

MIGUEL ABREU GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Exhibition: 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, Waclaw Szpakowski, Cheyney Thompson

Location: 88 Eldridge Street & 36 Orchard Street, New York, NY 10002

Dates: June 9 – July 24, 2021

Opening: Wednesday, June 9, noon – 6:30PM

Miguel Abreu Gallery is pleased to announce *The Poet-Engineers*, a group exhibition on view at both of the gallery's locations from June 9 to July 24, 2021.

In a world increasingly described and experienced as regulated by immaterial forces – the digital revolution – there exists a discrete counter force, one fueled by what can be referred to as a renewed materiality.

A tripartite condition of opportunity for artists has been in place for some time, but now might be the moment for an exhibition to focus on how 1. new materials, 2. advanced software, and 3. innovative fabrication techniques constitute a rare point in history in which, taken together, the availability of radical new tools offers the 'Poet-Engineers' working today a compelling invitation to explore unknown content and invent new forms.

Poet: a person possessing special powers of imagination or expression.

Engineer: a skillful contriver or originator of something; the prime engineer of the approach.

– New Oxford American Dictionary

Etymology of Poësis: to make / produce / composition

Some consider the advent of 3D printing, for instance, to be as momentous of an invention as what photography proved to be in the 19th century. As this new technology appeared and threatened painting's centuries-old dominance of the realm of representation and image production, it also unleashed a liberating force that allowed art's regal medium to start concentrating on its constitutive elements, and to address them, for better or for worse, as subject matter. Today, the artist can make the fundamental decision to print a photographic image or file in either 2D or 3D.

Consider scanners, digital photography and printing, computer graphics, UV cured inks, silicone, aluminum alloys, new plastics, resins and rubbers, formal optimization software, robotics and CNC milling machines, laser technology, advanced construction materials, along with more traditional media and techniques such as drawing, painting, weaving, wood and stone carving, glass blowing, bronze casting – all are within reach of the artist working today.

Each work in the exhibition contains the ability to clearly reveal its articulation and constitute an adequate plastic solution to a more or less identifiable problem – the conceptual dimension – or comes across as generating and

responding to its own inherent riddle. As we know, since Marcel Duchamp installed a urinal on a gallery wall over 100 years ago and called it art, a contemporary art object must be, at best, the material embodiment of an idea, whatever the idea might be. An idea, for instance, might emerge from considering and questioning the status of a given material or technique.

Here: idea = question = problem = riddle

In the search for the mark of the Poet-Engineer, an artwork's display of spectacular fabrication and high production values can be misleading. It cannot simply embrace and fuse with the alluring capabilities of advanced engineering tools.

The Poet-Engineer is a skilled craftsman, but does not specialize in a particular technique. The Poet-Engineer is a mindset.

The Poet-Engineer does not fetishize new tools. They tend to be a master of the oblique and of expression in the minor mode (Deleuze).

The Poet-Engineer is not interested in exploring for the sake of exploring. The Poet-Engineer, like Picasso once proposed, strives to discover and 'find' solutions.

"Among the several sins that I have been accused of committing, none is more false than the one that I have, as the principal objective in my work, the spirit of research. When I paint my object is to show what I have found and not what I am looking for. In art intentions are not sufficient and, as we say in Spanish, love must be proved by facts and not by reasons..." (Picasso, Paris 1923).

The aim of the poetically-engineered art object is to reveal its inner workings as it asserts its achieved contours. This intimate, localized entanglement is the only basis for what might emerge as the work's infinite truth, a factor upon which a faithful truth procedure can be initiated. As such, the crucial feature of this realized object is that it is addressed to all (Badiou).

One object, one solution at a time, poetically-engineered art is in search of singularity and against open-endedness and seriality. It does not circulate with ease and fluidity in the market place because its signature remains somewhat hidden, until it might appear in the last instance only.

The poetically-engineered art object does not find support in general ideas. It insists and relies on its internal operations, on its immediate shape and material facture to produce sensations. It radiates the unique intensity of its combined intellectual and material qualities. Assertions and beliefs emanate from the object; they do not descend upon it.

Because of its experimental nature and often complex material execution, the poetically-engineered work offers a way out of the impasse of today's rigid aesthetics of the 'face-off' brought about by "hyper-expressionism" (Sohrab Mohebbi). As it immediately positions the self as an entity with direct access to truth, "hyper-expressionist" art tends to do away with the call for material and formal innovation. It is often anchored in conventional modes of representation and the use of traditional techniques, and therefore is prone to be the outgrowth of a certain lack of imagination.

The three-part condition offers the artist an opportunity to make 'objective' new work, the outcome of an unusual admixture of material and immaterial elements. New tools and materials necessarily contribute to the exploration of the unknown and to the attainment of potentially surprising artistic propositions. These rare circumstances constitute a genuine invitation to playfulness and to unleashing a degree of child-play in the artist.

Fascinating new fabrication techniques, mesmerizing materials, and vertiginous software tools exist somewhat 'outside' the artist and as supplement to their immediately subjective impulses. They constitute a fresh environment that can be activated to innovatively solve age-old problems, in the same way that a hobbyist develops unusual crafts to fabricate new things. The resolved object exists in a space 'between' its maker and the viewer. As such, it contains a degree of autonomy, while it might also retain the subjective mark of its maker. It offers a generous and open invitation to be apprehended and contemplated on its own terms.

The newly invented object can be tested. It welcomes study and critique. It has the potential to produce knowledge because it is the repository of engaging and palpable qualities at the level of form and content.

The poetically-engineered art object proudly presents itself as decisive and distinct and is often unsettling. It produces sharp sensations and stimulates something akin to visual intelligence. This newly minted, crisp intelligence uses language to translate its inner logic.

The poetically-engineered object invites the viewer to indulge in its often sensuous surfaces.

What Alain Badiou writes of Jean-Luc Moulène's objects could be said of any work of a Poet-Engineer's:

"The artwork at hand rising up against the fatal violence of the world as it is, indicates the human spirit's capacity to propose to all what we might paradoxically call an idealist materiality. 'Idealist' insofar as, in the works of the artist, certain entirely unknown forms impose upon disparate materials—through the use of images, scans, topologies, digital manipulations and complex tools—a sort of startlingly clear and striking self-evidence. And 'materiality' because, beneath the novelty of the form, beneath its mathematics and its digital glamour, lie the traces of old materials, timeless gestures—traces hidden by just a layer of brilliant color."

The spirit of Leonardo da Vinci, the High Renaissance artist and polymath, is the guiding light of The Poet-Engineers.

A Reader comprised of original essays by Reza Negarestani and Scott Lyall, contributions by Alain Badiou and Robin Mackay, along with submissions by artists and colleagues, will be available online at www.miguelabreugallery.com and regularly updated with new materials during the run of the show. Following the close of the exhibition, a catalogue will be published by Sequence Press.

This exhibition project was developed in consultation with Reza Negarestani (philosopher/systems engineer), Sam Lewitt (artist), Leah Pires (art historian/critic), Michael Cavuto (poet), Alex Kitnick (art historian/critic), Geoff Kaplan (graphic designer), Matthew Fanuele (developer), and Martine d'Anglejan, MDAC (producer).

We would like to thank the generous lenders to the exhibition: Jill and Peter Kraus, Jonathan Lasker, and John Cheim, and extend our heartfelt gratitude to the collaborating galleries: Galerie Buchholz, Sadie Coles HQ, Marian Goodman Gallery, Andrew Kreps Gallery, Matthew Marks Gallery, Greene Naftali, Esther Schipper, Altman Siegel Gallery, and David Zwirner.

For more information and for visuals, please contact the gallery:

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Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10:30AM to 6:30PM

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