

**Sarah Lucas, John Isaacs, Laurie Simmons, Whitney McVeigh, Erwin Wurm, Tatsumi Hijikata, Matthew Killick, Hans Bellmer, Jiří Kolář, Matthew Miles, Kiki Smith, Konrad Wyrebek**

**Curated by Eiko Honda and Point Zero**

**Point Zero is pleased to open its doors with its first exhibition FLESH REALITY. Bringing together works of emerging and globally renowned artists FLESH REALITY is an exploration of the human relationship to one's body of flesh - where reality of existence resides and begins.**

Body has been one of the most prominent subject matters in the history of visual culture. We try to make sense of reality largely through our physical existence - the body. Yet, though our psyche resides in flesh, it can never be in complete control of this mysterious vehicle, with its perpetual transformation of tissues and cells; viruses and bacteria. Our attempts to map the body reveal that the matter closest to us can also be the most foreign, each new discovery hinting at further hidden potentials; future evolutions - and mutations.

One of the most prominent and historical works of this kind is that of the German Surrealist **Hans Bellmer** (1902-1975). Painter, photographer, etcher, doll-maker and writer, **Bellmer's** sexually charged, uncanny eroticism and deformed depictions of the body are reminiscent of figures once explored by Hieronymus Bosch. This has subsequently influenced practitioners like **Tatsumi Hijikata** (1928-1986); the visual aesthetic relevance can indeed also be observed in the works of **Sarah Lucas** (1962-) and **Erwin Wurm** (1954-). **Hijikata** was a 'dancer' and the founder of contemporary Japanese dance, or physical movement rather, known as Butoh. Beyond the idea of dance as a genre, his magnetizing performances aimed to express the body itself rather than the expression of something else through the body.

**Lucas's** recent sculpture series *NUD* may also convey the notion of the obsessive, raw and intimate physical reality. This time, in form of that which is ordinary-seeming and familiar; materially it is of wool fluff concealed and shaped within a beige, synthetic skin. The use of what could be understood as the second skin, i.e. cloth, is paralleled in **Wurm's** series of photographs *Palmers*. These works were initially produced as an advert for the Austrian lingerie brand of the same name. The garments are stretched and worn to capture and extend the body of flesh, resulting as an organic, ephemeral sculpture that manifests its own space of duration.

Berlin based British artist **John Isaacs'** (1968-) shockingly life-like wax sculpture of a dismembered limb, on the other hand, freezes the moment of a violated body. However, **Isaacs'** sculpture exists beyond the mere effect of visual provocation; it subtly refers to Rembrandt and Soutine's paintings of flayed ox carcasses that inspired *Bacon's* and those alike, alluding to the fragility and pain of a being that exists within this body of flesh.

Painter **Matthew Killick** (1973-) explores this flesh from the internal working of the body. Predominantly black and white depictions of human organs, they are often realistic yet otherworldly - likening to a growing vegetation quietly beginning to infiltrate and conquer the physical reality the person may hold. Amongst the most prominent artists of her generation and a printmaker, **Kiki Smith** (1954-) also investigates anatomy in her pieces. Using potato to print a shape of kidney cherished with precious silver-leaf, the miniature, delicate organ is colored with the red and blue of blood, suggestive of a force of life that is contained within.

London-based American artist **Whitney McVeigh** (1968-)'s work is preoccupied with this complexity and dual

layer of the psychological and physical. Without applying the actual body or intentional markings with the ink, her large scale monoprints appear as though the papers carry traces of human figures and faces -- the weight of bodily flesh and quality of a spirit-like presence. Czech poet, writer and visual artist **Jiří Kolář** also lays out a dual vision of the physical reality by taking two or more images of old masters paintings, modern human images from magazines and museum postcards, and cutting the skin of the subject matter printed on the paper surface to juxtapose the layers as a fine intricate collage piece.

The works of London based artists **Matthew Miles** (1973-) and **Konrad Wyrebek** (1983-) and New York-based artist **Laurie Simmons** (1949-) explore contemporary notion of the body in the capitalist fantasy. Primarily working in digital imagery, **Miles** new work suggests Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytical theory of Mirror stage - the moment that is said a child would recognize their own material existence in a mirror and the subsequent building of our identities within these ocularcentric confines. Overcasting the skin on the surface of resort swimming pool, the work also refers to the accelerated level of self-consciousness and insecurity of the body that consumer culture has forced upon the contemporary individual.

**Wyrebek's** practice is also centered around the bi-phenomena of capitalist fashion and lifestyle consumerism, where building a certain kind of 'standardized' body in the media is treated as a new form of religion. Such a tendency can subsequently result in a submissive and sometimes even masochistic relationship to the manipulating voices of widespread media material, as the artist claims. Often referred as a feminist artist, **Simmons** situates this troubles with body within culturally stereotypical female context. In her series of photographs *The Love Doll* (2009 - 2011), she positions the passive body of a sex doll she purchased from Japan in a various, often domestic, environment. Primarily sold in a slip dress with an engagement ring and female reproductive organ, the life-like doll is meant to fulfil the ideological stereotype of oriental femininity, where the active mind is removed from an obedient, doll-like body.

Bringing together art of contemporary practitioners and past avant-gardes, FLESH REALITY seeks to initiate new connections and conversations around the skin that can both trap and liberate our experience of the world.

The curator and Point Zero would like to thank all the artists and their studios, Aeroplastics Contemporary, Estate of Jiří Kolář, Keio University Art Center and Tatsumi Hijikata Archives, Sadie Coles HQ, Viktor Wynd Fine Art, Wilkinson Gallery, friends, family and colleagues without their help the opening of this exhibition was not made possible.