NEVINE MAHMOUD

Press Pack

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NEVINE MAHMOUD

Nevine Mahmoud (b. 1988, London) received her BA from Goldsmiths, University of London and MFA from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. She has participated in numerous exhibitions, including most recently *Dreamers Awake: Women Artists After Surrealism* at White Cube, Bermondsey. Mahmoud's work was also on view in *The Poet, the Critic and the Missing* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; *This is Presence* at Ballroom Marfa, TX; and *The Lasting Concept* at the Portland Institute of Contemporary Art. Other thematic exhibitions include *I Had the Landscape in My Arms* at Josh Lilley, London; *An Uncanny Order* at Jessica Silverman, San Francisco*; Debris* at James Fuentes, New York; and *Seven Reeds* at Overduin & Co., Los Angeles. Her work will be on view in the forthcoming exhibitions *The Artist is Present*, curated by Maurizio Cattelan at the Yuz Museum in Shanghai, and *MADEMOISELLE* at the Centre Régional D'art Contemporain Occitanie in Sète, France. *f o r e p l a y* (2017) at M+B was the artist's debut solo exhibition and was selected as an *Artforum* Critics' Pick. Other notable press includes *MOUSSE*, *Art Review*, *New York Magazine*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Contemporary Art Daily*. Nevine Mahmoud lives and works in Los Angeles.

NEVINE MAHMOUD

BORN 1988, London, United Kingdom
Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

EDUCATION

2014 MFA | University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

2011 BA | Goldsmiths University, London, UK

2010 Foundation Studies | Byam Shaw School of Fine Art, London, UK

SOLO AND GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018 *The Artist is Present*, curated by Maurizio Cattelan, Yuz Museum, Shanghai, China (forthcoming)
Peana Projects, Monterrey, Mexico (forthcoming)
Go, Soft Opening, Piccadilly Circus, UK
MADEMOISELLE, Centre Régional D'art Contemporain Occitanie, Sète, France
Paradise, organized by Edgar Bryan and Adrianne Rubenstein, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Gut Friends, curated by Ry Rocklen, Porch Gallery, Ojai, CA
Dragon Polishes the Pearl, Arturo Bandini, Los Angeles, CA
Tragedy Plus Time, Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, CA
Body So Delicious, Reyes Projects, Detroit, MI
I Had the Landscape in My Arms, Josh Lilley Gallery, London, UK
All Hands on Deck, Otis College Of Art and Design, Los Angeles, CA

2017 *f o r e p l a y*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA (solo)
Nerve Center, The Pit, Los Angeles, CA
Dreamers Awake: Women Artists After Surrealism, White Cube, London, UK
Seven Sisters, Kasia Michalski Gallery, Warsaw, Poland

2016 *An Uncanny Order*, Jessica Silverman, San Francisco, CA
Sim City, Ballroom Marfa, Marfa, TX
PLEASE HAVE ENOUGH ACID IN THE DISH!, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
The Poet and The Critic, and the missing, curated by Lauren Mackler*,* Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA
Four Square in the Land of Milk and Honey, BBQLA, Los Angeles, CA
Brancusi 2.0, Arturo Bandini, Los Angeles, CA
Roman à Clef And/Or The Appetite Of The Chef, Rainbow in Spanish, Los Angeles, CA
Three Isolated Effects, Lock Up International, Los Angeles, CA

The Lasting Concept, Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, Portland, OR

2015 *Motorfruit*, Blood Gallery, New York, NY
Tickles, 356 Mission, Los Angeles, CA
Deep Dark Submersion, Romer Young Gallery, San Francisco, CA
New Babylon, Roberts & Tilton, Los Angeles, CA
Debris, James Fuentes, New York, NY
SOGTFO, Francois Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Nihilism, Arturo Bandini, Los Angeles, CA
Vitrine, JOAN, Los Angeles, CA

2014 *Seven Reeds*, Overduin & Co., Los Angeles, CA
CK One Daily, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2x2x2, Favorite Goods, Los Angeles, CA
Louie Louie, Human Resources, Los Angeles, CA
A U T O B O D Y, MFA thesis show, Gayle & Ed Roski MFA Gallery, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

2013 *CULM*, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Magnitude, RealGold Exhibitions, London, UK

2012 *Dust Storm*, Occasionals Gallery, London, UK
Granica/Border, Miroslaw Balka School of Fine Art, Poznan, Poland

2011 *Cargo Cult,* Null/Void Gallery, London, UK

AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

2016 Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist Grant Winner

2011 Residency, Miroslaw Balka School of Fine Art, Poznan, Poland

2009 Summer Residency, Firenzi School of Art, Florence, Italy

2008 Catherine Brewer Craft Award, London, United Kingdom

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2018 Keiles, Jamie Lauren. “Nevine Mahmoud: Soft As Stone.*” No Man’s Land*, Summer
“5 Things T Editors Like Right Now.” *The New York Times T Magazine,* May 4
d’Avignon, Angella. “Nevine Mahmoud at M+B.” *Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles*, April 26
Duguid, Rosalind, Charlotte Jansen and Emily Steer. “Nevine Mahmoud: Juicy Fruit and Hard Stone.” *Elephant Magazine*, March 1

2017 Diehl, Travis. “Critics’ Picks.” *Artforum*, November 28
Tindle, Hannah.“The LA Sculptor Carving Erotically Charged Forms from Stone.” *AnOther Magazine*, June 28
Whitney, Christine. “The Sculptor Bringing Back the Craft of Stone Carving.” *New York Magazine*, March 27

2016 Mizota, Sharon. “Review: *PLEASE HAVE ENOUGH ACID IN THE DISH!*,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 17
“Portfolio by Nevine Mahmoud: Basketballs, Beachballs, Slides.” *BOMB*
Berardini, Andrew. “Playtime.” *MOUSSE Magazine*, Issue 52, February
Noice, E.D. “Considering Nevine Mahmoud’s Three Isolated Effects.” *aqnb*, May 11

2015 “*SOGTFO* at François Ghebaly,” *Contemporary Art Daily*, April 7
Berardini, Arturo. “SOGTFO (Sculpture or Get the Fuck Out).” *Art Review*, May

2014 Knight, Christopher. “Seven Reeds: Exploring the Work In Works of Art.” *Los Angeles Times*, December 4

M+B

NEVINE MAHMOUD

Selected Portfolio

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M+B

Nevine Mahmoud
Installation View of *f o r e p l a y*, solo show at M+B, Los Angeles
November 11, 2017 – January 6, 2018

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Nevine Mahmoud
Installation View of *Dreamers Awake*, group show at White Cube, London
June 28 - September 17, 2017

M+B

Solo Presentation of Nevine Mahmoud at The Armory Show 2017
March 2 – 5, 2017

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Solo Presentation of Nevine Mahmoud at The Armory Show 2017
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Nevine Mahmoud
Auto Body Part I, 2017
alabaster, resin, steel and paint
22 x 6 x 6 inches (56 x 15 x 15 cm)
(NM2.17.003.05)

M+B

Nevine Mahmoud
Headless, 2017
Portuguese marble and steel rod
8 x 3-1/2 x 5 inches (20 x 9 x 13 cm)
(NM2.17.008.12)

M+B

Three-person presentation with Daniel Gordon, Nevine Mahmoud and Jesse Stecklow
at Art Los Angeles Contemporary 2017
January 26 – 29, 2017

M+B

Nevine Mahmoud
Double lip, 2016
alabaster, cast iron
5 x 7 x 3 inches (12.7 x 17.8 x 7.6 cm)
(NM2.17.002.07)

M+B

Nevine Mahmoud
Bitte, 2017
alabaster and resin
4-1/2 x 6 x 2-1/2 inches (11 x 15 x 6 cm)
(NM2.17.001.04)

M+B

Nevine Mahmoud
Angle of Repose I, 2016
alabaster
10 x 7-1/2 x 7-1/2 inches (25.4 x 19 x 19 cm)
(NM2.16.009.07)

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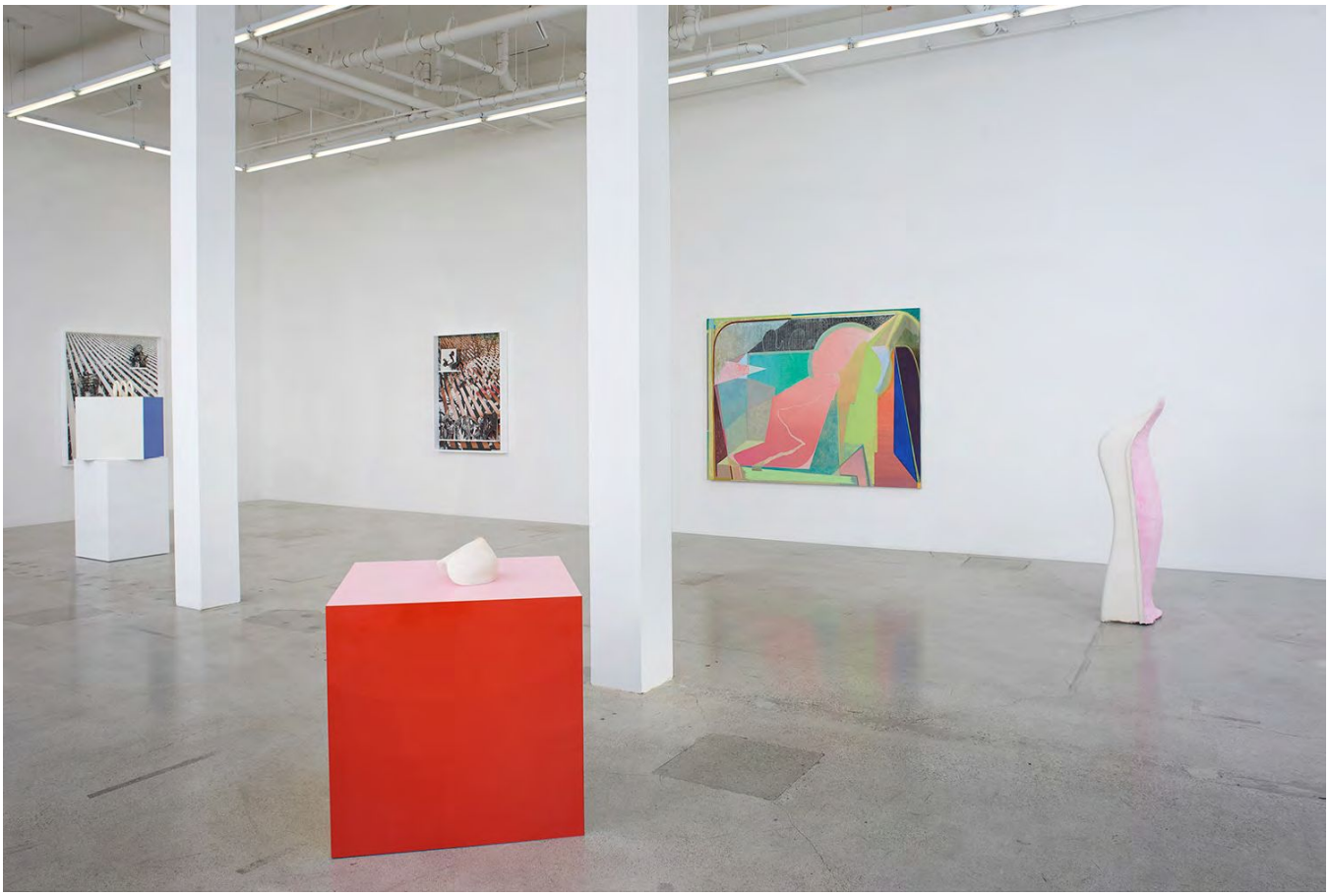

Nevine Mahmoud
Installation View of *An Uncanny Order*, three-person show at Jessica Silverman Gallery, San Francisco
November 4 – December 21, 2016

M+B

Nevine Mahmoud
Slide (Cast Back), 2014
cement, fiberglass, pigment and paint
50 x 22-1/2 x 15 inches (127 x 57.2 x 38.1 cm)
(NM2.14.001.50)

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Nevine Mahmoud
Tutti Laying, 2016
alabaster, laminate cube
sculpture: 8 x 5 inches (20.3 x 12.7 cm)
pedestal: 28 x 28 x 28 inches (71.1 x 71.1 cm)
(NM2.008.08)

M+B

Nevine Mahmoud
Tutti Laying, 2016 (detail)

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M+B

Nevine Mahmoud
Installation View of *Sim City*, group show Ballroom Marfa, Texas
September 23 – December, 2016

M+B

Nevine Mahmoud
Peach Object, 2016
carved calcite, carved steel
sculpture: 11 x 11 x 11 inches (27.9 x 27.9 x 27.9 cm)
(NM2.001.15)

M+B

Nevine Mahmoud
Installation View of *storefront: Public Fiction: The Poet and The Critic, and the missing*,
at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles
March 19 – June 19, 2016

M+B

Nevine Mahmoud
Deflating Beach Ball II, 2016
ceramic and glaze
13 x 13 x 13 inches (33 x 33 x 33 cm)
(NM2.002.13)

M+B

Nevine Mahmoud
Mouth, 2016
cast aluminum
4 x 9 x 24 inches (10.2 x 22.9 x 60.1 cm)
(NM2.009.04)

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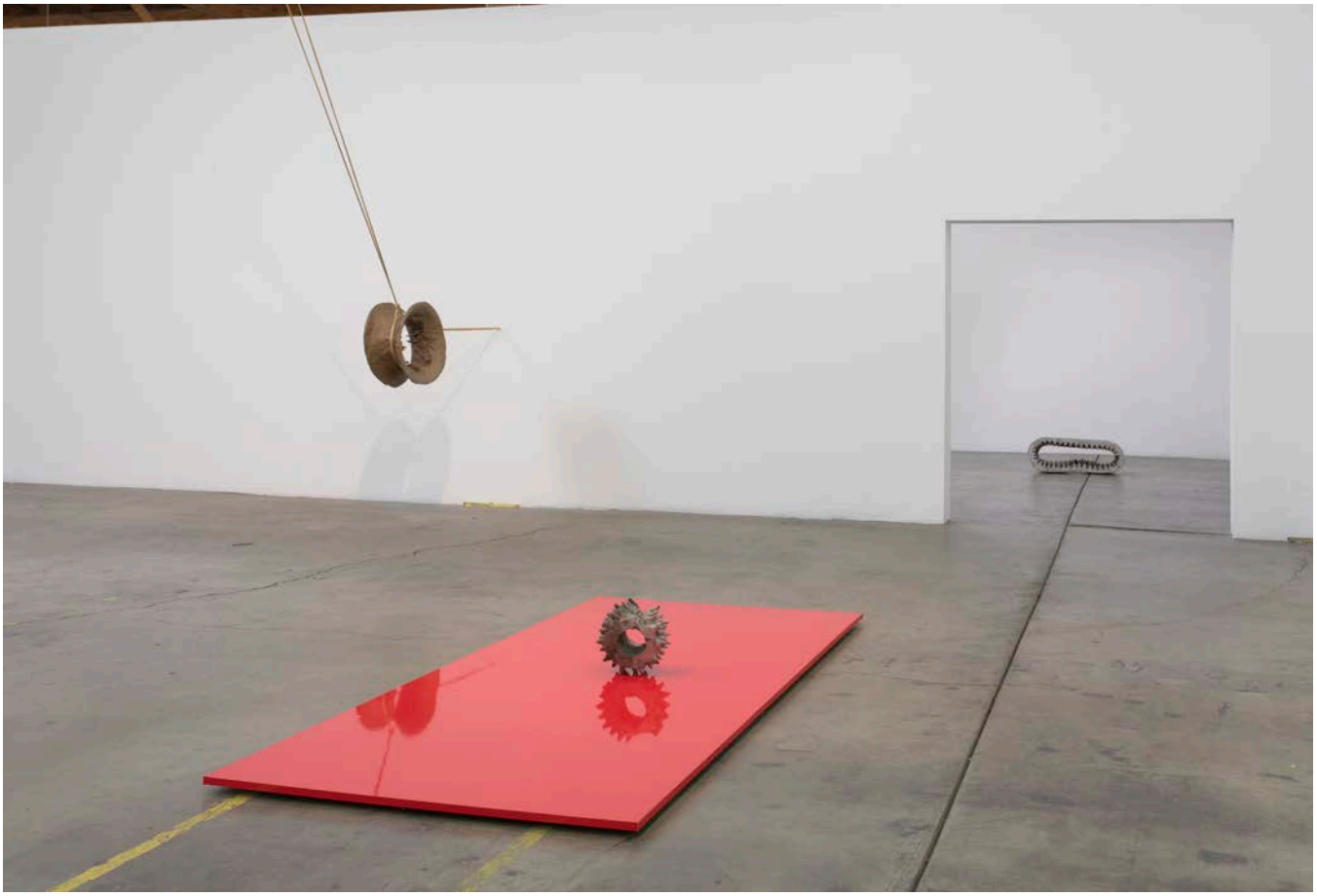

Nevine Mahmoud
Installation View of *SOGTFO*, group show at Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles
February 28 – April 11, 2015

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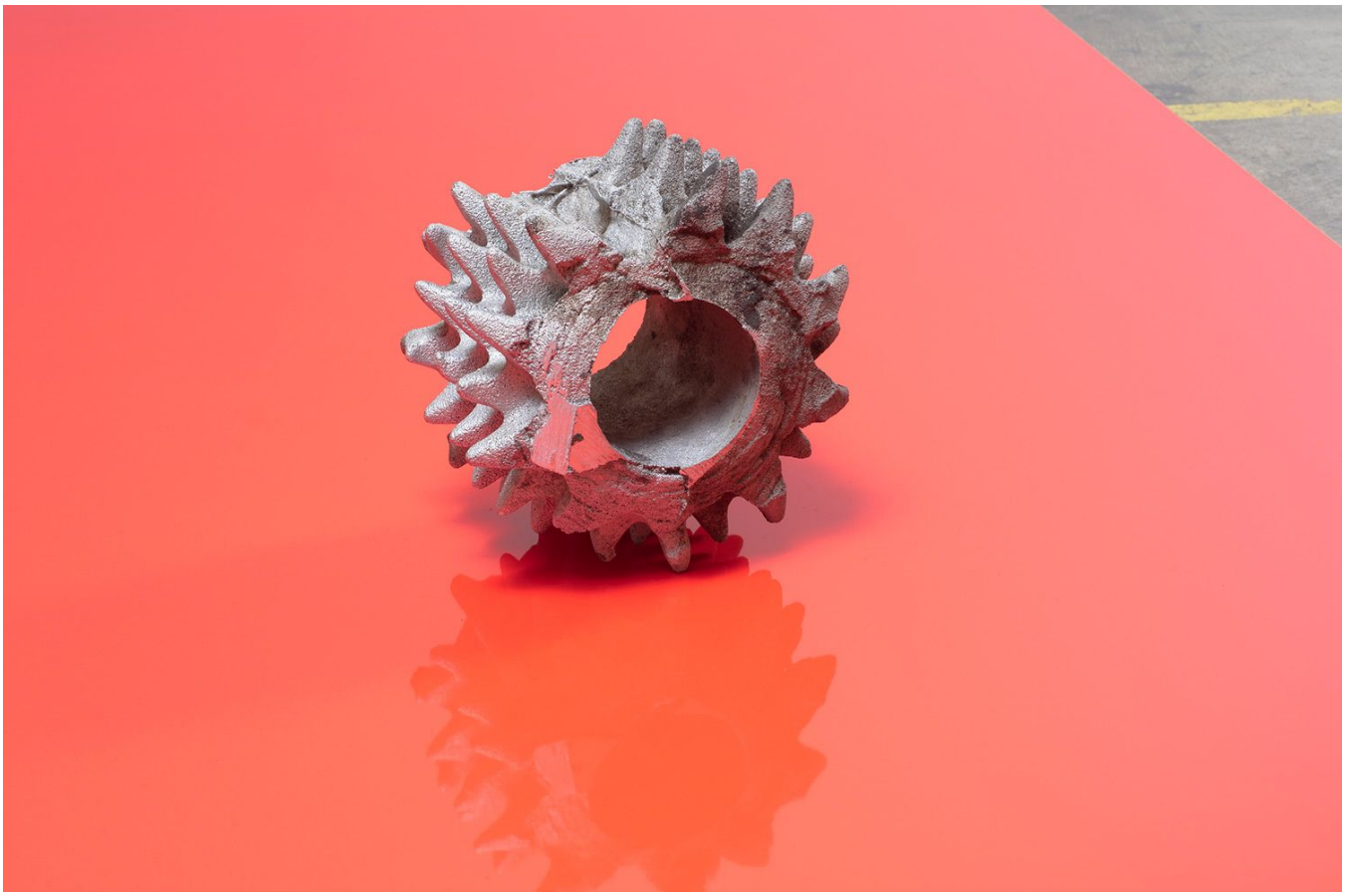

Nevine Mahmoud
Tunnel chunk with color plane, 2015 (detail)
laminate, aluminum
10 x 10 x 8 inches (25.4 x 25.4 x 20.3 cm)

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Nevine Mahmoud
U, 2015
4 x 24 x 32 inches (10.2 x 60.1 x 81.3 cm)
laminate, mdf, cast aluminum

Mouth, 2016
4 x 9 x 24 inches (10.2 x 60.1 x 60.1 cm)
laminate, mdf, cast aluminum

Knotted, 2015
4 x 18 x 12 inches (10.2 x 45.7 x 30.5 cm)
laminate, mdf, cast aluminum

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Nevine Mahmoud
Putte II, 2016
alabaster, laminate rectangle
sculpture: 7 x 11 inches (17.8 x 27.9 cm)
pedestal: 46 x 18 x 18 inches (116.8 x 45.7 x 45.7 cm)
(NM2.16.008.11)

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Nevine Mahmoud
Putte II, 2016 (detail)

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Nevine Mahmoud
Installation View of *Seven Reeds*, group show at Overduin & Co., Los Angeles
November 9 – December 20, 2014

NEVINE MAHMOUD

Press and Press Releases

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The Summer Issue

NO MAN'S LAND

For Women with Something to Say and Nothing to Prove

Greta Lee Elizabeth Warren

JESSICA WILLIAMS

Paloma Elsesser Chelsea Manning

US $16/CAN $18 DISPLAY UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30, 2018

STORY—JAMIE LAUREN KEILES
PHOTOGRAPHY—JACLYN CAMPANARO

Nevine Mahmoud — Soft as Stone

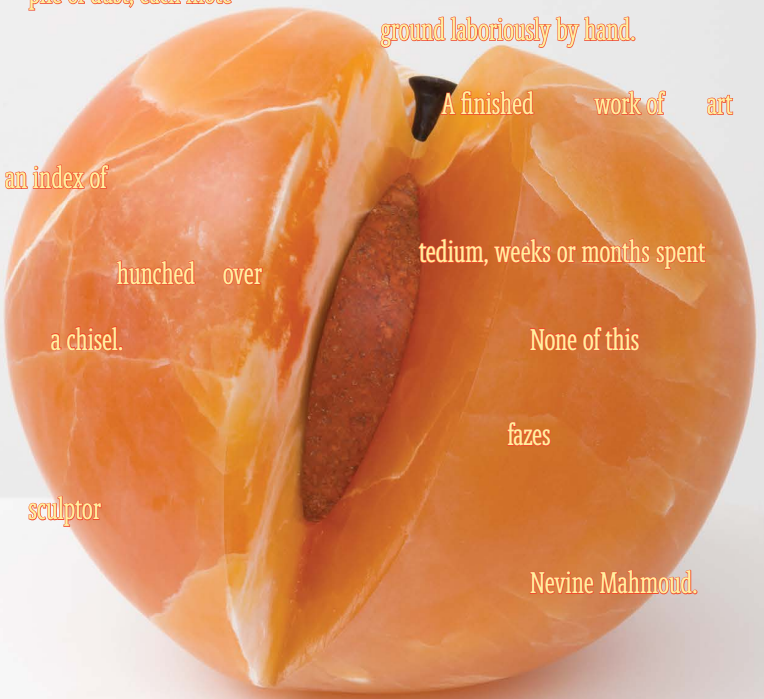
SCULPTOR NEVINE MAHMOUD
LETS MARBLE BE HER GUIDE

There's nothing efficient about carving stone.

The inverse of a sculpture is a pile of dust, each mote ground laboriously by hand.

A finished work of art is an index of tedium, weeks or months spent hunched over a chisel.

None of this fazes sculptor Nevine Mahmoud.



She carves in silence and rarely gets bored.

"Even if you've been doing the same thing for two hours, you'll learn something new," she told me. Mahmoud, 30, was born in London and started making sculptures as an undergraduate at Goldsmiths. She switched to carving stone full-time after her MFA at the University of Southern California. I met her at her studio in Alhambra, California, east of Los Angeles, in a garage in the shadow of a 7-Up factory. Mahmoud herself is tall with dark hair and the arms of a person who does not work at a computer. Her studio floor was littered with sculptures: an alabaster flower with a subtle human nipple, a pink marble tongue caught mid-lick. Mahmoud's sculptures are funny—almost too funny for stone, the stately material of graveyards and churches. Such is the immediate joy of her work: crass common shapes exposed for their grace by methods in use since before the birth of Christ.

There are faster and more reliable ways to make objects, but coming to terms with the pitfalls of a rock is as much Mahmoud's occupation as the finished shape itself. Though carving could, in theory, be learned through online research, its skills are hard to express in easy search terms. Each sculpture presents a unique challenge of finding the best way to hack off a chunk of stone. As in Hellenistic Greece, or Renaissance Florence, the craft is still best conveyed through demonstration. Mahmoud walked me through the tools at her disposal. A metal hand chisel moves across the material slowly, liberating tiny baby teeth of stone. A pneumatic hammer cuts the rock more quickly, but efficiency comes at the cost of precision.

Mahmoud learned to hone these techniques from Joanne Duby, one of the few female carvers at Art City Stone Yard in Ventura. When Mahmoud is stumped by a difficult shape, she calls upon Duby's 43 years of experience. Duby was instrumental in Mahmoud's most well-known work, a 50 lb. peach with a missing slice, rendered in calcite with a travertine pit. Getting crisp cuts inside the sphere proved a challenge, and Duby came through with a custom drill bit. When *Peach with Erotic Inside* debuted at the *2017 Armory Show* in New York, the sphere of its skin was so improbably smooth, and the orange of its flesh was so unflinchingly rich, that many viewers assumed it must have been plastic.

"I'm attracted to those stones that will always speak to being a rock," she said. "But that also have this part of them that's like, oh my God, it's so brightly colored—or so very consistent in color—that it's almost questionable that it's stone."

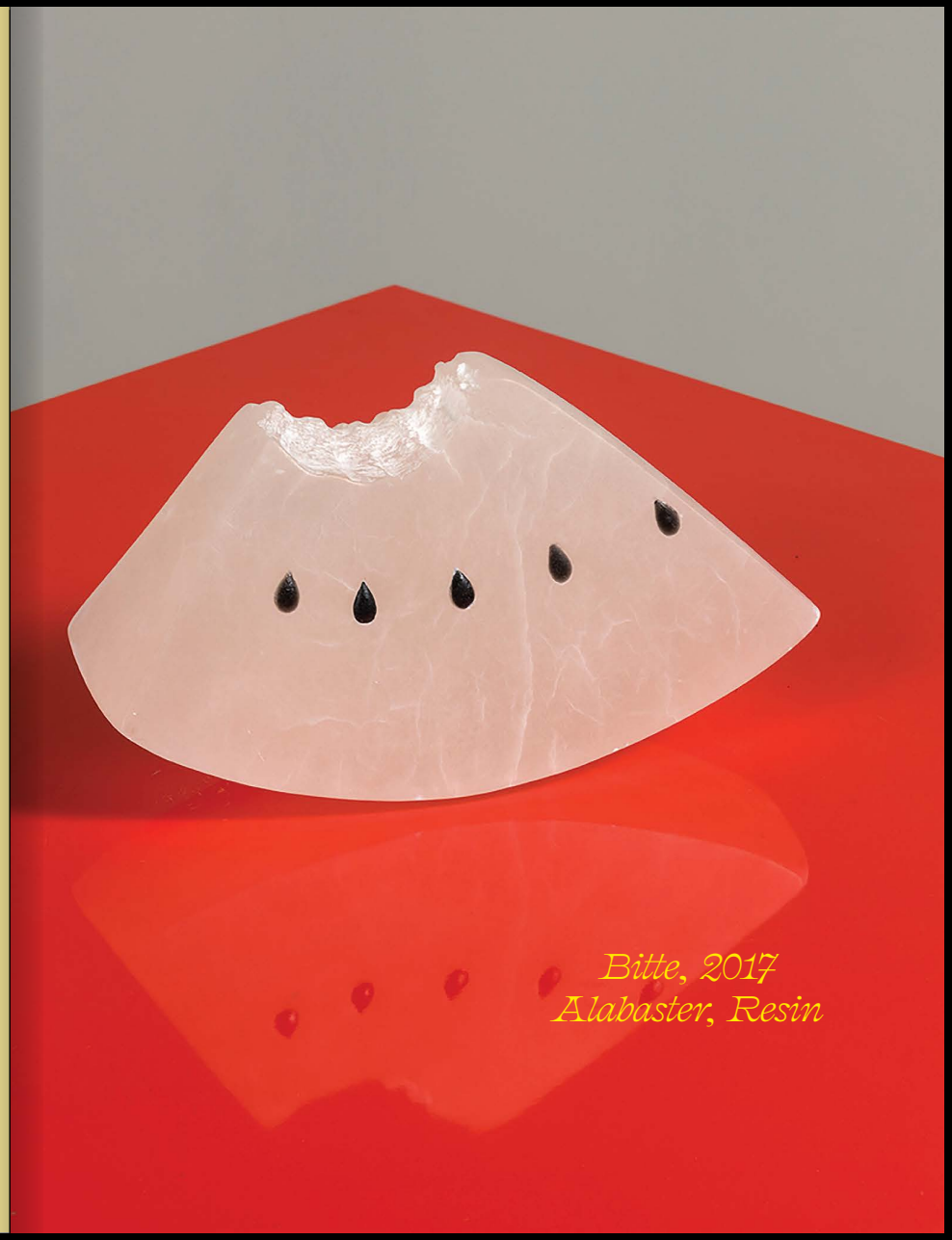
Art City Stone Yard is a kind of Flintstonian answer to Ikea. When Mahmoud goes shopping, she looks for rocks in solid colors, with very few veins. She's drawn to orange calcite and pink Turkish marble, but finding the right rock can be more luck than skill. When Mahmoud takes a chisel to a hunk of raw stone, she's the first to see its inside. If she finds the guts don't live up to expectations, her options are to change her plans or scrap the draft. She's done both before. When I suggested a half-carved sculpture was a toilsome mistake, she seemed unfazed.

"It can be frustrating, I guess," she said. "But in a way, that's why I work the way I do."

Breast Shade, 2017
Alabaster, Resin

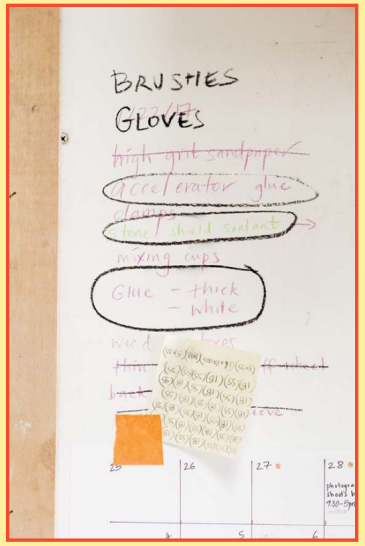
BAD SHES
GLOVES

Primary Encounter
(pink tensions), 2017
Portugese Marble



Bitte, 2017
Alabaster, Resin

Dumb Tongue, 2017
Portugese Marble



REYES PROJECTS PRESENTS

BODY SO DELICIOUS

MAY 10 - JUNE 16, 2018
OPENING RECEPTION: THURSDAY, MAY 10, 6-8PM
100 S. OLD WOODWARD AVE, BIRMINGHAM, MI

Birmingham, MI – April 25, 2018 – **Reyes Projects** is pleased to present ***Body So Delicious***, an all-female group exhibition featuring the work of **Genesis Belanger, Amy Brener, Ivy Haldeman, Nevine Mahmoud**, and **Alix Pearlstein**. The gallery will celebrate with an opening reception on **Thursday, May 10, 2018** from **6 to 8pm**.

Body So Delicious presents a nuanced look at the relationships between the body, sexuality, and sustenance. The participating artists work across a variety of mediums — painting, sculpture, and installation — exploring desire as an idea that is both necessary and utopian. The result is equally playful and astute.

In a collection of soft-hued ceramics, Genesis Belanger creates chimerical allegories in a style the *New Yorker* dubbed "funny-pages Surrealism." *Objets d'art* are born from tongue-in-cheek renderings of manicured nails, squashed cigarette butts, and sugary towers of whipped cream (forms that often become utilitarian, like handles on a vase). Paintings by Ivy Halderman present a cinematic look at the quotidian affairs of a female figure, jauntily posed. It is only upon a closer inspection that the viewer finds this recurring figure is female and frankfurter. Marble and alabaster are coaxed into eroticized forms by artist Nevine Mahmoud — adopting the contours of a cherry or a tongue, highlighting the artist's mastery of a traditionally male-dominated craft. Greeting visitors upon entry is Amy Brener's *Flexi-Shield (earth mother)*, a 13.5-foot suspended, silicone sculpture embedded with objects of daily life (flowers, keyboards, hardware, grooming devices) that have been gifted preserved bodies. Finally, paintings by Alix Pearlstein, band-aids woven into patterns on masonite, a blur of mediums that read like a lesson in seduction, fetishize the textures of domestic objects.

Within the exhibition, visitors will find the commonplace elevated and transformed. Though each artist's work stands solidly on its own, the exhibition as a whole appeals to the larger drive to unpack the topic of natural, healthful, sexual, and symbolic nourishment.

ABOUT REYES PROJECTS
Reyes Projects was established in 2017, Reyes Projects is a contemporary art gallery in Birmingham, Michigan. The gallery occupies a 4,600-square foot space in a newly-renovated landmark building on Old Woodward Avenue. Reyes Projects will reveal six to eight exhibitions a year dedicated to emerging and mid-career artists. It is with such presentations that the gallery seeks to reveal a profile both internationally renowned and regional in dialogue. Collaborating with local patrons and institutions alike, the gallery hopes to continue to diversify and strengthen Detroit's arts community. For more information, please visit www.reyesprojects.com.

PRESS CONTACT
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erin@culturalcounsel.com

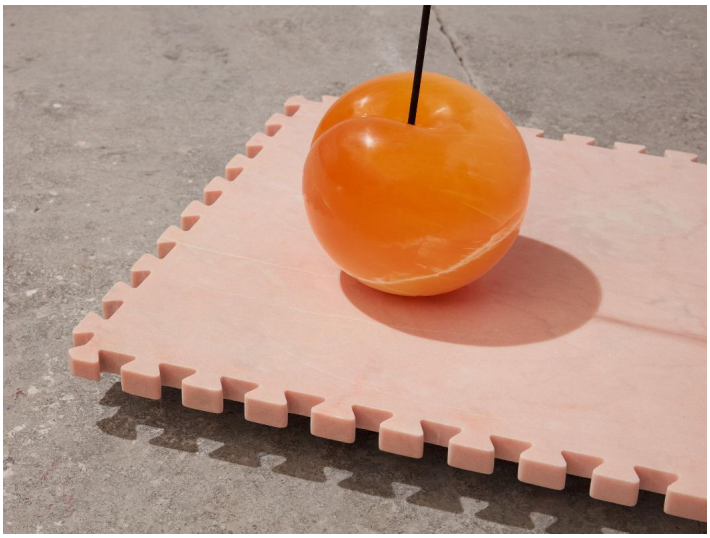
M+B

THE NEW YORK TIMES STYLE MAGAZINE

5 Things T Editors Like Right Now

A by-no-means exhaustive list of the things our editors (and a few contributors) find interesting on a given week.

May 4, 2018



Marble Fruits, With Ceramic Whipped Cream

"The lusciousness of the first bite of whipped cream on top of a sundae and the feel of the curve of a breast in one's hand evoke feelings that for some are one in the same," says the New York-based artist Genesis Belanger, whose ceramic sculptures often cast commonplace foods in surreal new lights. A selection of her latest work — including a vase with two protruding hands that cup twin dollops of cream — will go on view at Reyes Projects in Birmingham, Michigan, next week, in the exhibition "Body So Delicious." The group show will feature the work of five artists who explore the interactions between food and the body.

The exhibition began with softly hued paintings of hot dogs, the show's curator, Bridget Finn, explains. She had seen the artist Ivy Haldeman's eroticized renderings of sausages, emerging from pillowy buns, and couldn't get them out of her head. "They're just so sensuous," she says of the hot dogs' anthropomorphic forms, which humorously suggest the ties between desire, consumerism, food and sex. From there, Finn saw a through line to the sculptor Nevine Mahmoud's laboriously hand-carved marble sculptures of fruit, the artist Alix Pearlstein's woven Band-Aid works and the artist Amy Brener's hanging silicone sculptures, which often appear as if they have ingested troves of miscellaneous everyday objects. Finn will display new work from each of these five artists, who happen to all be female. "There's a metaphysical thread, sure, but, really, the works are more experiential, in referencing the actual needs and wants of the body — which I think women may be more in tune with," Finn says.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEVINE MAHMOUD
f o r e p l a y

November 11, 2017 – January 6, 2018

Opening Reception
Saturday, November 11 from 6 to 8 pm

M+B is pleased to present *f o r e p l a y*, an exhibition of new work by Los Angeles-based artist Nevine Mahmoud. This is the artist's debut solo exhibition. The show runs from November 11, 2017 to January 6, 2018, with an opening reception on Saturday, November 11 from 6 to 8 pm.

Nevine Mahmoud makes stone strange: borders are dissolved just enough to embrace a delicate place of perplexity and eroticism. It is in these fluid moments, where the object is untethered from its origin, that a thoughtful inquiry on the nature of representation and illusion is clarified. Reality is undressed, made malleable, and the stone Mahmoud shapes and sculpts is done with intuitive logic. In keeping with her earlier body of work, Mahmoud engages with elements of design, while challenging the role of functionality. This provocation is clear within each object and teases us with the possibility of a perky utility, while championing the re-objectified body.

Mahmoud's concerns with the fragmented body are prevalent throughout the exhibition, in a multifold of approaches. The figure is conjured as a provocative tongue unfurling from the gallery wall; it is eroticized in the carved form of a glistening and buttery peach; and it is offered in the shape of a marbleized breast—the bright pink nipple, a glowing invitation.

The theatrical position of each object in dialogue with another implies a performative act—a passing into, through and out of. The sculptures mirror one another; a companion bearing figurative semblance and sharing her story of origin—a psychic bond. These echoes are visible in formal relationships: they are one another's shadows; some begin where the other ends, and often there is a clear positive and negative tension at play. Stone is literally been pulled apart and history of the process emerges. This process acts as a conceptual binder, bringing the work into an arena where the air is charged with anticipation. It is in this theater of objects that each sculpture becomes portals into worlds unto themselves and unfold unexpected meanings with each slow viewing.

Nevine Mahmoud (b. 1988, London) received her BA from Goldsmiths, University of London and MFA from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. She has participated in numerous exhibitions, including most recently *Dreamers Awake: Women Artists After Surrealism* at White Cube, Bermondsey. Mahmoud's work was also on view in *The Poet, the Critic and the Missing* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; *This is Presence* at Ballroom Marfa, TX; and *The Lasting Concept* at the Portland Institute of Contemporary Art. Other thematic exhibitions include *An Uncanny Order* at Jessica Silverman, San Francisco*; Debris* at James Fuentes, New York; and *Seven Reeds* at Overduin & Co., Los Angeles. Notable press includes *MOUSSE*, *Art Review*, *New York Magazine*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Contemporary Art Daily*. Nevine Mahmoud lives and works in Los Angeles.

Location:	**M+B**, 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, California 90069
Show Title:	*Nevine Mahmoud: f o r e p l a y*
Exhibition Dates:	November 11, 2017 – January 6, 2018
Opening Reception:	Saturday, November 11, 6 – 8 pm
Gallery Hours:	Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm

For press inquiries, please contact info@mbart.com. For all other inquiries, contact Shannon Richardson at shannon@mbart.com or Jonlin Wung at jonlin@mbart.com.

Yes!
Yes!
Yes!

Sex and visual culture are long-running bedfellows—we're so used to the influence of sex on our surroundings that we often see it in strange places (are the rows and rows of phallic creations in our cities' skylines actually a line-up of architects' gargantuan erections, or are they merely well-designed to minimize ground space and maximize capacity?). Sometimes the lines aren't so blurred. What of the art that wears its sexiness on its sleeve, diving head first into the most natural yet oftentimes confounding of all human acts? We speak with six young artists who explore what sex and sexuality means today, from the most niche of fetishes in the online world to the women who are reclaiming pleasure for themselves IRL. What does sex look like in 2018? Why does it continue to fascinate artists? And what exactly is a cyber-erotic blob?

Words: Rosalind Duguid, Charlotte Jansen and Emily Steer

Nevine Mahmoud *JUICY FRUIT & HARD STONE*

“For me, a finger or a crack could also be erotic. And that could be any gender. It’s about touching, and hidden places.” Suggestion and seduction are key to Nevine Mahmoud’s sculptures—cold, stony forms that draw the mind to the warmest parts of the human body.

How does eroticism feed into your practice? The sculptures are rooted not just in eroticism as a theme or feeling but specifically in sculpture. There are a lot of female surrealists who I am very interested in, and then their male counterparts, like the Duchamp erotic objects, which were something I grew up with and was always very intrigued by. They’re erotic objects, weird body parts—today that might be sex toys. I thought it would be interesting with stone because the process of making it is so labour-intensive and there is so much touching in the finishing of them, it involves repeated touching and sanding and stroking.

There is a real mix of hard and soft. As the viewer you want to touch the works but there is a discomfort built in—it even feels as though you could bite into the peach sculptures, which would of course be very painful. I think there’s that translation of hard to soft which speaks very directly to process and your body wanting to interact with it; innately being in play. You don’t even have to say anything if that translation is already visible. I mean, that’s why I like sculpture. It evokes feeling instead of clear thought.

Do you feel there is a repelling element as well? I hope that’s there. For me, in terms of body parts, anything that’s fragmented or dismembered is innately uncanny or strange. They are pretty but I hope they also operate on a level of wondering what world they belong to, or imagining if a person was that big or that small.

Do you feel there is an element of cleaning up in your work? That’s something that happens quite a lot with eroticism. Many of the less appealing aspects are taken away, like hair, moisture and veins. I think that’s true. Maybe that’s part of the hyper-seduction or something. I think the challenge is trying to get things a little bit more direct but also keeping some of that cleanness, which is denial of certain textures or elements of that environment, which creates more seduction. You’re not giving the whole picture.

Do you feel there are some objects that are innately erotic or do you think it is completely our cultural understanding or filter that makes them so? I think what we generally define as erotic are a lot of female bodies and particular erogenous zones. A crack or a crevice can be so many parts of a body as well. The peach is quite distinctly like a woman’s vagina, but there are also cracks where your skin folds over on your finger. For me, a finger or a crack could also be erotic. And that could be any gender. It’s about touching or hidden places. There are some forms in nature that to the human eye… I do believe there are realms of beauty or symmetry that are quite attractive.

I have always understood your objects to be gendered. There are obvious things like the peach, but then there’s the tongue that could belong to anyone yet I still see it as female. Do you think this is fair, or is it purely because we’re used to seeing the female body presented in a more erotic way? It’s not something I say out loud or write down, but it is feminine. But I don’t always think about them as gendered. The tongue is interesting. When I showed a friend of mine my booth at the Armory, she saw the tongue as a guy and the female objects were on the floor: there’s this funny clown man on the wall, which I liked. He’s just on the wall, exposed, not really knowing what he’s doing.

There are a number of artists who have looked at disembodied female body parts—Sarah Lucas is an example of one who does so very politically. There is also a negative discussion around the disembodied forms in porn. Your work feels more celebratory. I think it’s operating in a realm that’s performative. You want art to be engaging, but when it’s celebratory it’s almost a performance between the work and the viewer; it’s making you feel. I hope that they do that.

You’ve mentioned that you don’t want to pick stone that looks too traditional. Nonetheless, do you want there to be a dialogue between your works and much more traditional stone depictions of the body? Stone has that inherent “this is art”. The material is so loaded that working with reduced or pop forms brings it back into… not design, I hate that word, but not antiquity. I do want there to be a middle ground.

You do get lots of luxury materials in sex toy design too. I was obsessed with the rose quartz dildo with the mink tail on the end in Coco de Mer [a sex boutique] in London. There’s definitely that luxury element to some of those alabaster and quartz textures. But the more I work with the stone, I’m contrasting more with metal or resin. I hope it will become more fluid. (ES)

Opening pages
Nevine Mahmoud
Slick Slice, 2017
Calcite and glass
12.7 × 24.1 × 6.3 cm

Previous pages
Mother Milk, 2017
Turkish marble, pigmented resin
30.5 × 40.6 × 25.4 cm

This page
Blue Donut, 2017
Blue marble, plexiglass
Marble: 40.6 × 40.6 × 22.9 cm,
pedestal: 81.3 × 45.7 × 45.7 cm

Peach Ball, 2017
Persian onyx, glass
25.4 × 25.4 × 25.4 cm

Opposite, below
Lick, 2017
Persian onyx, stainless steel
and steel hardware
12.7 × 26.7 × 16.5 cm

COURTESY M+B GALLERY, LOS ANGELES, AND MARTEN ELDER

carla

Issue 11

hundreds of Skype calls, thousands of emails and WhatsApp messages, innumerable CAD renderings, inventories of exotic objects and materials, and the booking of many flights to far-flung locations."[1] Countless narratives from museum staff across the catalogue recount Adrián's offbeat antics leading up to the exhibition—field trips to seafood shops, cake makers, and Hollywood prop houses. Later Barcena describes Villar Rojas' relationship with institutions he works with as "parasitic in nature and function." Indeed, in a lengthy interview with Villar Rojas, Helen Molesworth admits that when she first saw his proposed exhibition budget, she proclaimed, "Fuck, you can't rethink your relationship to spectacle! Not on my dime. You can do that on your next project!"[2]

Though hyperbolic, Molesworth's response emphasizes the absurdly expensive lengths Villar Rojas proposed to go to, leaving MOCA the bill. Referring to the planning process for the exhibition, the artist later tells Molesworth: "art, this art world, is very much a political battlefield, and somehow, this is what we 'staged' during our two years of dialogue and negotiations."[3] Yet two years of negotiations on this particular battlefield played out only for the select few *behind* the scenes. A further distinction amidst this behind-the-scenes battle is inevitable between the people *performing* the labor, and the people intellectualizing said labor (i.e., artist and curator).

Villar Rojas describes the tasks needed to create a spectacle—and the resultant physical labor—as "limited resources to fulfill infinite desires."[4] He wonders, "Is all this invisible process more relevant to me than the visible side of my work?"[5] Here the labor not only becomes pedagogy but also disregarded as invisible. The fact remains that this labor is not nothing: people are needed to *do* the labor. Stuff needs to be produced, materials cajoled. The labor is visible to somebody; the pertinent question is to whom.

Semantics aside, there is a conceptual rift between Villar Rojas' experience of the making of the work and the average museum visitor's experience of viewing it. While MOCA is often referred to as "The Artist's Museum," institutions also have a responsibility to be public-facing rather than navel-gazing. For *Theatre of Disappearance*, were the extreme amounts of physical, material, and financial demands worth the ultimate public-facing end product? A moody and ephemeral spectacle? It seems that the viewer is left to experience only a fraction of the work, and potentially only the less interesting remnants, while inside the inner sanctum of the museum, checks are written, flights are booked, and an intellectual battlefield spins onward.

Nevine Mahmoud at M+B

November 11, 2017–January 6, 2018

The Greek sculpture, *Aphrodite of Knidos*, is believed to have been carved from marble by Praxiteles in the fourth century. The sculpture takes the goddess Aphrodite as its subject, fresh from a bath with towel in hand, looking up to the door as if someone is coming. She has yet to cover herself; why should she? Naked and unbothered, Aphrodite's stance is casual, with her head cocked to the side, indifferent to the sound of an approaching viewer. As Anne Carson writes in *The Glass Essay*, "Nudes have a difficult sexual destiny,"[1] but Aphrodite can't seem to care—while her gaze remains insouciant, her posture is locked in a perpetual state of come-hither.

Compulsive sexualization is a timeworn method of the male gaze, through which women are reduced to fragments of their bodies, visually spliced into tantalizing bits and shown only as a breast, a pair of legs, or a bare face made pretty and transformed by the removal of her glasses.

Nevine Mahmoud's debut solo exhibition at M+B, kept a tight control on its objectification with precise arrangement and charged proximity. Its title, *f o r e p l a y*, alluded to an initiation. Mahmoud's play with suggestion and expectation

Angella d'Avignon

Nevine Mahmoud, *Blue donut* (2017).
Image courtesy of M+B Los Angeles
and Marten Elder.

M+B

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS

November 28, 2017
By Travis Diehl

Nevine Mahmoud

M+B
612 North Almont Drive
November 11–January 6

The title of Nevine Mahmoud's first solo show, "f o r e p l a y," goes just like that, the letters held apart. Likewise, the exhibition itself is desirously spaced, opening with *Primary encounter (pink tensions)* (all works 2017), comprising two big, pink marble blocks, one with a hole, the other, a corresponding peg. The pair is separated by a few charged feet of empty floor. Mahmoud combines a classical conceit—the erotics of marble sculpture—with a contemporary chill, as if Pygmalion were a Minimalist. And in case you get carried away with the idea of abstract penetration, a slick sense of humor keeps things real; two of the nine works on view, *Abacus arm 1* and *2*, resemble nothing so much as handrails threading soft stone rolls of toilet paper.

Breast shade and *Mother milk*, a bell shape suspended on a steel cable and a soft white blob on a glass plinth, respectively, are both tipped by pink resin nipples straight out of a Tom Wesselmann nude. The first piece trails a long wire to within a tantalizing half inch of the floor. It's important that it doesn't reach, of course—just like it's necessary that we can't touch art. *Slick slice*, an orange calcite wedge glazed with tearing glass, sits on a transparent pedestal so that one can take a look underneath. Poor, reflexive creature: You will.

— Travis Diehl

Nevine Mahmoud, *Breast shade*, 2017, alabaster and pigmented resin with stainless steel hardware, 13 x 18 1/2 x 18 1/2".

M+B

AnOther Magazine

The LA Sculptor Carving Erotically Charged Forms From Stone

June 28, 2017
By Hannah Tindle

The first thing one notices when talking to artist Nevine Mahmoud is her accent: a base of well-spoken Queen's English peppered with a distinctly Californian twang. It's inevitable that the artist, who was born and raised in London, picked up such intonation – she moved to LA in 2014 to undertake an MFA at the University of Southern California. The second thing? The manner in which she speaks about her practice, with a no-nonsense clarity, a breath of fresh air amongst the many pontificators knocking around the various corners of the art world.

Now represented by M+B Gallery in West Hollywood, Mahmoud's work takes the form of sculptural stone carvings; she whittles coloured alabaster and marble into the shape of surreal yonic fruits, arousing flowers, petal-like nipples, contorted tongues protruding from walls and disembodied lips – a welcome subversion of a traditionally masculine medium. Mahmoud's work returns to her hometown this month for a new exhibition at the White Cube, Bermondsey, titled Dreamers Awake – an all-female show tracing the influence of Surrealism upon the work of Louise Bourgeois, Hannah Wilke and Mona Hatoum, to name but a few. To be included in such a line-up for an emerging artist is "an honour", Mahmoud says. Here, alongside images of her erotically charged work, we speak about learning her craft at a place called Art City, and the surprising influence of Bruce Nauman.

On learning her craft…
"I've only been working with stone for around two years, since I started going to this place where I could buy it up in northern California, a couple of hours away by car from where I live. It's called Art City and I became totally obsessed with it. There are three of four women who work up there and the rest of the artists are predominantly male. Joanne DuBy, one of the women, started teaching me – she is a fucking amazing sculptor – and we did lessons for about a year. So I would go up there for two days of the week and would spend the rest of the week down in LA – and that's how it's been for a while now. My skills have obviously improved a lot and it's now less like a lesson whenever I visit, however."

On working with stone… "I just really wanted to do something different. I was very aware that I had been labelled as a 'young sculptor in LA' and so I kind of went with using older and traditional materials and methods to see how the conversation would work in that context. So I worked with plaster and metal and I had been thinking about stone for a while, but just hadn't had the sort of space to do whatever I wanted. There's a lot of thinking and planning during the early stages of making the work in stone – mapping out the shape, figuring out the scale. And then there is adding the fine detailing, sanding and polishing. It takes anything from a week to a month, working every day, to complete a piece. Choosing the colours for pieces has been this really organic and intuitive process. Every piece has been made in response to a rock that I have encountered. Each sculpture is innately unique because each rock I use is different and is sourced from all over the United States."

On the artists who influence her… “I would cite Louise Bourgeois as one of my influences, for sure. I obviously have always looked at the work of female artists, but I have been greatly influenced by men too. Bruce Nauman and Joseph Beuys, for example, have had a huge impact on my practice. Nauman in particular – he never really worked with carving, but always fragmented and dismembered the body in his work. I always look at very figurative sculpture from the mid-century too, but I strive to hybridise this with very feminine influences.”

On being a part of Dreamers Awake… “I think a lot of processes in Surrealist art – or at least the themes – have always been something present in my work: consciousness driven forward by unconscious desire. Also, elaborate and strange visual imagery is something I think about a lot. With the fact that this show is all-female I feel incredibly excited to be a part of it. Surrealism was a movement very much defined by men. The women involved in that historical context are often side-lined, and actually don’t identify as Surrealists – but they were making work in sort of that way. It’s an interesting topic to bring up today.”

M+B

NEW YORK MAGAZINE

The Sculptor Bringing Back the Craft of Stone Carving

March 27, 2017
By Christine Whitney

Photo: Julia Leonard

"Lilies are the most erotic flower," says London-born, Los Angeles-based artist Nevine Mahmoud. She's explaining the inspiration behind her carved-stone sculptures of the flower, which have turned many an art-world head as of late. Mahmoud's been making a name for herself with her feminine-meets-rock-hard forms in alabaster, marble, and calcite (think: the aforementioned flowers, a pair of lips, a tongue, and a 50-pound peach), a unique oeuvre that taps into an ancient, traditionally male-dominated craft.

In 2012, Mahmoud moved from her native England to L.A. to attend the MFA program at the University of Southern California, where she became enamored with the medium. "It started with finding this supplier and outdoor artist studios in Ventura," Mahmoud says. "Literally it's a huge yard just covered [in stone], with carvers were working on giant sculptures — outsider artists and weird hobbyists who are obsessed with it." Immediately obsessed herself, Mahmoud spent a year photographing and conversing with the artists, even asking one of her professors if she could take a course at the Ventura studios in lieu of working as a teaching assistant. "He was like, 'Hell, no, you can't stone-carve,'" the artist remembers. She put her aspirations on the back burner until after graduation. "After doing a lot of shows with the same work from grad school, I was just like, 'I need to do something different,'" she says, which meant enrolling in carving lessons with a carver named JoAnne Duby, who "just taught me everything — she's my guru."

Mahmoud's clearly an artist to watch; she recently joined the gallery M+B in West Hollywood and showed her carvings at New York's Armory Show, to rave reviews. But she's quick to assert that her work path is not set in stone (pun intended). "I'm a constantly shifting human," she asserts. "Who knows what I'm going to be making next?"

Below, The Cut visited the artist in her Alhambra, California, studio to talk about British humor, vintage shopping, and the thrill of Craigslist.

You're from London. Tell us a bit about your background.
I was born and raised in London and came here after undergrad. I wanted to move to L.A.; I've been obsessed with this city for a while. I'll always love London and I miss British people, but

day to day, there's no comparison.

What do you miss most about the British?
The sense of humor — it's very particular, very snappy and quick. The general recreational conversation there is not talking about yourself; it's more like jokes.

Your family is still there?
They are. My dad is Lebanese and my mom is Austrian. They met in Europe and moved around their whole lives before settling in London, so they're very supportive of me being out there and they love to visit. They met on a Greek island that we still all frequent. It's very romantic.

How do you manage your time?
[Figuring out] my routine and studio habits is probably something that's caused me the most anxiety of anything in my life. Getting into the routine I'm in now has taken me the past six years. Being in the studio is a really integral part of my process — it's really about going to this place every day and just being there. You don't need to make anything, you don't have to complete anything.

What's the first thing you do in the morning?
One of the first things I bought for my kitchen is one of those beautiful, stove-top Alessi coffee makers, so I have coffee, make breakfast, and listen to BBC Radio, but then I'm pretty quick to get out of the house. I don't like to stay at home in the morning. Either I get lunch ahead of time or do an errand. I used to go to Home Depot like every day, but now that the studio equipment is more built up, I don't do as much of that — I just buy stone.

What do you love about working with stone?
It's really absorbing and labor-intensive, which are things that really attract me. It's about tools and technique, and it's not easy to work with, but it's very pleasurable. It's intuitive and mathematical and I like that the material is old and has history embedded in it, literally. It's got all these contradictions. You never really know what you're getting, but there's all this room to interpret stone.

How do you pick the stones you work with?
I pick the stones depending on a shape or form that's been on my mind, but then that stone becomes synonymous with it. It feels really like it's about bringing out this ultimate thing I see in the color or the opaqueness. Now it's getting a little difficult if someone's like, "I love the peach!" [and wants me to make another one]. Sometimes that piece of calcite I have access to doesn't really want to be a peach right now. I just have to wait. It's this weird back-and-forth.

What helps when you're not feeling inspired?
Definitely being away from the studio for a little while. I used to struggle with that, or get really concerned if I felt like I had no ideas. Now I feel less pressure to be inspired in general. As long as I'm here and can see stuff, I know that there are things to do. Conversations with other artists also inspire me a lot.

Who would be your ideal studio visit?

Because she was just so badass, Louise Bourgeois. Or Bruce Nauman or Isamu Noguchi — he's been my go-to stone carver for a really long time.

You're very inspired by other women artists. Who are some of the most influential for you?
Louise Bourgeois and Alina Szapocznikow — I look at her stuff every day.
There's this show I'm in, in London at the end of June at the White Cube. It's this big group show of female artists under the umbrella of surrealism and modernism: Claude Cahun and [Bourgeois] and Kiki Smith and Mona Hatoum. Of my contemporaries who are kind of emerging, Kelly Akashi and a couple of others are also in the show.

What do you like to have around you when you work?
Recently, music. I try not to listen to headphones too much, just because with carving I want to have my senses all equal. I listen to this radio station that broadcasts from London a lot and gives me a lot of ideas, called NTS. They actually broadcast from a store right next to where I live, and in London it was the same thing; they broadcast from the square next to the apartment. It's just very comforting and really great music — obscure stuff and old-school stuff.

What are you listening to on repeat?
A dance playlist. These friends of mine keep coming over for dinner and everyone will bring two bottles of wine each. We'll have some great meal and then start playing music and drinking and dancing. It's gone until like 4 or 5 a.m. a couple nights. No drugs, just energy. I'm just compiling the music we've been playing — a lot of R&B and hip-hop stuff, like that Miguel song, "Adorn."

What's your studio uniform?
I have a cupboard of old T-shirts, [like this Backstreet Boys one], and leggings. Shoes are like this [white Reeboks], or sometimes I'll need something steel-toed. Leggings and shorts in the summer — although I have some pretty gnarly burns on my hands and legs just from the grinders, so I should be wearing long pants all the time.

What's the story behind the Backstreet Boys shirt?
I got this when I was like 16 from Camden Market. It was from this store that sold all the '90s band T-shirts in vacuum-sealed plastic bags, and these high-waisted jeans I still think about all the time. They were called Fizzy Jeans, and they were skin-tight, and stretchy — we bought those by the boatload.

What's your style like outside the studio?
It's pretty different. I like to wear colors, block colors, silks, translucent fabrics, and nice jeans. I haven't really been into dresses, but more tailored stuff. I just got this classic Gaultier '90s, net, sheer, tight top with crazy patterns. I found it at a place called called Replica Vintage … It's really good, it's a lot of Gaultier and Westwood, that kind of darker '90s stuff. And I have this Calvin Klein velvet pantsuit — blue velvet dots on sheer, sort-of silk. It's like a smoker's jacket kind of thing with loose pants.

When did you realize you wanted to be an artist?
When I was like 16. I played the flute, I was in theater a lot, and I was doing art. Acting was like

this adrenaline rush, but I was just obsessed with drawing and photography. And I remember being like, “Oh, what will I choose?” And I was like, “[Art] is gonna be more realistic — this is gonna sustain me and keep me interested for longer.”

What were some of your most memorable theater roles?
Males always, always men. Except once I was an old woman, a billionaire, who went back to her hometown to murder this guy that raped her. It’s this play from the ’30s and it’s crazy. That was a pretty great role.

Did you see the movie *Elle* with Isabelle Huppert?
I just saw that — it’s excellent, she’s amazing. That film and *Mustang* [from 2015] are two of my new favorites.

You have a child’s slide and a big metal spring here in your gallery. What are you doing with them?
Those are just forms that — scale-wise, shape-wise, color-wise — I’m just keeping here constantly, because I know they’re both going to be emerging in my work.

Where did you find them?
Craigslist. Everything is Craigslist. I look for slides and car parts, always. Now people know the work so I’ll get text messages [if they find good ones].

How do you unwind?
I’m trying to garden more. And there are always home projects to do. But I’m pretty social, so if I’m in the mood to unwind, I’ll just have someone over, and we’ll have a glass of wine and cook some food.

What’s your signature dish?
Through winter, I was doing a really rich, red-winy stew with game, and pasta. I also got really into savory pies, like onion tarts. Tonight I’m doing a roast chicken.

THE ARMORY SHOW 2017
Nevine Mahmoud

March 2 – 5, 2017
Pier 94 Booth P6

M+B is pleased to announce its participation at The Armory Show from March 2 - 5 in New York City. Please visit us at Pier 94 Booth P6 where we will be presenting new works by Los Angeles based artist Nevine Mahmoud.

Nevine Mahmoud's meticulously sculpted works are connected by their materiality and sensual expressiveness. The works in the booth are a focused selection of hand-carved stone objects—fragmented, bodily shapes with luminescent skins and surreally erotic overtones. With their lush material presence, the curving forms beckon to us to touch them, place our bodies against them.

In *Putte*, smooth alabaster lips rest atop a handkerchief cast in iron, underscoring the tension between the supple surface of the lips and the rough industrial material. The hybrid breast/flower of *Auto Body Part I*—its delicate skin hollowed out from hard stone—balances against the readymade metal of a machined coil. And in *Headless*, a large wayward tongue juts from the wall, disembodied from its owner. With a playful post-minimalism, these objects are in dialogue with the work of artists such as Robert Gober, Alina Szapozcnikow and Marcel Duchamp, and explore the tense poetry between bodies and things.

Nevine Mahmoud (b. 1988, London) received her BA from Goldsmiths, University of London and MFA from the University of Southern California. She has participated in numerous exhibitions, including most recently *The Poet and The Critic, and the missing,* as part of the *Storefront Series* exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and *The Lasting Concept* at the Portland Institute of Contemporary Art. Other recent thematic exhibitions include *This is Presence* at Ballroom Marfa, TX*; An Uncanny Order* at Jessica Silverman, San Francisco*; Debris* at James Fuentes, New York and *Seven Reeds* at Overduin & Co., Los Angeles. Her work has been featured in *BOMB* Magazine, *MOUSSE*, *Art Review*, *Los Angeles Times* and *Contemporary Art Daily*. The artist will have her debut solo exhibition at M+B in September 2017. Nevine Mahmoud lives and works in Los Angeles.

M+B

ARTSY

20 Artists to Watch at The Armory Show

March 1, 2017

Portrait of Nevine Mahmoud in her Los Angeles studio by Emily Berl for Artsy.

Two years ago, Mahmoud carved an erotic peach from a slab of stone in what would ultimately spark a daring new body of work for the young sculptor. This week, in her debut at The Armory Show, the series culminates in a collection of handcarved forms that reference elements of the human body—including a lone tongue, a pair of lips, and a single breast.

> “They’re disembodied body parts; parts without a whole,” says Mahmoud from her studio in a converted garage in eastern Los Angeles. Inspired by the fragmented bodies in works by Louise Bourgeois and Alina Szapocznikow, and the unsettling quality that can accompany even their most erotic or attractive forms, she laces beautiful shapes with strange, dark undertones. Though sensual, the sculptures are fashioned in hard stone and often affixed with metal and mechanical parts. “I’m always hoping to find a form that sits somewhere between familiar and bodily—something that you would recognize as your own, but something that’s also alienated,” she says.

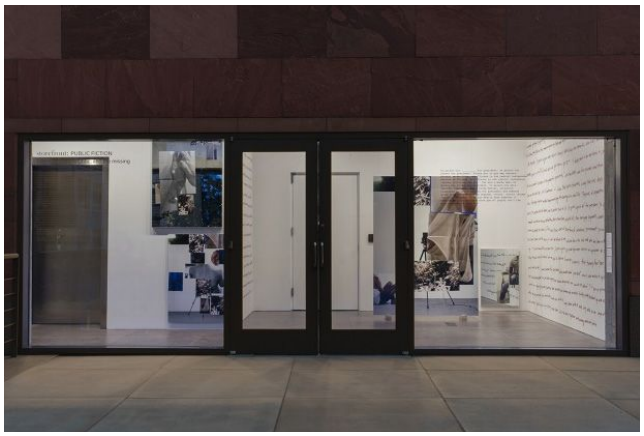
The sculptures on view have been carved from alabaster, sun-yellow calcite, and opaque pink and white marble, using a traditional process that’s a departure from the plaster casting technique she employed for her MFA work at the University of Southern California. A particularly fruitful stone-gathering mission once led her to a stone-carving studio in Northern California, where she found a mentor in an older female sculptor. “That’s kind of how I’ve learned everything that I know,” she says of this new chapter of work, the next iteration of which will be on view in her fall solo with Los Angeles gallery M+B.

LA RB LOS ANGELES REVIEW OF BOOKS

A Note on the Contemporary Canon: Public Fiction's Show at MOCA Los Angeles

By Paloma Checa-Gismero
June 17, 2016

HIP-HEIGHT ON THE RIGHT inside edge of the window frame, perpendicular to me are three captions on a concrete wall. Two point to works inside the gallery, and one to an address far up in the Hollywood Hills. I am outside Los Angeles's Museum of Contemporary Art, standing across the glass from storefront: The Poet and the Critic, and the missing, the most recent exhibition by the independent art platform Public Fiction.



Storefront: The Poet and the Critic, and the missing is a two-show project occupying the anteroom of The Marcia Simon Weisman Works on Paper Study Center, on the plaza level of MOCA on Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles. Curated by Public Fiction's leading soul, Lauren Mackler, it has brought to the space works by artists Nathaniel Mackey, Nevine Mahmoud, and Lynne Tillman (between March 19 and April 25, 2016), and Nancy Lupo, Litia Perta, and Paul Mpagi Sepuya (between May 2 and June 19, 2016).

Complementing the shows was the missing, a screening on May 5 that included Isaac Julien's The Attendant (1993), Alfred Leslie and Frank O'Hara's The Last Clean Shirt (1964), Maha Maamoun's Domestic Tourism II (2009), and an installation of Mungo Thomson's 2002 video The American Desert (for Chuck Jones). Lastly, the cycle will close with Stanya Kahn-directed performance A Fugitive Thought on June 2.

Watered iced coffee in my left hand. It is a Tuesday and the museum is closed. I stand outside the storefront in the empty plaza that is also a roof for an underground contemporary art mausoleum. Below my feet, silent, is Helen Molesworth's show The Art of Our Time. MOCA is closed for the day, but the storefront is a storefront. Across its full wall, glass captions are still white with text printed on black non-serif type. Name of the artist, date, and place of birth. Name of piece, date, a short narrative, information on materials and technique. The first caption from the top reads "Paul Mpagi Sepuya." The San Bernardino–born, Los Angeles–based artist brings three pieces to the show: Study with Five Figures (3009) (2016), Figures/Ground Studies (2016), and Study with Four Figures (3001) (2016), three sets of inkjet prints mounted on wood bracings, where mirrors, cameras, tripods, and bodies denote the game of gaze reciprocities that seem to fill the exhibition space. This triangle expands on Sepuya's long exploration of the intimate space of an artist's studio and the relationships that occur within it. Such interest is now transplanted to the art gallery, following curator Mackler's interest in investigating the spaces of in-betweenness that exist within art exhibition spaces.

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For almost three months, storefront: The Poet and the Critic, and the missing runs parallel to The Art of Our Time, MOCA's redrawing of postwar art's conventional chronologies. A big reframing of the museum's contemporary art collection, The Art of Our Time emphasizes the affinities among artists, told in relation to their shared institutional affiliations, their art schools and galleries, and major historical events. The Art of Our Time decenters the canonical sense of New York as contemporary art's cradle, and revisits instead the importance of schools like Black Mountain College in the articulation of shared generational conversations and formal developments. It also explores the tightknit interactions between postwar architecture and avant-garde art, revisiting the structural concerns of installation and object-based artists on both coasts. MOCA's show centers desire, sexuality, and the body as major transgenerational concerns, and reconsiders art trends in light of changing modes of production, especially for the post-industrial US–based art collected by MOCA. A Western avant-garde-centric rewriting of history, in other words, proves inadequate for understanding a city whose indebtedness to foreign influences has long been acknowledged.

Discursive gaps are inherent to curating. They exist in most exhibitions, sometimes as substantial conceptual lacks, sometimes as loci where affinity threads weave between pieces, exhibitions, and the visitor's experience. Mackler's concept for Public Fiction's residence at MOCA was to explore these gaps as points of entry to The Art of Our Time. Thus storefront: The Public and the Critic, and the missing acts like a set of captions, comments to the main narrative of that exhibit, and interventions in MOCA's new institutionalized account of the contemporary avant-garde. In a conversation, Mackler remarked on the footnote-like nature of its insertion in MOCA's structure. Slight, subtle additions to the museum's proposal remind one of scribbled notes on a book's margins. The art of our time is, Mackler's counter-exhibit argues, art made today by the young and mid-career artists with a solid presence in the circuit of alternative exhibition spaces like Public Fiction and others. These are notes to the contemporary canon from actual young practitioners situated in the city of Los Angeles.

The last of the captions points to Nancy Lupo's Bench 2016 (2016): "Bench 2016, on view in a white Dodge Caravan, license plate 7KAA008 parked near 2130-2178 Castilian Drive, Los Angeles CA 90068." I go back to my car, miraculously parked on one of MOCA's side streets, sip the rest of that iced coffee, mostly melted now, and type the address on my phone. Out of downtown, onto the freeway, off the freeway, into Hollywood, up the hills, past the park, up and up, past apartment buildings, houses, and then mansions overlooking the mussed metropolis. To my right there's a steep cliff with cacti. On my left I spot the white van. As at MOCA's storefront, I lean against the windows to get glimpses of a long pine bench in the back of the vehicle. Thousands of yards of dental floss weave through the bench's scaffolding. Hundreds of little branches of spray millet hang from the structure. This is Nancy Lupo's piece, a workbench that is also a garden, inside a van.

Public Fiction's vitrine-like gallery is spatially equivalent to the museum's gift shop, across the square, on street level. This mirroring pays homage to Public Fiction's original emplacement: a storefront in the Highland Park neighborhood of Los Angeles, where Mackler started her independent project in 2010. After five years of working in that East Los Angeles suburb, Public Fiction is now a nomadic gallery. Property value escalated in Highland Park since she started, a gentrification that occurred partly due to the presence of alternative art and music venues like hers, as well as other services targeting the young, creative, middle-class Angelenos displacing the Latin@ community from the area. As is often the case, art got caught in the middle of complex processes of value transformation. Public Fiction got expelled from its Highland Park storefront by the very processes that enabled it and that it helped set in motion.

What has remained stable, however, is Public Fiction's dual nature as a publication and an exhibition project. Both, in Mackler's words, "accumulate content and layers of sense." The show makes evident how Mackler builds the layered articulation of meanings: works and words are located on the gallery's walls, on its windows, freestanding within it, and outside. Some are activated in a projection room — "like a movie theater," she has said — and others inside the museum's main galleries and hallways. The related publication can be accessed at publicfiction.moca.org, which gathers installation shots, pictures taken at the artists' studios, stills from the screened films, fragments from the text-based pieces, and texts by Corrine Fitzpatrick and Quinn Latimer. "Together," as Chris Kraus wrote in Where Art Belongs, her monograph on alternative art practice in Los Angeles, "the writing and the visual work form a system in which (as in life) meaning occurs through accretion."

Earlier this spring, the first exhibition of the twofold storefront: The Poet and the Critic, and the missing, featured Song of the Andoumboulou: 148 & Sweet Safronia's Wave Unwoven (2016) by renowned poet, novelist, and critic Nathaniel Mackey. Mackey's poetry was fixed on the window inside frames that remind one of computer screens, boxes that make one want to scroll down his stanzas, a gesture that curator Mackler had already initiated in the online publication accompanying the project. "Long since in some room reminiscing, long on / something said said again. A symphonette / of beaks, bits of wood scrap, wheese what / there / was of it left …" Mackey writes, referring to the lit gallery behind his vinyl words. "We knew it wasn't up to us. / We knew it was a game. We enjoyed it / High chiming strings way back in the mix / re- / buffed us, a remote broadcast it seemed." One pictures the morning party sunrays on a misty chilly porch.

Also in storefront: The Poet and the Critic, and the missing's opening show were works by artist Nevine Mahmoud and award-winning novelist and essay writer Lynne Tillman. Mahmoud's Fluid mechanics/ objective parts (2016), focuses on the material aspects of her creations, sexy emulations that exude self-referentiality and intimacy as well as contention. Their forms speak of fluidity, self-contradiction, change, morphing. As if they traced the formal extorsion suffered by points in space, printed on shiny, velvety, pink plastic. A perfect counterbalance to Mahmoud's figures are Lynne Tillman's words. Her Ode to DCW (Dining Chair Wood) (2016) appears inside a light box on the gallery wall, and reads: "Made of wood, like the Eames chairs, covered in hard foam rubber that didn't show traces of bodies pressed upon them," responding to the materiality of Mahmoud's work and the underground pieces of our time's new canon. Tillman's words pose the unavoidable question: where do each of us position ourselves amid this contention?

Despite The Art of Our Time's welcome revisiting of the canonical stories of recent art history, the exhibit remains strongly faithful to the autonomy of art and its exceptionality. It engages with its local and tourist audiences through traditional didactic captions, explanatory texts, and short videos hosted on the institution's website. However, by hosting a rotating selection of smaller exhibitions such as storefront: The Poet and the Critic, and the missing, MOCA allows its audience to profit from the exploratory character of independent curatorial practice, as well. With their informality, platforms such as Public Fiction are raw fresh winds that help invigorate the museum's more constrained institutional agenda. Conversely, Public Fiction benefits from the legitimation of inhabiting MOCA for three months. It expands its audience, it receives a budget, it is able to commission new works and engage in fair trade with its artists. Lauren Mackler's vision is backed by one key piece of the national art establishment, and artists become gatekeepers in the translation between the canon and the varied art production that a megalopolis like Los Angeles generates — the symbiotic relationship between more established and smaller institutions is mirrored by that of the writers to the objects in the exhibit. As Corrine Fitzpatrick writes: "Poets use words to mine mysteries and thus can provide language — the wardrobe of reason — to objects existing in space," and Mackler's show helps mine the mysteries of MOCA's attempt to redraw the canon within the milieu of art production in 2016 Los Angeles.

Paloma Checa-Gismero is a PhD candidate in art history, theory, and criticism in the University of California, San Diego.

Considering Nevine Mahmoud's Three Isolated Effects

By E.D. Noice
May 11, 2016

On a lonely hill above Los Angeles I find myself texting a complete stranger in order to be taken to an exhibition I know nothing about. Typically when I'm asked to write about art, I've at least heard of the gallery, and if not, I'm able to familiarize myself prior to visiting the show by reviewing photos and reading a press release. A barren website and a cryptic appointment e-mail containing the word 'access' confirming my reservation are all that lies between myself and the exhibition.

Nevine Mahmoud, Three Isolated Effects, 2016.

The stranger turns out to be Lewis Teague Wright, the 'Gallery Director' for transient art space Lock Up International that has hosted shows in London, Frankfurt and Mexico City. On this particular day Nevine Mahmoud's Three Isolated Effects exhibition, running from April 18 to 24, is showing in a 10×10 space in a Public Storage facility in Los Angeles' Elysian Park neighborhood and is made up of three sculpture pieces by London-born and LA-based Mahmoud.

The abstract ambiguity of Mahmoud's pieces marry perfectly with their surroundings. Contained within the walls of a storage unit, we understand there is value. There is worth in the work. In the same way that value is given to art objects displayed in the white cube, Mahmoud's Three Isolated Effects, too, feels right at home in a space with its function of storing a person's valuables.

With construction going on both above and below the unit that houses the show, I become acutely aware of the delicacy of viewing art in a way I'd never realized. The floors and walls of the space are made of creaking and groaning plywood —the kind that noise and movement flow through freely. The banal act of walking from one piece to another to view it becomes a disruptive and self-conscious one. At times it leads me to focus on factors outside of the art, influencing the viewing experience.

Mahmoud's most formally recognizable and least abstract piece is a colorful, to-scale beach ball. Without a list of titles or materials to refer to, I'm left to observe exactly what's in front of me. Its glossy finish and stillness leads me to believe it is made of ceramic —making it a replica of a delicate, light object made of a different, yet equally fragile material. Diagonally across from the ball is a free-standing fibre-glass piece of what I can only guess was once a jacuzzi or bath. Smooth and white like the faux-porcelain of any domestic tub on one side, and rough and painted a bright, chalky, Pepto-Bismol pink on the reverse.

Almost invisible due to its hue and broad surface is a golden, canary yellow panel to the right. It lies nearly flush against an already yellowed plasterboard wall, creating a subtle and atmospheric piece that complements and observes the installation alongside it, without leaving an intrusive impression. The pieces conjure nostalgia in both their formal and conceptual existences. The colors and materiality of all three artworks make them familiar, even when a piece's shape or size is surreal.

Nevine Mahmoud, Three Isolated Effects, 2016.
Installation view. Courtesy of Lock Up International.

It's rare to see a show with a title, environment and works that so succinctly combine and freely converse between themselves. Three Isolated Effects achieves what many Los Angeles art shows miss out on; existing outside of the city's influence. Blanket statements about a place as diverse and complex as this one are typically invalid, but there are two truths that are proven exceptions to this rule: that Los Angeles has a lot of space and light. Although the white cube is an equalizer, it's hard to ignore how these two physical elements exist and inhabit this Californian city. Mahmoud's show, like others put on by Lock Up International, become truly free of existing in any one location.

As curator Teague Wright leads me through the labyrinth of identical hallways and safety-orange metal unit doors, in a generic Public Storage facility, in an ordinary residential suburb, these two truths of LA fall away —we could be anywhere. This anonymity, and the Lock Up International website's lack of explanation, leads to an art exhibition palette cleanser, one that asks you to forget the white cube. Instead you're invited to pay attention only to what is around you, and in front, lending itself tremendously to Mahmoud's show, as abstract sculpture typically requires even a modest suspension of disbelief. This return to basics is both refreshing and eye-opening, leaving me glad to know that the places and modes of how we view art have a dialogue all their own, being hashed out on an international scale.**

M+B

MOUSSE

Playtime

By Andrew Berardini
Issue 52
February 2016

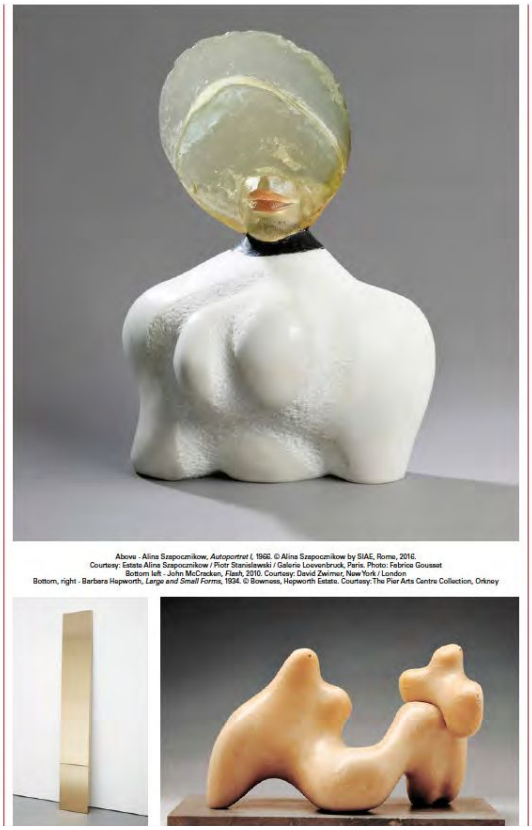
Inverted gears warp inward, raw metal with an organic curve. A post-industrial sea creature, this mouthy hunk of raw metal plunks onto a slick primary-hued plinth, raised just off the floor. Balls in the colors of faded ice cream sag without bounce. Chopped slides arced and prone beam in more cheerful primaries their unuseful curves, some magic of modern material cast just so for the whimsy of children. Old car parts cast shadows on photo paper like those nuclear winters you hear about where the flash of the explosion makes vaporized bodies permanent shadows on thick walls. And these special stones carved just so, a calcite peach, a disembodied alabaster tit, they sit on these bright primary plinths too, though the latter was spotted in a makeshift bar sitting on the glossy surface of a piano, regaled with cheap barroom chatter and an instrumental from the keys of Wham's immortal Careless Whispers. Playground minimalism plunked with curved stones from the pornographic end of Noguchi or Hepworth, the work of Nevine Mahmoud is all of these things.

The locked weirdness between modern materials and shapely living bodies, the natural and unnatural, a yearning for some kind of order refused with a chop, the roughest metal lingering on those perfect plinths. Dangerous pussies or vagina dentata or whatever, anyway you cut those lopsided circles you still don't put your fingers in them. The stones on the other hand beg for a soft touch to see if its translucent skin as yielding as it looks. The peach, though suggestive, still feels PG, laying a finger on that can go down without a hint of the illicit. But wanting to touch the disembodied boob
(even thinking of it as a boob without a body) feels just a little bit creepy. One doesn't often view sculpture begging to be handled.

Every time I see one of John McCracken's spacey, leaning planks, I want to smear a greasy thumb across the perfect sheen of its surface. I yearn to mar its perfection with my imperfect, squelching, sweating body. The triumph over the messy living over the perfection of these objects' inhumanly (or post-humanly) modern materials. His work has become easy shorthand for me in thinking about contemporary commodity fetishism and its attendant alienation, another way to throw my body on the machine.

"New Babylon" installation view at Roberts & Tilton, Culver City, 2015.
Courtesy: the artist and Roberts & Tilton, Culver City

Most minimalists, though less fetish-y, still beg for a hand to finger their unhandled forms and make them more human. If seen as a cautionary tale of our sometimes disastrous love affair with machines, Donald Judd and Carl Andre look like ignored Cassandras making monuments to the tragedy of disappeared bodies. But seen as they wished themselves and their work to be understood, they were butch ultra-literalists. They wanted things that could not be anything but what they were, sucked of all content, smashing old illusions, doing it with all the romance of a stack of plywood. Monuments to an emptied-out monumentality, or truly (at least to me) triumphal sculptures to industry at the moment when its force started to fail. They poured their concrete and stacked their bricks just as all the American steel mills went rust belt and their factories and foundries were dubbed Superfund sites. In chopped forests and mine runoff, in quarried mountains and chemical treatments, the
EPA might be able to better tell you how much toxic wastes goes into the creation of that literal geometry of industrial manufacture. Industrial materials were also employed in that generation by female artists as well but to very different effect. Eva Hesse and Alina Szapocznikow made corporeal sculptures with these materials but found themselves in early graves, most likely from their unmasked exposure to their media's carcinogenic chemicals. Szapocznikow, a Jew during World War II, had survived Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen and peritoneal tuberculosis, both experiences that brought a contemplation of corporeality to her work in all its fragile mortality and occasional sex appeal, but it was likely the polyester resins that gave her the breast cancer that eventually took her life. Also a casualty of Nazism, Hesse as a child made it out of Germany, but her uncle and grandparents died in concentration camps. Clearly less representational than Szapocznikow's cast body parts, Hesse 's sculptures differed greatly from Judd and Andre in its palpable psychological moods, organic forms, and occasional sexual innuendo.



Above - Alina Szapocznikow, *Autoportret I*, 1968. © Alina Szapocznikow by SIAE, Rome, 2016.
Courtesy: Estate Alina Szapocznikow / Piotr Stanisławski / Galerie Loevenbruck, Paris. Photo: Fabrice Gousset
Bottom left - John McCracken, *Flash*, 2010. Courtesy: David Zwirner, New York / London
Bottom, right - Barbara Hepworth, *Large and Small Forms*, 1934. © Bowness, Hepworth Estate. Courtesy: The Pier Arts Centre Collection, Orkney

1. *Vitrine project* (detail), 2015. Courtesy: JDAN, Los Angeles; 2. Studio view, 2015. Courtesy: the artist; 3. *Reachbutt*, 2015. Courtesy: the artist;
4. From left to right - *u*, 2015; *mouth*, 2015; *knot*, 2015. Courtesy: the artist; 5. *Tied chunks with color box*, 2015. Courtesy: François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles

The work of Nevine Mahmoud lives in this tradition of sculpture set forth by Hesse and Szapocznikow through a similar use of materials and concerns. But her meditations on her mediums absorb some of the hard edges leftover from a fetish minimalist like McCracken, the tension between the plinth and the knotted hunk of metal atop it, between the rough industrial skin and the slick surface it rests upon. The corporeality that Nevine brings to her work, through inclusive of both the psychological complex and surreally sexual, also finds a curious element of play: the balls, the slides, those specific colors. Though the elemental metal works look quite menacing in their way, the shapely slides bear a human curve. Looking at Nevine's work, I kept dreaming of Jacques Tati's Playtime (1963). In his DVD commentary for the British Film Institute, scholar Philip Kemp described the film's plot as exploring "how the curve comes to reassert itself over the straight line." The hard angles of modernity, cookie cutter mass production, the straight lines that the gray worker's walk of the new modern Paris (and the occasional striking color brought by flowers, vivid non-conformists, and the working class). The old Paris construction workers and dancing teenagers walk and move in curved, organic paths and rhythms. Tati's iconic character Mr. Hulot himself in his messy humanity is hilariously and somewhat melancholically lost in the mess of this bloodless, boxy universe. Given this paradigm, it's hard for me not to think of Judd, Andre, and the gang as purveyors of this soulless modernity, and Hesse, Szapocznikow, and Tati as bodies trying to resist its hard geometries on their round bodies, some to more violent effects than others of course (but the world has always been so much harder on women to be sure). This is a false dichotomy perhaps, but I still feel it.

Humor and play itself are rebellions against the efficiencies of modern life, the exhausting churn of perpetual work so many people in the industrial and postindustrial world find themselves in. Our generations ultra-modern materials have long left plywood and concrete behind, but we all stare at the unbroken perfection of computer screens. Apple's triumph was to make the least machine looking of machines; its sleek metal and plastic without orifice as if it was shat from a robot and never saw a human hand (which we artist too much or reduce his work to a single element) this is also a clear tactic of late-capitalism.

"Play" is one of those words that seem to litter contemporary art writing to the point where even I read one of this delightful world with a bit of a pause, but rather than dismissing a cliché, perhaps I'd rather explore why we need to feel this sense of play, why an artist like Nevine choose to make these beautiful, almost classical, post-minimalist objects out of balls and slides, along with those old
car parts and menacing hunks of metal. Not a Luddite, I don't wish to attack modernity and its mechanical advancements wholesale but such progress has casualties. The assembly line of death that both Hesse and Szapocznikow barely escaped, the industrial poisons
that eventually took them. And though the issues are maybe not so stark, we still somewhat blindly rush forward into futures without thinking of the whiplash of progress, worked to death and always complaining of being "busy," as the old John Lennon song goes, by giving us no time instead of it all. And here in the work of Nevine I find both the promise of play and the material reveal of the suppression of labor, all seen the perspective of an intelligence in full possession of a body aware of the potential casualties of our most modern desires.

M+B

Contemporary Art Daily

“SOGTFO” at François Ghebaly

April 7th, 2015

Nevine Mahmoud, Tied chunks with color box, 2015.
Image courtesy of François Ghebaly, Los Angeles.

SOGTFO (Sculpture Or Get The Fuck Out) is a critical play on the misogynistic acronym TOGTFO (Tits Or Get The Fuck Out), a prompt directed at anyone claiming to be female within online boards, chats, and forums. This prompt, which bridges “accepted” adolescent immaturity and the most menacing forms of misogyny, points to the pernicious “made by and for men” sentiment that persists in cultural realms both high and low.

Under such hegemonic primacy, male artists tend to be elevated far above their female peers, and the notion of genius is largely reserved for men. This bias resides most resolutely in the discourse surrounding the practice of sculpture, in which an emphasis on grandeur functions as the new phallus of nations, churning out massive works for even more massive sales floors, collections, and institutions.

This exhibition argues against the predominantly patriarchal imagination that has defined sculptural form, and it aims to reveal the energy, intensity, and originality being forged by artists who exchange the emptiness of grand gestures for complexity, criticality, humor, and meaningful gravitas.

Without discrediting or disregarding history, the exhibition makes a case in and for the present—a time when the market has nearly consumed every aspect of the maker—by turning our attention to five contemporary artists whose gestures in form embody the now and point to the new in Sculpture. Spanning three generations, the show introduces emerging artists Kelly Akashi, Nevine Mahmoud, and Kathleen Ryan, alongside established artists Andrea Zittel and Amanda Ross-Ho, illustrating a shift in mentorship and aesthetic lineage that argues against longstanding—and all-too-gendered—systems of artistic valuation and authority.

SOGTFO is curated by Charlie White, with accompanying texts by Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer and Charlie White.

M+B

ArtReview

SOGTFO (Sculpture or Get the Fuck Out)

28 February – 11 April 2015, François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles

May 2015 Issue
By Arturo Berardini

Tits or Get the Fuck Out. In the darker, scuzzier and more diabolically playful corners of the Internet, where identity is at best fluid and undefined, TOGTFO is, according to writer Quinn Norton, 'a transgression to test a new person's ability to participate within an in-group'. Though directed at women or users perceived to be women, you're not supposed to show your tits. That's maybe the worst possible response. Or the worst outside of taking it as a literal request and getting upset. Better is, maybe, 'All I have are your mom's and nobody wants those', or just ignore the fuckers.

The question presumes that the majority of /b/tards, anons, trolls, hackers and lurkers are dudes, which most of them are, and the Internet's language, culture and criteria have been largely set by men. Artist and exhibition curator Charlie White asserts that sculpture has had the same history, but that it shouldn't have had to, thus the show's title.

Of all the different media, sculpture has a particularly cock-dragging history and is dude-dominated in general, in LA in particular, and the gang of artists in this show engages with that history, collectively pushing the medium into new places. Of the six artists, all ladies, two midcareer and a trio of emergers, none are flashing their tits or buckling under the offence of patriarchy. With humour, panache, skill and style that matches and surpasses their male peers, the work of these artists supersedes any bullshit gendering.

Amanda Ross-Ho's Untitled Sculpture (Once U Go Black) (2015) quietly engages with LA sculpture icon Charles Ray's subtle and significant rescalings. Here the upsized bottom hips of a mannequin sport a fade-to-black of panties stacked atop panties creeping down its legs – an American Apparel model tweaked for surreal effect. The sculpture doesn't read here as an objectified body but rather as a bit of amusing motherfuckery (to use the Anonymous term) with display, bodies and commerce.

Kathleen Ryan beautifully engages with display and material in Bacchante (2015), which has concrete balloons tumbling down a granite plinth, a bulbous match for Nevine Mahmoud's ceramic balls in Basketball (2014) and Beachball (2015). Rounding onward, Mahmoud's gnarly, heavy metal spiked rings, plunked on and off pristine coloured platforms with one particularly sizeable vagina dentata calling itself O (2015), matches in shape and title Kelly Akashi's surreal free-floating wall, dubbed Figure oO (2015). Standing with two circles cleanly chopped out, the wall displays the artist's disembodied hand cast in wax. Rather than assertive phallic obelisks, we have assertive holes all the more badass for their yonic vacancies. Andrea Zittel's Flat Field Work #1 (2015) reads in this context as a bridge. Zittel takes issues of domesticity to a level of autarchic seriousness. Her perspicacity and facility with materials make craft, previously considered 'women's work', simply art.

Given the male-dominated history of sculpture, the ladies here offer neither a junior alternative nor a reactionary riposte, but a sophisticated set of objects working with essential issues of sculpture in ways that the gentlemen just couldn't. White locates with these artists an important shift in our understanding of art (especially the history of it in Los Angeles) and its relationship to gender, flowing out of feminist and trans advances but also the postgender continuum offered by online avatars. Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer sums up the possibilities beautifully in the final line of her essay that accompanies the exhibition: 'an all-female sculpture show is pretty cool, but an all-female Senate would be so much cooler'.

Los Angeles Times
Review

'Seven Reeds,' exploring the 'work' in works of art

December 4, 2014
By Christopher Knight

Seven Reeds," a group show of painting and sculpture at Overduin & Co., takes its title from a short 1949 documentary by Italian filmmaker Michelangelo Antonioni.

The five artists don't illustrate his film's narrative, which followed the production of synthetic rayon from natural materials all the way to finished fashions. But, using Italian Arte Povera as a starting point, they do operate in a murky, sometimes provocative area somewhere between nature and culture.

Jacob Kassay's irregularly shaped canvases are covered in finely splattered paint that looks alternately like a celestial star-map or cheap linoleum. Stretched denim torn with holes by Valentina Liernur is part working-class fashion statement, part homage to Lucio Fontana's slashed paintings, where real spaces intrude on art's typical illusions.

A glazed ceramic basketball by Nevine Mahmoud is a primordial vessel crossed with an impossible modern toy. Fredrik Vaerslev pushes wooden slats out from the wall on steel struts, the paint-splotched surface transforming a forklift pallet into an artist's palette.

Overall, the show's most consistently compelling works are Julia Rommel's abstract paintings, such as "Blitz." Rommel stretches and re-stretches linen in rectangles of different sizes. The creases formed in the material establish interior drawing along the paintings' margins, and finally she paints those linear edges and shapes in bright hues.

The result is a considered composition that records itself coming into being. In part, "Seven Reeds" contemplates the determined power of work within any work of art.

Overduin & Co., 6693 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, (323) 464-3600, through Dec. 20. Closed Sun. and Mon.