

New Exhibitions



26 Apr-28 Apr 2024

Rochelle School
London E2 7FA



L: Hatty Buchanan, "Ms Nova Jones" (detail), 2024. R: Cecilia Sjöholm, "Vestige of Veracity", 2024

Location and opening times



Overview

New sculptures and wall-based works by Hatty Buchanan and Cecilia Sjöholm

26 April 6-9pm (opening event)

27 April 11am-6pm (1pm artist's tour) & 28 April 11am-6pm (1pm artist's tour)

STRANGER WITHIN brings together a body of new sculptures and wall-based works by Hatty Buchanan and Cecilia Sjöholm. Conceived as a dialogue between Buchanan and Sjöholm, the exhibition traces the artists' shared interest in reappropriation, textile and abstraction and explores overlapping ideas around identity and internal narratives.

STRANGER WITHIN will be the second occasion that the artists have exhibited together following the group exhibition *The comrades they were brave – We salute you!*, curated by Cecilia Sjöholm at 44 Great Russel Street Gallery.

Hatty Buchanan's practice draws inspiration from second-wave feminist and queer explorations of materials and process as a way of unpacking gendered, political, and personal content through abstraction. In particular, the materiality of cloth and its specific behaviours are key to her work, as stories are told, untold and retold through their physical remaking. Combining the purposeful with chance, Buchanan's collaged tapestries of repurposed items of her own clothing - such as a mid-2000s Martin Margiela top in the work *Ms. Nova Jones* or masculine dress shirts - draw attention to seemingly incidental details. The traces of wear and prior use that mark the garments call into focus the intimacy of our relationship with clothing and their potential for material memory.

Torn away from their bodily counterparts, Buchanan collaborates with her past to rework the textiles into new compositions that derive their form from the experiences and memories held in each item of clothing. The abstract and expressive modes of cutting, stitching and splicing are articulated throughout as performative and editorial acts of resistance and redemption. Displayed on a canvas ground, the works are often in dialogue with the formalities of painting as well as serving as a reminder of a cutting table from where the articles of clothing once came.

For this exhibition, Cecilia Sjöholm uses textiles and found objects to create playful interventions that perform inner narratives and hint at a dialogue between a dual persona, a true self and a public one. Sjöholm imagines what she describes

as an 'inner trickster' that dictates the interaction of forms and the conversations between different elements within her works. She also perceives colour as personalities, which become part of a personal register. For Sjöholm, her abstract configurations distil complex emotions, often amalgamated with the artist's memories, experiences, observations and dreamlike states.

Sjöholm uses materials that disobey or defy their conventional use, acting as a performative façade in negotiation with the unruly, hinted at by references to nature throughout the work. Poking out, piercing through, constrained, or escaping elements within her sculptures are often connected with chains or ropes that support or balance their counterparts. Textiles are draped, padded or prodded to build a narrative of surfaces. In *Don't – Maybe – Don't* a hanging fabric becomes reminiscent of a spine and a punctuated wall-based work, *Vestige of Veracity (Within the looking glass)*, provides a mirrored surface reflecting the viewer - the works are often animated by the bodies that interact with them.

STRANGER WITHIN forms part of the artists' ongoing interrogation of uncanny psychological states in which bodies are abject and absent but the viewer's sense of self or scale becomes more acute. Across the works in the exhibition, cloth and textile become a form to be animated and challenged and the artists share an understanding of its ability to provide a protective layer that is remodelled in the space. Embracing often traumatic personal histories, ambivalence, instability and messy entanglements, Buchanan and Sjöholm dismantle identity to examine our fragile sense of self.

With thanks to Lauren Williamson for her collaboration and guidance (Curator, Case Study Project Space)
