary motion, a machine's operation through the repeated and revolving movement from a center axis. In this instance, the mechanism is derived from a metal polishing and rock tumbler. The action is an automated approximation of phenomena that began when waves and streams tumbled Earth's first sediments, a distributive process that occurs through the internal drives of tides and waves that shape and loosen, smoothing the surfaces of accumulated and hardened substances.

The works *Circadian Interface I-III*, *Second Affordance II*, and *Radial (i)* are an iteration of sculptural composites, made up of adjusted mechanisms and assembled forms one might encounter in daily life by way of their integration into the circuitry or physical edges of a building. The mechanisms are selected as characters of action. Their potentials trace a specific facilitation of movement, typically in relation to space, access, light and the adjoining surrounding. By "killing the use part" through new formal arrangements, they oscillate between illegible, abstract and mimetic forms.

Window glass is slumped in a kiln directly into a half round steel channel which in its initial context functions as a gutter or drain. Subjected to very high heat, now concave, the glass has solidified back into the shape of its direct support. In previous iterations, an electromagnetic lock, a pneumatic actuator, and now rotary motor sit at the end of a tray, set inside is the slumped glass, water, and an intricate tangle of metal and silver wire in which the forms oxidize slowly over the exhibition's duration. A causal relation between ferrous compounds found in steel and water. As one tries to penetrate the surface visually as much as its interior transparencies permit, it is also reflective, and gives back to the viewer the circumstances in which they behold it and evidences a system of emergent material relations.

— K.R.M. Mooney

K.R.M. MOONEY
Strike (*i-iii*), 2020
Cast bronze, olivine sand
Three parts, each: 8 x 9 x 10 inches (20.3 x 22.9 x 25.4 cm)
Overall: 30 x 12 x 10 inches (76.2 x 30.5 x 25.4 cm)
[KM1000.20]

Note:
Based on social and material engagements, the works *Carrier*, *Channel In C*, and *Strike i-iii* are taken from objects that hold the capacity to emit, to have a voice and participate in public life. *Strike i-iii* follows the logic of works produced from 2016 -2020, an iteration of sculptures using source objects that in their initial context function as idiophones, for example a bell or chime: objects the whole of which vibrates to produce a sound when struck. Held up by the architecture required to materialize their production and here, display, *Strike i-iii* is produced from the striker of a tenor bell. *Strike i-iii* consists of a repeating form that enacts sound as an institutional modality by way of a tenor bell's temporal register, aware of the encounter of a sound's emotive means. The surfaces are not sanded, varnished or sealed, allowing the initial coloration that emerges by way of oxygen fusing with metal once the cast is poured and cooled to be reflected on its surface. A reminder that bronze itself is an assemblage of the alloys copper, tin and the conditions from which it was produced, constantly changing, resisting totality or precision on the surface.

— K.R.M. Mooney

CHEYNEY THOMPSON
Displacement [*32028, 6, 12*], 2021
Oil and acrylic on canvas
81 1/2 x 62 1/8 inches (207 x 158 cm)
[CT1012.21]

CHEYNEY THOMPSON

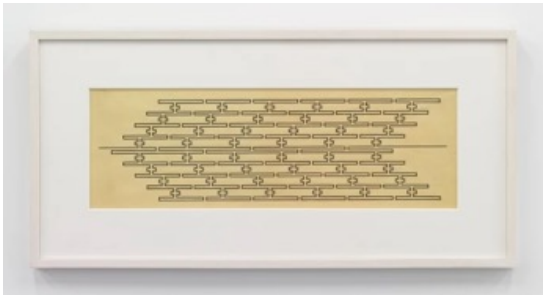
Displacement, 2021
Oil and acrylic on canvas
81 1/2 x 62 1/8 inches (207 x 158 cm)
[CT1013.21]

Note:
Cheyney Thompson's new series of *Displacement* paintings posits each canvas's ground as a touch-sensitive surface. The works adopt a uniform structure of five-millimeter square black marks painted in a gridded pattern atop a white ground. Before the paint is dry, Thompson deploys an assortment of custom silicone tools against the surface, forcing the wet squares out of place. He adds no new material, but rather subjects the existing marks to this process of reorganization. The resulting transformations appear as extensions of squares into lines, glyph-like forms, and sweeping, sinuous fields of paint. Each painting has become a record of the tools' interactions with the surface: the stops and starts, the kinetic limits of Thompson's body and the entropic movement of the order of painted squares into noise. But, they are also pictures, as this play of ruptures and conjured forms has been frozen into an unsettled pictorial field, still with the trappings of figure-ground, composition, and space.

The artist has introduced four sweeping arcs of bright red, yellow, green, and blue that are sprayed onto the white ground. They appear as distinctly colored lights illuminating each painting, one arc per corner. Together, they suggest that each canvas is not an autonomous piece, but instead, an element in a larger set as their radii are designed by relating the internal dimensions of the painting with the architectural dimensions of the gallery space and the positions of the neighboring paintings. Thompson treats color as both a sensual material and an organizing strategy.

WACŁAW SZPAKOWSKI

C4, 1924
Ink on tracing paper
9 3/4 x 27 5/8 inches (25 x 70 cm)
Framed Dimensions:
15 3/4 x 32 inches (40 x 81.5 cm)
[WS1004.24]



Note:
Wacław Szpakowski (1883-1973) was a Polish architect and engineer who created a distinct idiom of abstract drawing, first conceived in notebook sketches in the 1900s and developed systematically in a series of works

made with an ink pen on tracing paper between the early 1920s and 1940s. Szpakowski worked in complete isolation, indifferent to the art of his time; yet his project is fundamentally modernist in its aspiration to find the simplest possible means for expressing the underlying order of the universe, one that approaches a scientific investigation in its formal rigor and systematic nature. Calling his works "drawings of linear ideas," Szpakowski created symmetrical patterns of a continuous geometric line; invariably 1 mm thick and 4 mm apart, it always starts on the left side of the page and ends on the right. For Szpakowski, the line's relentless trajectory across the surface of each sheet is merely a fragment of its endless rhythmical movement through space and time. He invited viewers to 'decipher' what he called 'the inner content' of his drawings by following the course of the 'broken line' across the surface of the page, "just like one composes the words of a text out of individual letters."

Seen today, Szpakowski's work anticipates seriality, accelerated temporalities and the increasing density of visual memory. Resembling circuitries or digitally generated diagrams, the motifs of Szpakowski's drawings evoke the new technologies of image production that affect perception, heightening the crisis of attention. Exploring the dichotomy of a focused and distracted, decentered gaze, Szpakowski's project can be understood as a critique of the changing modalities of vision.

36 ORCHARD STREET

SAM LEWITT

LOST CORE 05, 2018
Broken engine sand core package components, aluminum
26 x 38 3/4 x 7 inches (66 x 98.4 x 17.8 cm)
[SL1276.18]

Note:
The *LOST CORE* works support the fossilized traces of the process that materially forms them.

The works are comprised of 'sand core' fragments retrieved from a BMW engine manufacturing facility in Landshut, Germany. Sand cores are used in industrial manufacturing to mold cavities and internal geometries of mechanical equipment.

For these works, mechanical precision cedes to the heaping and halting of material processes. The retrieved core fragments are trapped into molten aluminum, as is consistent with their industrial use, showing the layers of agglomeration and loss on a flatbed plane. What is formed by this tabular logic are moments of accumulation, layering and spacing - a tableau always involves counting elements - rather than the directed issuance of those moments into a unified product.

These works are 'remains'. They result from the sedimentation of the cast off cores from a process of production that they are then used to crudely reconstruct. As reconstructed remains, they isolate the particular processes that differentiate the surface and form of the work – retrieving, framing, placing, pouring, seeping, stopping.

AMERICAN ARTIST

Server Rack (for Pigford), 2021
Wood, hardware, paint, hay bailing twine.
Lever open: 63 1/2 x 20 3/4 x 38 1/2 inches
(61.3 x 52.7 x 97.8 cm)
Lever closed: 59 3/4 x 20 3/4 x 56 1/2 inches
(151.8 x 52.7 x 143.5 cm)
[AA1000.21]

Note:
This sculpture responds to the phenomenon of *Silicon Prairie* resulting from venture capital that has been funneled into the Midwest over the last two decades. In recent years an increasing number of tech entrepreneurs and computer programmers from San Jose have moved to the Midwest for job opportunities comparable to those in Silicon Valley. The relationship between the high-tech industry and agriculture has a precedent in Santa Clara Valley, California, where the fruit industry that prospered in the early 20th century was eclipsed by the tech sector by the 1960s.

Within the same two decades that Silicon Prairie has attracted many young white male VCs to the Midwest, the USDA has been part of the largest civil rights lawsuit in the history of the United States because of loans that were denied to black farmers for over a decade. After failing to adequately award settlements to petitioning farmers in the Pigford v. Glickman lawsuit, successive bills were authorized allowing additional farmers to apply for payouts. The most recent bill, Pigford II, was settled in 2010 for which applicable farmers didn't receive payment until 2013.

This sculpture draws a parallel between a data server rack: a modest utilitarian device usually unseen by consumers that provides the infrastructure for the cloud, and a handmade hay bailing machine: a niche tool to alleviate costs for farmers, made from wood and found materials in order to create industry-standard bales of hay.

JEAN-LUC MOULÈNE

Catasphère (Paris, 2019), 2019

bronze, patina
20 3/4 x 23 5/8 x 19 5/8 in (52.7 x 60 x 49.8 cm)
Edition of 3 + 2 APs
[JM1634.19]

Note:
As its title indicates, *Catasphère* can be described as the staging of a set of catastrophes. In this work, Moulène arranges around an earth-like bronze sphere the five figures of French mathematician René Thom's Catastrophe theory. For the artist, an intriguing aspect of Thom's theory is that he himself chose to popularize it by representing it, that is by drawing and giving names to each of the figures of catastrophe in question – fold, cusp, swallow, hyperbolic and elliptical umbilical point.

Common representations of these reductive figures are usually on an x-y-z axis plane, but Moulène's challenge was to calculate, combine, and transpose them onto a smooth sphere that can be continuously traveled with the touch of one's fingers without disruption only to encounter bifurcations or discontinuities in five specific spots.

At the level of potential allegorical readings, Moulène considers this work to function like an ecological manifesto.

SCOTT LYALL
Nanofoil (*SLStudio.clone__1/16/2*), 2018
UV-engraved photonic structures in aluminum foil, polymer coating, casein painted frame
3 5/8 x 2 11/16 inches (9.2 x 6.8 cm)
Framed dimensions: 13 x 12 inches (33 x 30.5 cm)
[SL2239.18]

Note:
Scott Lyall's *Nanofoils* are made from Nanomedia, a process in which wafer-thin foils of cloned aluminum are altered at the level of their sub-visible particles, rendering structures that cannot be seen. But like certain plants and butterfly wings, these structures cause light to disperse and scatter. Whenever light encounters this exposed material, it shatters into billions of chromatic signals. The color is not derived from pigments or chemicals; it is the real-time appearance of the radiating light as it is scattered by the non-visible structures of the foil. This could be conceived as a performance by light. The scripts for such performances are made in a Clean Lab, but the works themselves are concrete, individual visibilities, or accidental masks of natural light. Crucially, as a structured material identity, the cloned foil is altered to become something new.

JONATHAN LASKER
The Handicapper's Faith, 2011
Oil on linen
100 x 75 inches (254 x 191 cm)
[JLR1002.11]

Private collection

INQUIRE

Note:
Jonathan Lasker's paintings separate and objectify to their respective limit the basic elements of painting, such as drawing, figuration, color, foreground and background, as well as the material of paint itself. Slowed down and reduced to an existence as identifiable, finite ingredients, they recombine in striking compositions that stretch the eye towards a new visuality.

NAIRY BAGHRAMIAN
Scruff of the Neck (UL 11, F), 2016
Cast and polished aluminum, polished aluminum rods, plaster, beeswax and rubber
101 1/2 x 89 x 46 inches (257.8 x 226.1 x 116.8 cm)
[NB1000.16]

Note:
The ensemble of fragmentary and fragile-looking sculptures titled *Scruff of the Neck*, maybe regarded as symptomatic of the close dovetailing of corporeal morphologies and context-specific installation strategies that have come to define the artist's oeuvre in the past five years. Relief-like constructions, sometimes in pairs, are mounted on the walls at fairly wide intervals, either above or below eye level. In all incarnations of *Scruff of the Neck*, bulbous and organically shaped matte white plaster objects, partly coated with yellow bees-wax along the edges, are set in front of large uneven panes of cast and polished aluminum. These in turn are supported by dynamically mounted constructions of slender metal rods likewise polished to a silvery shine and affixed in two points to the gallery architecture. Along the sides of several of these pieces of sculptural debris, hook-shaped proliferations reach out into thin air, suggesting the possibility of interconnection beyond the individual structure; at the same time, the cantilevered elements indicate that the works have lost their foothold. In this configuration, each component of the complex of works holds out the prospect of a supplementation of what is there, while also, and in equal measure, marking a deficiency that is almost impossible to mask. In fact, the artist modeled *Scruff of the Neck* on the morphology and materiality of dental protheses — more specifically, of bridges, of combinations of implants and mountings used to close gaps in a rudimentary set of teeth. Codes such as "UL 9/10, E," "UR 8,D," and "UR 1/2, G" included in the titles- their meaning will be familiar to dentists and some of their patients- emphasize this connection. The unmistakable references to armatures and artificial replicas of body parts, that serve the cosmetic correction of physical deficit, not only has implications for the status of the sculptural object but also the viewer's experience of it.

— Vincenzo de Bellis and Martin Germann, "An Oeuvre by Proxy: Nairy Baghramian's Déformation Professionnelle," in *Nairy Baghramian : Déformation Professionnelle* (Munich:Prestel, 2018)

K.R.M. MOONEY
Deposition c. (ii), 2021
Electroplated steel, silver, cuttlebone, aluminum
10 5/8 x 2 1/8 x 3 inches (27 x 5.4 x 7.6 cm)
[KM1004.21]

Note:
See description for *Deposition c. (iii)*

HELEN MARTEN
Untitled, 2020
watercolor on paper
12 x 17 3/8 inches (30.5 x 45.4 cm)
framed: 12 3/8 x 18 1/4 x 1 inches (34 x 46.4 x 2.5 cm)
[HM1001.20]

HELEN MARTEN
Untitled, 2020
watercolor on paper
12 x 17 3/8 inches (30.5 x 45.4 cm)
framed: 12 3/8 x 18 1/4 x 1 inches (34 x 46.4 x 2.5 cm)
[HM1003.20]

Note:
I worried that perhaps these works on paper didn't fit your brief of plastic re-manipulation, but then I thought well, they are abstract machines themselves, an agglomeration of diverse "acts" and so therefore part of the bulb of language and therefore technology... there to be broken, to spread like oil, to be patched — part of a system! I thought about a potato with its tubers or a mushroom with its mycorrhizal magic ecologies as being perhaps the most technologically advanced and chemically sensitive things out there. I thought how everything I make begins with drawing anyway. I also got thinking on more elaborate tangents about how in plotting the lines or vectors of a shape in CAD or CGI — a banana or a car for instance — you play with the tessellated edge of volumes before they become softly animated shapes. Rugged geometries, baby outlines. A pre-render curved line exists only as tiny joined sections of straight edges, so the place before a curve happens is like zombie land,

not skin nor flesh but en route. This en route state is most confounding because of its image paradox: it's the place where information in the whole process of digital design is for an instant truly honest, exposed and yet, it's not truly image/object form at all yet. It's a ghost or an en route cipher. All the intention, the snags, the architectural markers, the numbers - they're all there on screen but the image looks like nothing "real". And at this stage compression also hasn't happened yet so the physical slipperiness of the curve (if there were such a thing on the screen!) is less treacherous. The wonky curve isn't sexy, just mid process. It's like suspended space before manual diagram becomes densely optical catastrophe. Once the render is complete, all these markers disappear, the mathematical force lines or script that make up the commands have disappeared ... the image is full-bodied! Now it looks even more *real.* Except it's a great dishonest horror, a strangely ectoplasmic substance that reflects light, casts shadows, offers density. It's so insane and fascinating! Such a dark comedy to this making of CGI/CAD... that behind the tightly constructed image elegance, there is a bloody mess of entrails and rampantly un-plotted vectors! A weird kind of surgical process that happens at a goddam desk!

— Helen Marten, correspondence to Miguel Abreu

DEXTER SINISTER

Watch Wyoscan 0.5 Hz, 2012
digital watch with custom electronics that slow down the display
Dexter Sinister for Halmos
[DS1000.12]

Note:
Time is like that — both point AND duration. This is how it can bend and warp. A week, a second, a season: all are specific and discrete, but none are the same. The present can be cut to any number of lengths, from a single vibration of a quartz crystal to the display period of a digital timepiece.

Watch Wyoscan 0.5 Hz is a reverse-engineered Casio digital watch. A tiny computer inside has been reprogrammed to slowly render the current time from left to right, scanning across its liquid crystal face, completing 1 cycle every 2 seconds.

You'll notice that reading this watch requires more attention than usual, as the seven segments of each digit are lit one by one across its display. This speed may be adjusted until it reaches the limits of your perception. You and your watch are now in tune.

Watch Wyoscan was adjusted by Dexter Sinister and produced by Halmos with support from Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerp, and Yale Union, Portland.