

ESTEFANÍA LANDESMANN  
05.02.2022 | 19.03.2022

## A RESONANT SHELL

"To open? To break something, then. At the very least to make an incision, to rend."<sup>1</sup>

In a courtyard outside of a monumental sculpture workshop, offcuts and casts are used and then scrapped, left abandoned over the years. Fragments of plaster, wood, cloth and rubber that once helped shape bronze figures mix and blend among colonies of lichens. Matter of the production process of sculpture, usually kept out of sight, stands discarded among shoots and branches. Estefanía Landesmann found this place to be an uncanny site where figuration and abstraction seemed to balance like an undulating set of scales. Moving through this site with a camera initiated a semi-archeological process of observing the material in order to reflect back on her own artistic practice.

In this series the casts and materials are assigned complete autonomy from their site and placed into the realm of the image. The term *rend*, coined by Georges Didi-Huberman, applies to the process of making visible, inverting the image from its logic into a layered interpretation. The framing of the camera is a way to resignify specific surfaces, and of shaping meaning from a mass of cast-away objects. From within a cavern-like chamber, nails stitch together incised material and leave rusted remains that stain the white interior. Delicate incisions are found on the pink surface of another object which has begun to accumulate fungal organisms. Its alien and fleshy ligaments bend one over the other in a frozen caress. The implication of anthropomorphic forms renders this site a complex image – one in which the mind struggles to find recognizability in the negative.

Landesmann's research could be seen as a battle between mediums - sculpture and photography shed their invisible matter of production and face each other. Photography is often connected with the instantaneous capture of a moment as a virtual surface that points to an absent elsewhere. But while these images depict plaster casts in their current condition, the layered meaning and relation between the camera and the mold creates a complex thesis on photography, sculpture, materiality, originality, and repetition.

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<sup>1</sup> Confronting Images. Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art  
Georges Didi-Huberman, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press 2005 p 139

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In the gallery, these images take on extraordinary dimensions, reduced or enlarged beyond their original scale. Transformed into solid objects that appear carved into the walls, they alter the architecture, determining the visitor's perception of the room. The newly materialised surfaces are dually reinvented as a physical navigation of space. The gallery becomes a proxy between one world and another while redefining the observational path of the viewer around the pieces.

Printed on hollow aluminium plates, the industrial finish of the works defines their existence between ephemerality and gravity. Positioned directly on the ground, an extensive human-scale piece acts as the anchor of the exhibition which the other works orbit about. It summons the traces of a worker's hands that have modelled the dry surface of a clay shell-like incrustation. These imprints are a sign of the invisible labour that touches only disposable material and evidences the imperceptible precarity behind making. This monumental work contains everything but the monument itself - it represents a symbolic absence.

Protruding from the wall, another work shows incisions cut through plaster in mechanical routes to form what appears to be the negative of a cranium. Yet, the human mind always tries to make sense and create logic out of images, which offers this work as an indefinite unknown. The abstraction within this piece opens the possibility for multiple potential interpretations. The skeletal outer shell has been cracked open, and the final image has been removed leaving the force of the negative. In this absence, the material incisions remain, and time begins to erode faithful recognition.

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