



Nature // The Semiotics of Surface: An Interview with Rachel de Joode

Article by Julianne Cordray in Berlin // Friday, Jul. 29, 2016

Through the interplay of flat surface and dimensional object, a thing and its representation, Dutch artist **Rachel de Joode** traces a line of inquiry around the nature of art and the interconnectedness of things. The temporality and ephemerality of matter is articulated in the hybridity of her photo-sculptural works, which engage the senses in an embodied interaction between nature and artifice. Abstracted, close-up photographs—surfaces that represent other surfaces—are composed into amorphous forms that are propped up on pedestals or protruding from walls. Through human and digital processes of integration and dematerialization, de Joode stages encounters that illuminate the experience of a connected existence that increasingly unfolds on screen.



Rachel de Joode: Sculpture in Pond, 2016, archival inkjet print on dibond // © Rachel de Joode

Berlin Art Link, July 2016

In a direct engagement with materials that reference traditional sculpture and its techniques—such as clay and marble—de Joode permits these to remain raw, as articulations of matter itself. The disintegrative processes of digital photography lead to the re-emergence of such physical objects in a new state, altering our relationship to the things around us. Through recorded, though re-contextualized, traces left in materials and collected from the human body, de Joode stimulates awareness of the continual and interactive processes of time and transformation: manifesting the state of being in between.

Julianne Cordray: Your background is in time-based art. How did the exploration of this potential evolve through sculpture?

Rachel de Joode: Time-based art is basically every art, if you think about it. I graduated with photography and two short films. I thought I would make more short films, but I realized that you're not independent when working with film. The fun thing about making films is the set and staging, so it just felt really natural to continue with photography in the same way. Then I started making a lot of still lifes: photographing objects and arranging them, and thinking about the semiotics of objects. It made a lot of sense at one point to just not photograph them anymore and leave them be. That also had a lot to do with this idea that if you stage things in a gallery space, it ends up as a photograph anyway, since most art is consumed on the internet. It's this constant play between the real object and the photographic representation of the object. We live in this flat world already, a screen world. The photograph is not the object, but on the other hand it is. I like the idea that even the representation is the same thing as the object; it's just a different form.



Rachel de Joode: Detail // © Rachel de Joode

J: Skin has a particular presence in your work—manifesting in representations of actual skin as well as materials, textures and tones that resemble it. Can you talk about your interest in skin as material and subject?

RdJ: Our bodies have so many bacteria cells, or foreign cells, that human cells are outnumbered. One out of ten cells in the body is human and the rest are just something else. We're sort of a landscape for everything. And it's so weird that we're not even human, in that sense, if only the minority of cells are human. I'm interested in this idea of being porous—we're breathing and dust particles get into our bodies and we release things into the world—and constantly living on earth together with all these materials, both organic and inorganic. And I think that process is also reflected in the skin, because it flakes off. It's so small that we don't see it, but our skin is probably everywhere around us. There's this porous back-and-forth between everything around us and us, which is happening on our surface. That's the only part we see. We leave traces, and traces are left on us. It's this constant back-and-forth that I find really interesting about the skin. And it's in flux. It's always changing.

JC: Because of the close-up, cropped and abstracted nature of the surfaces that compose photo-sculptures, the images become so textured that you are drawn to their materiality in a tactile way, while at the same time there is something repellent about them. It seems to challenge, and also interweave, the senses of sight and touch.

RdJ: I think that has to do with the way our eyes see things versus the way a camera lens sees or captures things. I recently rented this 50 million-pixel camera for a project I am working on and currently making tests for. The interesting thing was that it became scientific because it's so sharp and microscopic that it changes your perception of objects. I think that also makes objects repulsive. Our eyes are making everything nice for us so that they're more manageable. If we could see more detail it would just be too much information. There's much more than even the lens can see, and also so much less. It's just a way of looking at things. But I think this sense of being attracted and repulsed at the same time is something I search for. I think I want people to have these emotions. I think I want to have these emotions when I make the work. These weird, very primordial emotions you can experience just from matter. It's hard to put that into words because it's more like a feeling that you get through looking.



Rachel de Joode: 'Not Touching A Meteorite', 2013 // © Rachel de Joode

JC: There's a photograph, 'Not Touching A Meteorite', that seems to illustrate this tension between being compelled to touch something but also resisting.

RdJ: That work came about by accident. I was doing a residency in Frankfurt and I was planning to do a project with a meteorite. A curator of the meteorite collection there was always showing me these meteorites with her hands—without gloves or anything. I wanted to photograph them in my hands, but when I went there on the day of the shoot, she said that I could not touch them. That was exactly the idea, because I wanted skin contact. So that work ended up very different. I was really trying not to touch them. It was the closest I could get with my finger. Then there's this sort of space in between my finger and the meteorite. I think it's more about that empty space.

JC: There are several photos of hands touching and interacting with the materials that you work with, such as clay. Is this intended as a reference to your own working process—almost performative in a sense—or as a personal engagement with material?

RdJ: I like materials that refer to art. Clay, marble, or bronze—those sorts of iconographic materials. I think it's weird to make the decision to be an artist. And then there are these materials in the world, like marble, which never asked to be representative materials of art. I like the sort of comic aspect of those materials. You don't really have to do anything with them, because it's enough. I get some clay from the art supply store and I just handle it: leave traces of me, of the artist. It's just the clay and me, and we make an artwork together. So, it's more of a conversation between clay and me. And that's what I photograph.



Rachel de Joode: 'Across Fingers Clay', 2015, archival inkjet print on dibond // © Rachel de Joode

JC: Are there any new materials you're working with now, or that you're planning to experiment with in your photo-sculptures?

RdJ: I'm making pictures that are getting a bit more liquid. I started taking photographs of clay and I was really into the parts where it's still in the plastic bag. So I got really into plastic. I'm also researching printing on glass, which is also reflective. That's an area I'm exploring. But it's in an embryonic stage. That's something I'm working on for the upcoming show in Oslo at the Henie Onstad Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art. How it will evolve is something I'm curious about myself.

JC: You're also participating in the Cycle Music and Art Festival in Iceland this fall. Are you working on anything new for that?

RdJ: Yes, I'm making costumes. And they're actually for a video, so I'm back in the world of moving images. It's basically flat surfaces that are wearable: installed on a human, let's put it like that. I'm bringing the two together again—the artwork and the human—and also the human thing and the art thing. And I also like this idea of humans pretending to be materials. Or maybe materials pretending to be human, in a way. That's what I'm working on at the moment.

[Artist Info](#)

www.racheldejode.com

ARTFORUM

REVIEWS

Rachel de Joode

GALERIE CHRISTOPHE GAILLARD

Rachel de Joode's exhibition "Porosity" provided viewers with numerous ways to understand the oscillation between object and photograph, between 3-D and 2-D, between virtual space and physical space that has long characterized her work. In the video *Soup*, 2015, we see the artist's hands as she soaks various objects in a whitish and viscous liquid. Shot from above, the comings and goings of, for instance, some bubble wrap, a photograph, or a paintbrush give the screen a sense of depth. *Soup* shows that everything, even a croissant that floats like a

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Rachel de Joode,
Soft Inquiry XII, 2015,
ceramic and inkjet
print on PVC, 21 ½ x
14 ¾ x 5 ¾".

dinghy and resists going under, can become a kind of sculpture—or, more precisely, that everything emerges from a "soup," a dough, a process of maceration. As the French philosopher Michel Serres has observed, making a distinction between *material* and *mass*, statuary takes its basis in the latter. Serres specifies that if material is "an empty metaphysical word, with neither value nor foundation in the physical sciences," mass, on the other hand, inert and amorphous, "guarantees that a thing exists that is lodged in space, that withstands time and doesn't care about signs and meaning—radically foreign to our scheming."

The artist has also taken similar doughy substances—clay, paint, and so on—and modeled them, photographed them, and printed them on two sides of a surface that she then cut out and attached to fourteen stools of different shapes and heights. In these works from the series "Here I am and things that exist. Owl," 2015, which might be described as faux sculptures, photography is used to deprive the mass of every reference to the figure, to its real dimensions, to its hardness. De Joode's sculptures sometimes look as malleable as mercury, sometimes as hard as diamonds. They sometimes resemble a soft paste that can be modeled like clay; at other times they resemble a granitelike

material that can only be carved. Photography also deprives the mass of any anthropomorphic reference, despite the silhouettes that, from a distance, evoke the sinuous forms of biomorphic sculpture, as their pink color suggests certain skin tones. Only the pink vertical sculptures, here leaning against the wall, refer to the artist's body, the imprint of which is present in negative.

At this point, does little more remain of sculpture than a digital image? This would be a hasty conclusion, for if photography liberates the mass from its sculptural function, frees it from the heaviness of three-dimensional volume, it does not as a result liberate it from gravity. Moreover, the sculptures rest on pedestals and are not hung on the wall like photographic prints. The artist considers them "things," and, paraphrasing Heidegger, she states that "the word 'thing' names everything that is not simply nothing." The subtraction of the third dimension, in other words, does not mark a movement toward the immaterial; if these "things" orbit in the space of the gallery, they do so in the manner of celestial bodies or meteorites, and the viewer who circulates in the exhibition space is their witness.

There is a further stage, after the show closes, when the works circulate exclusively online. Today, in our screen-oriented culture, this is how we familiarize ourselves with the work of many artists. Does the artwork once again become a virtual image? The show's title suggests that the digital interface of the screens does not have the last word. In the continuous interferences between sculpture and photography, between mass and surface, the image becomes porous. There is no paradox here: Just as materiality remains solidly grounded at the heart of digital culture, so too does De Joode demonstrate that porosity does not cease to proliferate.

—Riccardo Venturi

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

FLUXO

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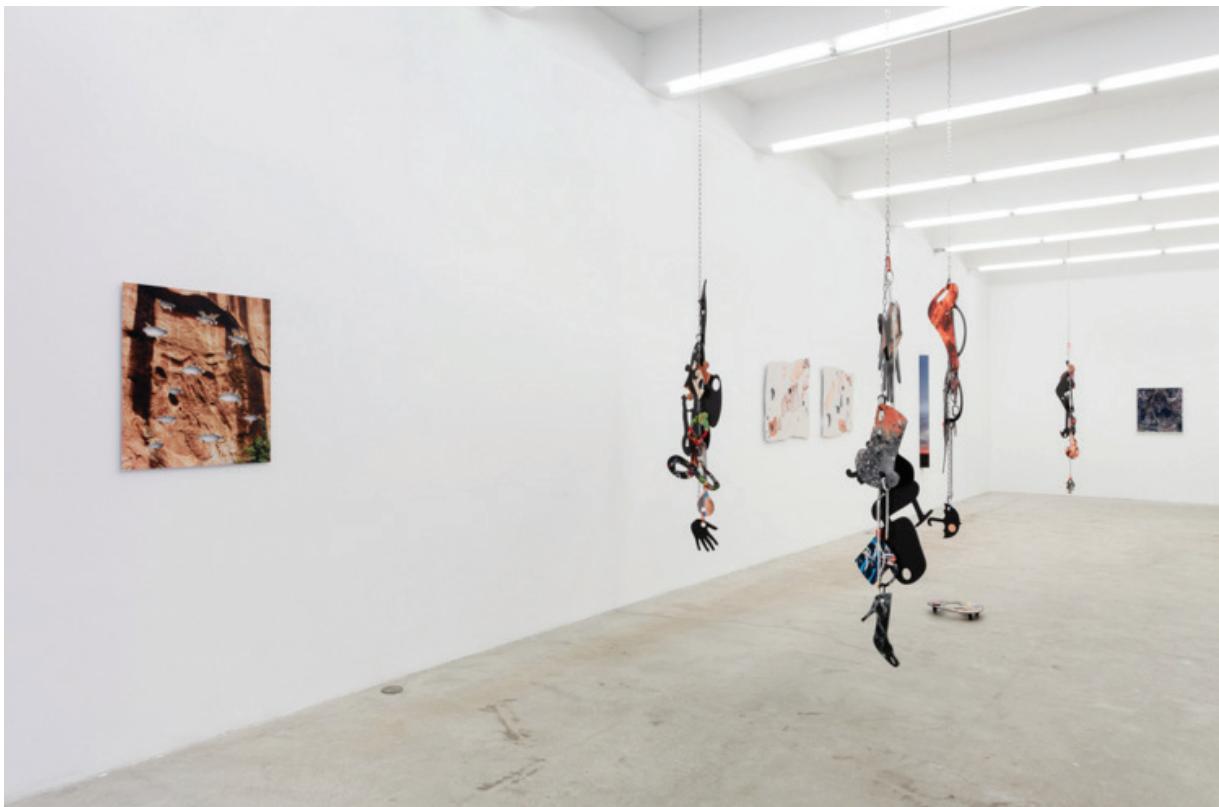


'Touch-tone' by Rachel de Joode, Kate Steciw and Letha Wilson @ Martos Gallery

Martos Gallery is now showcasing Touch-tone, featuring new works by Rachel de Joode, Kate Steciw and Letha Wilson. Continuing their dialogue that challenges the limits of photography as an artistic medium, Touch-tone is the first time these three artists will collaborate on an exhibition together. The show will be on view November 7 – December 19.

Through their work, de Joode, Steciw and Wilson examine how the viewer systemizes, perceives and absorbs visual culture in the persistently shifting modes of media today. Whether they record in the studio, appropriate via the internet or shoot in the wilderness, each artist begins their process with a photograph. Through subtle interventions or aggressive manipulations, these photographs are fragmented, de-constructed, sewn back together, skewed, fractured, crumpled and stretched. Consequently, each image is re-imagined, endowing its content with new physical and contextual form, creating and dissipating narratives, and ultimately altering our notions of reality.

**Neumeister
Bar-Am**



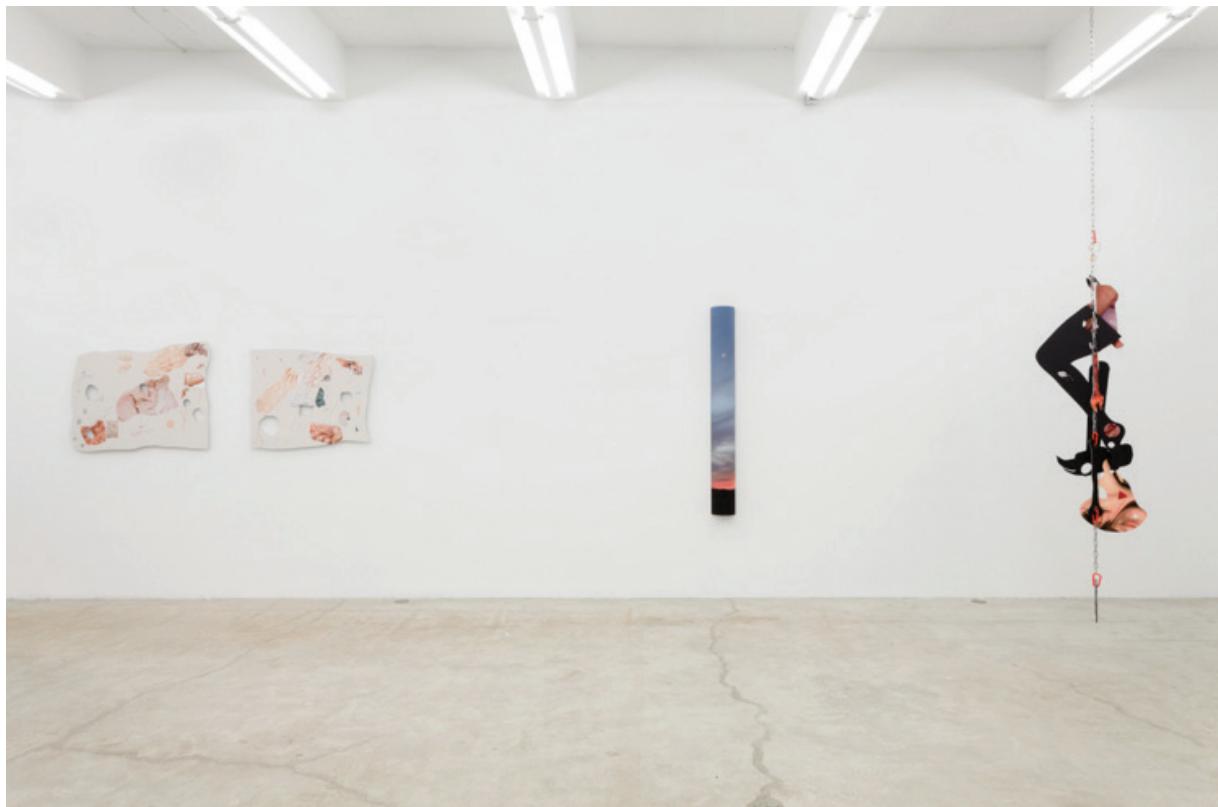
Installation View: *Touch-tone*, 2015



Installation View: *Touch-tone*, 2015

OFluxo , November 2015

Neumeister
Bar-Am



Installation View: Touch-tone, 2015



Rachel De Joode, Drawing or flowy conglomeration. Hey! VII, 2015,
archival inkjet print on Dibond, 31.5 x 39 inches

OFluxo, November 2015

Neumeister Bar-Am

Analyzing the tenuous divides between the physical, the representational, and the abstract, **Rachel de Joode** constructs works reminiscent of another world. Juxtapositions of skin, clay, soil, and other organic elements compose flat digital shapes, which the artist repositions on pedestals and as wall pieces that perform a gestural migration throughout the space. De Joode was born in 1979 in the Netherlands. Recent exhibitions include those at Christophe Gaillard, Paris; Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin; Kansas Gallery, New York; Tatjana Pieters, Gent; Arbank Sanat, Istanbul, and MAMO, Marseilles. She currently lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

Meditating on the power of photographic representation, **Kate Steciw** assembles imagery taken from social media, stock photography and iPhone cameras, which she then collages, prints and cuts into miscellaneous, generic shapes of aluminum mounted on Sintra PVC. Hanging from the ceiling of the gallery like mobiles, these pieces—randomly strung together with chains and ropes—allude to the jaded and anarchic manner with which we digest photography in our daily lives. Steciw was born in 1978 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Recent exhibitions include those at Retrospective Gallery, Hudson; Higher Pictures, New York; Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles; Levy Delval, Brussels and upcoming solo shows at Brand New Gallery, Milan and Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin in 2016. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Colored chromogenic prints of picturesque panoramas and verdant close-ups are cut, dipped in cement, folded and torn in **Letha Wilson**'s scenic reliefs. The result is a fluctuating, textured surface where the facets of the landscape—ridges, grooves, and vistas—are mimicked by the artwork's terrain, generating a material duality between the flat image and its physical counterpart. Wilson was born in 1976 in Honolulu, Hawaii. Recent exhibitions include those at Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam; Brand New Gallery, Milan; Higher Pictures, New York; Retrospective Gallery, Hudson; Marianne Boesky, New York, and Jack Hanley, New York. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn.

Touch-tone

Rachel de Joode
Kate Steciw
Letha Wilson

November 7 – December 19, 2015
@ Martos Gallery, NYC

www.martosgallery.com

INTERVIEW WITH RACHEL DE JOODE

Whether at Unseen, in a gallery or visiting a group exhibition, the works of Rachel de Joode (NL, 1979) undoubtedly attract one's attention. They're neither flat nor spatial, neither shiny nor edgy, slightly alienating, always linked to photography, and both clear and enigmatic simultaneously. They're all over the place and yet at the same time so very grounded, weirdly familiar and somehow always recognizable as hers. The intriguing objects are many things in one – just like the artist herself – whose practice is as inventive and open as her mind. It seemed like a good reason to dive into her head.



*Installation view of 'The Matter Of It Being A Stone' - @ SWG3 Gallery, Glasgow 2014.
(Allotrope I to VIII, Digital print on acrylic, custom pedestal and stand. Dimensions Vary).*

Zippora Elders: It feels as if your work is full of fascinations. What is your personal top 5 of greatest things of wonder?

Rachel de Joode:

- The Cosmos, the origin of space and time, the universe;
- Earth, it's crust, all life on earth, the smell of earth, oxygen;
- My mind and my body;
- The big question 'why?'
- Feelings.

ZE: That's a lot. Also, observing your installations it becomes clear that you often work with mixed media, found objects and footage, but also with new imagery and unconventional materials – what would you say is the meaning of the medium of photography to you?

RdJ: A photograph of a certain object represents that object. A photograph of clay represents clay and clayness. When I use a photograph of clay I use it in the same way like I would use clay, but more freely: clay dries and is unstable – a photograph of clay is easier to work with. I feel free this way, using photography as a means to transfer objects. Photography frees the object from its material body. But it's more than representation and 'freeing' – a photograph is flat, whether it's an old fashioned print or visual data on a luminous screen. I like to make things in the real life (IRL) world, the spacious, 3D world. But then I like to turn the IRL world slightly flat, a bit more like a photograph, like a theatre play, like a hoax... As if you walk into a screen, into the two dimensional world.



Hand Handling Clay, 2015

ZE: And how does that work in relation to art exhibitions and museums?

RdJ: I guess my work evolves around the documentation of art, pics or it didn't happen. How is art perceived on the screen? Because the networked documentation image has become the artwork on many levels.

ZE: So essentially your work is in between the spatial and the surface, it's an interesting approach of photography. Your inspiration springs from many mediums. How do you organize your practice? Do you work mostly at your studio, on location, behind your computer, on the streets – or how do you divide this?

RdJ: Mostly in the studio and on the screen. I also like to visit art supply stores or hardware stores. I sketch a little, I read a little, I think a little, back and forth... And at one point I have a conversation with some materials, and that conversation is photographed. I then use the pictures as puzzle pieces in a photographic sculpture. But the space in which the work is shown is relevant as well; I always ask the gallerists or curators for shots of the empty space in advance, to use them as a sketching board.

ZE: Now we're talking about presentations... Your works can be experienced as both appealing and uncanny (sometimes perhaps even repellent), often referring to nature and the human body. You seem to follow your own logic and create your own system, but in a playful tongue-in-cheek way. Could you elaborate on this?

RdJ: Well... I know the work has humour, as does life. It's so strange to be alive. The human condition in general! I think my work simply reflects my feelings about being alive (i.e. having a human living thinking doing body) on earth at this moment in time.

ZE: That sounds very valid and intuitive, and also a bit unconventional. Speaking about which... You graduated from Rietveld VAV, one of the more intriguing departments of the Rietveld Academy I would say. The department used to be about audio-visual arts, which are essentially time-based. Now we're interviewing you as a museum for photography – how would you explain the field you're working in?



Soft Inquiry X, 2015. Ceramic and archival inkjet print on PVC. (Image courtesy: The Artist; Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin)

RdJ: I actually graduated with a short film and a series of photographs. I never wanted to be a photographer in a traditional sense, but I somehow always go back to photography: it's a push on the button and the rest is magic. It has something so easy and effective, so soothing. VAV at the Rietveld was more the 'free' department, as a student you could actually do anything, it didn't even need to be lens-based. Media and media-art played a big role. And play in general was important as well.

ZE: Sounds like the best department to be in, although one perhaps needs to have some sort of focus or background to not get completely lost... Some of your works remind of (commercial) object photography. You worked as a fashion photographer too. How is this reflected in your autonomous work?

RdJ: I think my fashion and commercial photography has been very helpful to develop some skills, also to learn how visual language works. I am an autodidact so it took a while to learn how to make a proper commercial photo.

ZE: Working on commission seems like a proper learning school for sure. Although it must be great to operate more autonomously too, on your own pace. Any other influences, from daily life or popular culture?

RdJ: That would be the networked image. The internet has certainly influenced me. I think it really changed how we perceive and process visual images. Humans now upload and share almost 2 billion photos every day. We are basically living in a stream of photographs.

ZE: Back to real life. You are involved in interesting collaborations too, artist-run initiatives, platforms, publishing. How is the interaction and exchange with your individual practice?

RdJ: I like to exchange with other artists, it's liberating to see how other artists organise their practice. Art is work and so it's nice to have co-workers to



*Digital Fine Art Print in partially cut custom frames.
(Image courtesy: the Artist; Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin)*

go on lunch break with and work together with on a project. Art is a collective process on many levels and that's why I like collaborating. There's an agency in art that becomes evident when you collectively work on a piece. Art itself wants to be made, practiced in a certain way in a certain time.

ZE: Collaboration is a very fruitful and valuable thing, also because there are less limits and framing forces. What are your plans for the future?

RdJ: My plan for the coming winter is to take a short breather. I did and am doing three solo shows and three group shows in the last five months and I need a break. After that, of course: more shows, more work, a new studio, travel, maybe make a book and a movie. Enough ideas, but I need a short break at the moment.

Ze: A very well-deserved break, so it seems. With hopefully lots of roaming around the internet and in nature. Many thanks and good luck!



Installation view of The Molten Inner Core @ Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin 2015.

Rachel de Joode (Amersfoort, 1979) is a Dutch-born, Berlin-based multi-media artist who conflates the mediums of photography and sculpture. De Joode is a great connoisseur of surfaces—wet, smooth, crumpled, drooping, her works distort familiar structures, lending new shapes to bodies and objects. De Joode studied time-based arts at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie Amsterdam, she lives and works in Berlin since 2005. Currently her solo show 'Porosity' is on view at Galerie Christophe Gaillard in Paris and her work can be seen in the group show 'Touch-tone' (with Kate Steciw and Letha Wilson) at Martos Gallery in New York.

POST

SOFT INQUIRY

by POSTmatter Editors | March 26, 2015

RACHEL DE JOODE TAKES A NAÏVE APPROACH TO ORGANIC MATERIALS IN HER LATEST EXHIBITION AT KANSAS GALLERY, FLATTENING THEM INTO NEWLY ARTIFICIAL FORMS.

"THE REAL AND ITS PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION, THE ORGANIC AND THE ARTIFICIAL, THE THING AND ITS MERE SURFACE... ALL ARE EQUAL"

"I SEE ART ONLINE AND I ACCEPT IT AS ART, NOT AS A REPRESENTATION OF AN ARTWORK OR ART-SHOW"

Soft flesh tones, cool, clean greys, creamy earthen textures and an expanse of white come together within the Kansas gallery. Filled with the pliant, textured surfaces of stone, skin, clay and algae, the viewer is enveloped in the comforting familiarity of the organic world. There is a curious flatness to be found however, upon closer inspection. Playing with perspective, cushiony curves are revealed to be lined by sharp, straight edges. 3-D becomes 2-D, and nothing is as it first appears.

Instead, Rachel de Joode's new exhibition presents an inquiry almost into what else these familiar objects could be. Her materials, once soft and submissive, become rigid and uncompromising in their new artificial forms. Photographs at once trap and liberate the forms that they represent. Two-dimensional images of skin are abstracted to create sculptural compositions, presenting smooth, almost deflated – surfaces. Here, the real and its abstracted sculptural and photographic representations are placed on equal footing. Flickering between the fleshy reality of the body and its flattened onscreen representation, the two begin to blur under de Joode's direction.

POSTmatter: Your exhibition takes up natural materials such as skin, clay, rock and algae, but plays with their textures through newly flattened representations. What drew you to this fluctuating line between the organic and the artificial, and the 2D and the 3D?

Rachel de Joode: My work



oscillates between the 'in-real-life-ness' of the artwork presented in the white cube format, and its web-based installation-documentation. Is the gallery a mere set? Is the purpose of the artwork documentation? In that case we don't need three-dimensionality, but just the illusion of three-dimensionality. The real and its photographic representation, the organic and the artificial, the thing and its mere surface... all are equal, all are matter, all have power, all exist side by side and are in constant interaction - this is the core of my practice.

PM: Could you describe your process of working with, and ultimately abstracting, your materials?

RDJ: With a deliberate naiveté, I observe materials, matter. I mainly use art-supplies or art-ish materials – things with an art aura. I use these as products. For example, I observe clay and 'handle' it without knowing how to handle it properly. Instead, I just know that it's an important asset when you make a sculpture. Most of the materials I use are fragmented; I point them out, I use a tiny detail, I isolate. Sometimes I photograph these materials and work (sculpt) with them in Photoshop, or else I don't photograph them and just sculpt them. It depends.

PM: The resulting images move across boundaries, alternating between the physical, digital and then the physical again. How do you feel about the overlap of two in art today?

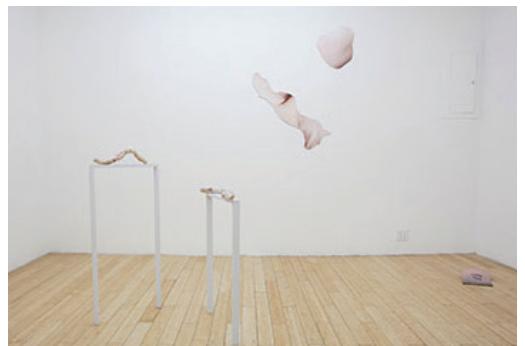
RDJ: The play between the physical and the virtual world is relevant. I explore the relationship between the three dimensional object and its two dimensional counterpart (the screen thing). My work is a constant play between surface and materiality. I see this happening in a lot of contemporary art, but it seems fluid to me: I almost don't even think about it. I see art online and I accept it as art, not as a representation of an artwork or art-show. And so it's almost not overlapping, meaning two separate things that might overlap, but one could also argue it's almost getting to be one thing.

PM: You play in the show with the expected order of things: physical textures and sizes don't correspond with the visuals they represent. Skin and rock are made to feel the same, while body parts are isolated to become something else. What is it about this play on forms that interests you?

RDJ: My work plays with the idea of the static art-object as an actor in the theatre of the gallery or museum-space. I let the art-object perform by using elements such as ephemerality, weird dimensions or a play with art-display. By doing so, I touch upon the socio-material root that lies in the art-object itself.

PM: How do these various ambiguities tie into the exhibition's title? What does 'inquiry' represent for you?

RDJ: I like to investigate, and this was an investigation into softness: surfaces, and a soft inquiry. Parallel Soft Inquiry also refers to a kind of inquiry that can occur on your credit report, and I thought that the idea of art being closely linked to the monetary system was suiting somehow.



K A N S A S

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Rachel de Joode: *Soft Inquiry*

February 21 – March 28, 2015
Opening reception, Saturday 21 Feb., 6-8 PM



KANSAS is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new work by **Rachel de Joode**. Opening February 21, the exhibition will run through March 28, 2015.

The representation of objects, the consciousness of matter and the exposed and secret nature of things continue to be the main points of departure in de Joode's latest body of work.

Through an installation of beguiling objects that straddle the realms of sculpture and image, de Joode chooses to focus on depictions and abstractions of basic and primordial materials such as clay (a mainstay for the artist), rocks and the occasional dash of algae. Swaths of skin and passages of boiling mud are images isolated from photographs to form lyrical compositions that nod to the physical and virtual worlds.

Organically shaped, bright and flesh colored clay appear sumptuous to the touch, but closer study reveals an even, smooth surface. All of the seeming tactility is frozen in photographs, which are cut and hung on handmade ceramic hooks. Textural paintings serve as a meditative focal point when descriptions of matter begin to act as new entities, divorced from the material they logically reference. Here, the surface of clay becomes a thing in itself.

As is common in de Joode's work, questions of perception arise through a truncated, two-dimensional version of these materials (skin made to operate on the same phenomenological plane as mud) which go through an accordion-like process, beginning in full form, compressing, and finally extending into a state imbued with previous iterations.

The tenets of classical sculpture are observed through a process of creating poetic gestures. A cast of de Joode's pinky toe enlarged and forged in bronze resonates with the aura of inferred grandeur. An enigmatic choice of subject for the historicity of bronze, the toe - the isolated body part - becomes an object in its own right and operates as a whole through the act of its abstraction. Hands enter from the tops and sides of images to lift, smear, or otherwise manipulate materials found within the frame - a narrative of intent that questions how we formulate visual culture through ever more complex systems of media, continuously encountering our origins anew.

Rachel de Joode (b. 1979, The Netherlands) lives and works in Berlin, DE but is currently a visiting scholar at the University of Cincinnati, OH. Solo exhibitions include: *The Matter Of It Being A Stone*, SWG3 Gallery, Glasgow (2014); *The Molten Inner Core*, Neumeister Bar-Am, Berlin (2014); *Dust Skin Matter*, Diablo Rosso, Panama City (2013); *The Hole and the Lump*, Interstate Projects, New York (2013); *Real Things - Explorations in Three Dimensions*, Oliver Francis Gallery, Dallas (2012); and *Light Trapped in Matter*, Kunsthooone, Tallinn (2011). Current in the groupshow: *COOL - as a state of mind* at MAMO - Centre d'art de la Cité Radieuse, Marseille (2015)

For more information or exhibition images, please contact Katia Rosenthal at Katia@kansasgallery.com

Gallery Hours: 11 AM – 6 PM, Tuesday through Saturday

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RACHEL DE JOODE: WHEN I GROW UP I WANT TO BE A MINERAL



"Looking at minerals, I tried to be a mineral myself". As an artist, Rachel de Jood knows very well what it means to possess an organic body that is subject to change, age and injury. Perhaps for this reason too her sensibility was touched by the perpetual and crystalline charm of minerals.

Her series "The Matter Of It Being a Stone" is a trip into this new way of feeling, a process, a rite of passage – in no way linear or definitive – of her being made of flesh and her state of irresistible attraction towards the complex architecture of minerals.

Neumeister Bar-Am

This project stems from a residency at the Frankfurter Kunstverein, where Rachel was able to delve into one of the largest mineral collections in Europe, the Mineralogie Collection of the Senckenberg Institute. This research resulted in a series of miniature models that investigate the relationship between the behavior of crystals and that of her body.

Smoothed but repelling turbulent textures of various and deformed images: rotten food, stones, bones, chicken meat, pieces of human flesh. Plaster sculptures created starting from many fragments of subjects that are photographed, blown up and finally aggregated in ideal spasmodic rocks, as if awaiting a mutation. A radical one.

Photos via racheldejoode.com



Lancia, January 2015



Steciw and de Joode | Open for Business

For Gallery Weekend Berlin, Kate Steciw and Rachel de Joode came together to produce *Open for Business* at gallery Neumeister Bar-Am, an exhibition that straddles the divide between performance and installation while displaying the artists' collaborative photography. Having exhibited *Open for Business* and other projects in the past, Steciw and de Joode's relationship alludes to a promising future. Marvin Jordan reached out to the duo via email.



Can you tell us about the history of your collaborative relationship? Do you approach your exhibitions as part of a cohesive or cumulative body of work?

Kate Steciw We'd both admired each other's work online for some time so when Rachel approached me about participating in an auction she was organizing I was excited to be in touch. Emails and chats ensued. I remember exchanging a lot of images (we still do) just for fun and as conversation starters. I think it was Rachel who formally introduced the idea of collaborating in some way but it was so hard to decide what exactly that meant and what we'd produce being that we live in different countries most of the time. Ultimately Rachel was going to be in NYC for her solo show with Interstate Projects and we'd secured a venue for the weekend at Stadium Gallery yet were still "brainstorming." It was then that we realized that we should make our collaborative work about the work of collaboration and furthermore about the performance of artistic labor.

Rachel de Joode So true! I think it had a lot to do with chance as well, for the first one in New York, we realized that we only had a few days to 'do something' and so the 'doing something' also got to be the thing. And let's not forget the performance evening 'Important Things' that I curated at Interstate gallery in the summer of 2012. Kate participated with a great performance together with her dog, both were dressed up as 'each other' – this was pretty amazing and opened a dialog between us about the notion of the contemporary artist, openings, networks, being (acting as) an artist in the existing art-market, capitalism.

As far as the media that people traditionally expect to see in an exhibition, you employed photography as a central feature of Open for Business. However, there were many more factors at play beyond a simple photo exhibition, such as your performative immersion in the art space. Did you ever think strategically in terms of the relationship between your photography and the other, 'unexpected' factors of the event? Was the photography an instrumental pretext for other possibilities, or was it just as important?

KS Photography or images were a logical starting point for us as they are central to both of our training, individual practices and/or day jobs. Also they were a primary form of communication with one another. We've always thought of the photographic element as a kind of catalyst for the physical work in that aside from some very basic "art" supplies, the actual output exhibited begins with a photograph. That initial photograph or photographs is then manipulated, composited and printed only to find its way into further photographs, sculptures or other interventions. In this sense, the photograph or act of photographing is the essential practice, generative of all of the other final works in some form or another.



RdJ True, we use photography as on-the-spot documentation, then, we work with this 'documentation' as material (as an 'art-supply') we rework it and document that process: back-forth, back-forth, till we stop. The photograph and the physical work are fluid, like a dance. On a basic semantic level, "performance" connotes dynamism and fluidity whereas "installation" implies construction and fixity. The fact that Open for Business intersects these two art forms raises interesting questions.

Would you characterize your collaboration as an installation performance or a performance installation? To what extent did you intend to deconstruct or problematize these notions?

KS My gut response is to call it a performance of exhibition rather than installation per se. I am hesitant to call the final product an installation because, there is a concerted effort to transform the site of making to a site of display implying an exhibition of discrete but related works rather than a display the environment of making. Deconstruction is less of a motivation in general but the idea of "problematizing" resonates. I think the concept "problematizing" is an inspiration for both of us on a personal and an artistic level.

RdJ I agree with the notion of 'performance of exhibition'. Concerning deconstruction, there's actually something to it I believe, in a sense that we work a lot with fragments; we point to objects, things, situations, maybe deconstruction is not the right word, perhaps a 'problematic reconstruction'.

There is a stock-like quality to your photos but also a deep-seated disturbance of the concept of stock photography, in addition to self-referential representations of artistic production. Do the both of you share a consistent aesthetic vision prior to your actual collaborations, or is your collaborative process more spontaneous than it is calculated in advance?

KS Our collaborative process is definitely spontaneous at its core. I think whatever aesthetic overlap we share is informed by our participation in the world of commercial photography on some level or another. As for the resultant works, it's not so much a sublimation of our individual aesthetics for the sake of a collaborative aesthetic as it is a kind of exquisite corpse or call and response in which Rachel's distinctive palette will mix with my digital compositing which will then be intervened with again by Rachel either digitally or physically and onward until we call it 'done.'

RdJ So true! I think we both agree that the truly fun part about our collaboration is that for us it's like playing, like acting. We have different solo-practices and that's the beauty of this project; for one day only we have a public, high speed dialog out-loud, which results in a solid body of work in only a few hours, blending both our practices into one. It's spontaneous within this one-day border that we set. The only thing we decide upon in advance is a table full of art-supplies and our 'opening hours'. The way it's photographed might remind of Stock-Photo, but, I think it's more somewhere between stock-photo and the present-day internet-art-documentation aesthetics. Which are two topics we both work with in our own practices; Kate more with stock-photography and I work more with the notion and aesthetics of the art-documentation.

You livestreamed your activities in the art space as the day unfolded, making Open for Business accessible to anyone with an internet connection. What were your goals in integrating digital broadcasting into your exhibition? In general, does the internet inform how you work as artists, both individually and collectively?

KS The internet is integral to the collaboration as it is integral to our contemporary lives. We likely wouldn't have even seen each other's work or as much of it had it not been for the Internet. Furthermore, we'd certainly never have been able to move forward as rapidly as we have given our physical distance from one another had it not been for Skype and chat. There is also the fact that the internet facilitates a more image-based exchange which has definitely played a role in our collaboration. As for broadcasting, it was initially an impulse to expand our audience which is an essential part of the idea. The idea that an audience could access the secret realm of the artist's studio has always been interesting to us as a way of demystifying the creative process — making the studio more like a "shop" than a site of secretive and/or magical production of highly valuable art objects.

RdJ I believe that streaming Open For Business really finishes the work. This time we had more visitors online (over 100) than IRL. How incredibly interesting is that! It's funny cause on the one side we try to 'de-romanticize' the art-making process, but then through the stream I feel there's something extremely warm and romantic happening, people watching us make mistakes: glueing our fingers together, dropping things, printing the paper upside down etc, from their beds, sofas, workspace (with a 'romantic art-making process' I mean it in a Vincent van Gogh solitary artist kind of way).



There seems to be a conceptual interplay occurring between the materials depicted in your photos and the processing entailed in their portrayal — the fact that artisanal craft resources are being extensively photoshopped. Moreover, a tension between process and product is also spotlighted: we see that something is being produced with clay, we don't know what it is, but nonetheless that itself is the product. Is there a deeper critique of artistic process taking place here?

KS We are definitely interested in the aesthetics of art supplies. For us, incorporating things like blocks of clay, a daub of paint or an unused brush call to attention to the pre-aestheticized nature of the tools of art making. In this way, these objects act as an extension of the performative element of our collaboration. They too are performing a part in the mythology of the studio so to introduce them as sculpture or a layer in a digital composition reinforces their own formal aesthetic attributes. We also like to aestheticize the process of making (dirty hands/clothes, fingerprints on prints, splashes and splotches of all kinds). Unfinished works have a greater set of potential outcomes and by photographing works in progress, fragments or discarded materials, we generate more materials for future works. The process is kind of fractal in that way. Furthermore, by photographing a cast in progress or wet paint, we are able to access a moment of flux that is traditionally excluded from the final art object. The potential to introduce an image of a liquid state and have that image act as material for a three dimensional within minutes of its capture speaks to the speed of contemporary art/image/content production.

RdJ I believe we work from an 'alien perspective', we observe clay, using it maybe without knowing how- to properly, but knowing it's an important asset when you make a sculpture. Most of the materials we use fragmented, we point them out, we 'handle' them, partly. Our shopping list contains mainly art-supplies, we use them as products and we use the images of those products (sometimes 'handled' by with hands) as material. This again has to do with the de-mystification. By using these art-materials, that have a strong aura, as products we definitely engage in a critique concerning worth of art: What is art? What is artistic labour?

What does the future hold for Steciw/de Joode, both short-term and long-term?

KS In the short term, Rachel is going to have a baby who we hope will be a willing and enthusiastic assistant to our collaboration at some point. We are always really excited to produce/perform in new locations (the more disparate the better) because the way that artwork is produced (the speed of production, the materials available and the pre existing aesthetics of those materials) always varies so much from location to location and the more opportunities we have to work in different places around the world, the more we are able to call attention to those differences and discrepancies we find so interesting. In fact, the more widely disparate those experiences are, the better. For example, the differences between producing in Mexico City and producing in Berlin are vast and extremely interesting. We'd like to work in China for instance. Language barriers and miscommunication are interesting as there are often sub-collaborations that are essential to our practice that we also like to have play an active role in the final outcome (galleries, assistants, printers, etc...).

RdJ True, I am days before exploding! And yes, we need to do the next OFB on a different continent. I think locality versus globally is part of the work as well, as it is about internet-culture and art-production, art-value, the artist as producer. The project benefits from changing environments. China, Africa, Antarctica; here we come!

Interview by Marvin Jordan
All images courtesy of Steciw / de Joode and Neumeister Bar-Am



ARTFORUM

Rachel de Joode

NEUMEISTER BAR-AM

Goethestraße 2

February 22-April 26

Functionally, the skin is the most multifaceted organ of the human organism. In its protective capacity, it serves as the boundary between interior and exterior, between ourselves and the world; simultaneously, it works as a connective organ that facilitates interaction and contact. This biological material, so to speak, forms the central motif for Rachel de Joode's first solo exhibition in Europe. In "The Molten Inner Core," de Joode organically links two- and three-dimensional media into a single web of interconnections. While flesh-colored sculptures, such as the works Sculpted Human Skin

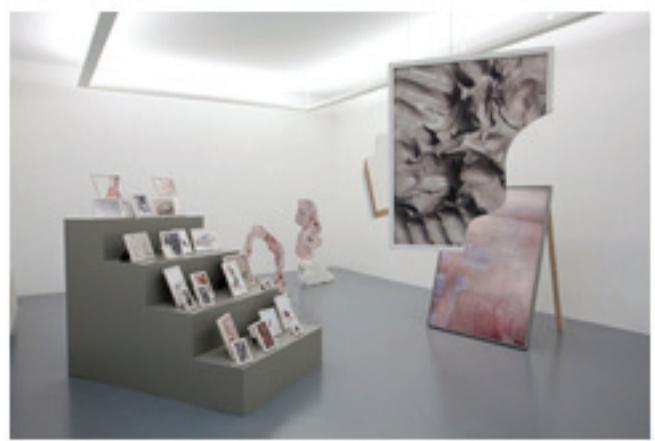
in Rock (I & II), 2014, jut boldly out of blocks of stone, and stand freely in the space like collages of cells, the print Achilles, 2014, becomes intimate, depicting a close-up image of the artist's own ankle. Relations of scale between the various objects emerge as a central theme.

De Joode's play on classical conventions of sculptural display reaches a high point in the installation White Pedestal Thing, 2013. Here, clay sculptures, serving as pedestals for small, skin-toned ceramic objects, seem, in their organic and bulky way, to be less static than they might first appear. Means of presentation, like pedestals and frames, come to the fore while withdrawing from their original functions—representation is more important than presentation. Agency (25 Photographs of Things), 2014, for example, consists of twenty-five framed, small-format prints either of hands kneading and molding rumpled masses of clay or, in contrast, of fingertips touching perfectly polished granite. De Joode captures these ephemeral states photographically and lines them up like a collection of family portraits on the steps of the massive pedestal. Even when her approaches toward two- and three-dimensional works are different, she connects the processes quite logically, insofar as clay consistently serves as her point of departure. But its reworking and reshaping are not just bodily acts; the material itself is elastic and malleable. And so it is not surprising that, ultimately, de Joode's sculptures and photography both resonate and flex between two- and three-dimensionality.

Translated from German by Diana Reese.

— Melissa Canbaz

Artforum, April 2014



View of "Rachel de Joode," 2014.

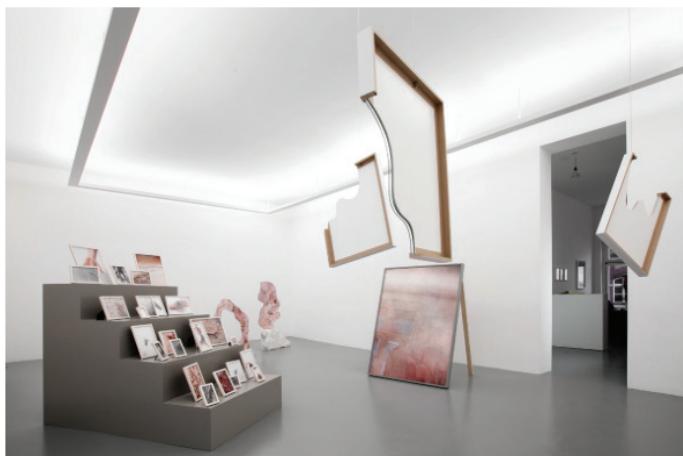
INTERVIEW // Rachel De Joode: Examining the World of Things

Berlin-based Rachel De Joode examines the world of things in her recent show *The Molten Inner Core* at Neumeister Bar-Am, and will collaborate with artist Kate Steciw in a shop-style performance and installation for Gallery Weekend in May.

Before an object, material, or idea is understood – before it has a name – language relegates it to being a ‘thing.’ Not until it is cut open, taken apart, appropriated, used or misused, do we begin to know it, and consequently title it appropriately, as needed. It is then that this thing can become ours to categorize and organize within our systems of knowledge.

Dutch-born, Berlin-based artist Rachel De Joode inverts this process in her study of “things,” and returns them back for refreshed and deconstructed viewing, wherein we once again feel unsure or almost suspicious about the objects with which we co-exist. In her most recent solo exhibition, *The Molten Inner Core*, on view until the 26th at Neumeister Bar-Am, Rachel continues to reassemble and decontextualize the common and the known, bringing into question their pre-assumed place within our symbolic systems and worlds of knowing.

De Joode presents an egalitarian cast of object-characters, from delicate clay forms on pedestals to a powerfully large standing photograph of skin. Each object appears as pure surface, allowing them to be free of any kind of definitive framework. De Joode breathes new questions into the phenomena of our environment and the way in which things are moulded and changed by the actions of our own hands: in this case, De Joode’s hands. *Agency* (25 Photographs of Things) pulls in reference to the Kodak family portrait collection, where photographs of dust stand alongside a photograph of a meteorite, nearby portraits of her own hand presenting moulded, dewy surfaces of ambiguous grey goo and clay. Asking for these items to be viewed for their connections to one another first, and then, but less immediately, to us, their imagined histories remain fluid and loose, as these framed materials liberally converse with one another. Meanwhile, the artist’s hand intervenes into these “portraits,” almost as a sideshow to these now central and animated materials.



"The Molten Inner Core", Installation View at Neumeister Bar-Am; Photograph courtesy of Neumeister Bar-Am



"The Molten Inner Core", Installation View at Neumeister Bar-Am; Photograph courtesy of Neumeister Bar-Am

It is this kind of manipulation of object roles that connects this most recent show with the broader scope of De Joode’s photo work. Her dedication within her practice to the investigation of objects’ context and connotation is an outgrowth of her spanning body of work in photography and the ubiquitous still life, perhaps not coincidentally also a genre of Dutch mastery. That photography merges all-too seamlessly with the online sphere, standing on our screens against the white pixel background of art websites, is carefully considered in de Joode’s image and mixed-media work. Her photo-based sculptures speak to their coming, immaterial life on-screen, wherein art floats on and falls away into new spheres of symbolic definition. In *Sculpted Human Skin in Rock (I & II)* – a flesh-toned photo collage rising and falling from the sturdy foundations of marble – the illusory two-dimensional character of this ethereal pair brings a heightened awareness to the very setting of a gallery, the viewer’s presence within this semi-public space, and acts as a cautionary premonition for it’s soon-to-come life online.

With sensitive placement, these things transcend our human-centered vision of the world, of which language historically has played a dominant role in our process for understanding. Perhaps this is why each work is so simply titled with nothing more than a few descriptors, holding back any kind of suggestive bias or frame from which to learn about each thing.

What we come to realize by her process is that the world is less ours than we may imagine it ought to be, as her re-appropriation of objects and materials render each free to move away from stable definitions and human-imposed hierarchy. They return to wander within a loosely associated cosmos of materials, relating into new contexts together, irrespective of any knowledge or human-centered ontology we usually, often subconsciously, impart upon them.

With the upcoming Open for Business collaboration, the third manifestation of a project Rachel de Joode has been working on with U.S.-based artist Kate Steciw, De Joode merges her practice in a one day “pop-up shop” within Neumeister Bar-Am for Gallery Weekend (May 5th). As both a performance and installation project, Open for Business plays with the operative routines of the art market, as the two collaborate to complete a piece before the end of the relegated 10-6 workday. The two build on their common interest in photography as a generative practice and investigate questions surrounding ownership, production, industry, and the limitations and possibilities of image and information over time and space. Understandably, De Joode has been busy with her “things,” but we managed to talk to her about just that.

KATE BROWN: In The Molten Inner Core you continue with your exploration of ‘things.’ The word ‘thing’ is interesting to me – it’s a word we often apply to subject matter we don’t understand. In a way, it has a distancing affect. It functions in the opposite affect to something like a nickname. Would you agree? Etymologically-speaking, what does the word ‘thing’ mean in the context of your art practice?

RACHEL DE JOODE: Yes, the word ‘thing’ emphasizes a more alien approach/way of looking which I believe is very useful, both as an artist, but also as a human. An alien viewpoint helps to relativize human domination on planet earth, it helps to abstract human attributes. To me the word ‘object’ implies too much materiality. I don’t condemn the word object, I just think there is an attractive looseness or flexibility to the word ‘thing.’ It seems to me to be a bit more playful. On the whole, I guess to me the word ‘thing’ names everything that is not simply nothing.

KB: Your study of things incorporates human forms into a dialogue with dust, marble, clay, a dinosaur bone, reforming the usual hierarchical structures between some things and other things: our bodies and “the rest.” What motivates this?

RJ: It is my intention (from an object-oriented ontological viewpoint) to decenter the human from our very human existence on earth. Recently, I read and was inspired by philosopher Ian Bogost’s book Alien Phenomenology, or, What It’s Like To Be a Thing, which (in very short) outlines a system of thought in which no object has precedence or hierarchy over another. I like to see the work Agency (that you describe in your question) as a visual list of things; nonhuman and human (my skin). This visual list tries to point out the agencies that are at work while making an art-work, ie. an assemblage of things that are set in motion when me-the-artist is making an artwork. For example, the dust that resides in the corner of my studio while I am thinking of the work (the dust that I partly breathe in and that is also partly made of my dead skin-flakes). Or one hair that I left on my pillow the morning I wake up, or a thought about a dinosaur bone or a texture of some art-material or the itching of my foot-sole. By non-hierarchically pointing out a handful of things, or actors, that are all involved in the art-making process I try to reorient the human idea of art-making or the art-piece itself. I leave the (ta-da end result!) art-piece that is normally made and presented away and present its actors in a kind of family photo setting.

KB: What exactly is the molten inner core of an object? RJ: I took the title from Object-Oriented philosopher Graham Harman. To him, objects have autonomy, and exist beyond the needs and desires of humans. Objects are not for us! He uses ‘The Molten Inner Core’ as a metaphor when answering the question: what is going on in the interior of an object? Using the analogy of a tree and oneself as forming a unified object, Harman writes: “located inside the unified object that the tree and I form, it is the hollow, molten, inner core of objects where all intentional relation occurs”. This tree/self metaphor leads us to, as Harman says, “Vicarious causation, of which science so far knows nothing, is closer to what is called formal cause. To say that formal cause operates vicariously means that forms do not touch one another directly, but somehow melt, fuse, and decompress in a shared common space from which all are partly absent. My claim is that two entities influence one another only by meeting on the interior of a third, where they exist side-by-side until something happens that allows them to interact. In this sense, the theory of vicarious causation is a theory of the molten inner core of objects – a sort of plate tectonics of ontology.” I like this idea of the thing inside the unified



"The Molten Inner Core", Installation View at Neumeister Bar-Am; Photograph courtesy of Neumeister Bar-Am

Neumeister Bar-Am

object: the thing that one and the other object form together. In a way, making art is always about this unified space where the maker and the material fuse.

KB: You just completed research on meteorites. What made you interested in meteorites as a subject matter? RJ: Last winter/spring I received a 2-month residency and funding (from the Deutsche Börse) to do research and to create a body of work. I was doing research in the Senckenberg Institute in Frankfurt, the residency was inside the Frankfurter Kunstverein. Meteorites contain the oldest known rocks in our solar system. They also contain 'pre-solar grains,' which are minerals that formed around other stars probably billions of years before our solar system was born. I am fascinated by meteorites because they are these little bits of outer space that enter the earth surface and that show us our own alienishness and at the same time they connect us to the cosmos. I mean, earth is as much outer space as any other planet is. We are part stardust, we are part meteorite, we are the same. We (planets, stars, meteorites, milky ways, black holes) are all existing in the universe, the cosmos. Then the way meteorites look so humble is most compelling! Their sheer lack of affect, their silence, their sheer stoniness as, Roger Caillois puts it, makes the meteorite something mysteriously fascinating.

KB: Would you say that part of your art focuses on the art of documentation and art as a documented object?

RJ: Without wanting to be cynical, the end result of any contemporary exhibition is a jpg circulating the internet. Yes, I am working a lot with the idea of art-documentation being the work and many of the works I made in the last year, such as Various Qualities To Orbit The Mysterious Core or the works in this show like Sculpted Human Skin In Rock, play with the in-real-life-ness of the white cube and its web-based installation-documentation. I work a lot with issues like 2-dimensionality versus 3-dimensionality, with proportions, with performativity of the work, with surface.

I think the article Flatland by Loney Abrams really pins it down: "Far more people see art on screens than in museums. The gallery is no longer the primary exhibition space; the Internet is. As documentation—photographs or videos that capture a finished work of art, usually installed within a gallery—are posted to the Internet and then dispersed and multiplied via likes and shares, online viewers become the overwhelming majority of an exhibition's audience. The digital image is supplanting the art object. All works, regardless of their material constituents, are flattened, scaled down to several hundred pixels. Consequently, the digital photographic image can be understood as the homogenizing, ubiquitous medium of our era."

KB: How has the prevalence of the online art experience affected your work over the years? RJ: In general the Internet has been very good to me, I have had the possibility to show my work to a large audience and I received a lot from it. Also, I have had the possibility to get to know artists and their work more so then I would ever be able to do when there would be no Internet. I love surfing the web looking at art and one artist/artworks leading to another artist/artwork. It inspires me a lot.

KB: What else can we look forward to from you in 2014? RJ: I just accepted an adjunct professorship at a university in the U.S., I will be moving there (for two semesters, 9 months) with my then-born-child and husband, so this will be quite exciting! Also, I will be working on some curatorial projects the coming period. And in the beginning of April I have a show in Naples at Museo Apparente and at the end of June I have a solo-show in Glasgow which is curated by itsourplayground at SWG3 Gallery. And I am giving birth very soon. This is something which I am most excited about! A new human!



(Detail) "Agency (25 Photographs of Things)", installation view at Neumeister Bar-Am; Photograph courtesy of Neumeister Bar-Am



"The Molten Inner Core", Installation View at Neumeister Bar-Am; Photograph courtesy of Neumeister Bar-Am

NEUMEISTER BAR-AM "The Molten Inner Core" – RACHEL DE JOODE
Exhibition: Feb. 22 – Apr. 26, 2014 Goethestraße 2, 10623, Berlin

Berlin Art Link, April 2014

POST

RACHEL DE JOODE

by Jonathan Openshaw | April 15, 2014

BERLIN-BASED SCULPTOR RACHEL DE JOODE CREATES PHYSICAL WORKS THAT ACT AS PORTALS INTO OUR DIGITAL LIVES.

Predominantly working in sculpture, but heavily influenced by screen-based research and digital media, de Joode plays with the line between the physical and virtual worlds. Her constructions are self-consciously handmade and often ephemeral in nature, but you can see a kind of digital skin that plays over their strange dimensions, contortions and colours.

"The internet is this great, churning machine with so many aspects to it: its connectivity, its speed, the cleanness of it, the transience, the information, the narcissism involved, the voyeurism, the lies! It's fascinating territory and all very, very flat: two-dimensional. There's just a screen to look at, but so many emotions involved. Surfing the web is transcendental for me".

The fact that this swirling, absorbing and ever expanding online experience is hidden behind an object as dull and mute as a smartphone is one of the great contradictions of our age. The experience of stepping through the screen and exploring all the internet has to offer might be an all-encompassing one, but the physical interaction is very limited – the click of a mouse or caress of a touchscreen. There's a growing disconnect between the hardware, and the experience that it facilitates.

"Even though I love the internet, I also hate it, and I feel the urge to compensate for the online experience by working in physical formats". Acutely aware that we cannot dictate the terms of our online interactions, de Joode focuses on the feedback loop that is created between our virtual physical worlds. How are our surroundings being reformulated by the digital experiences that increasingly dominate our lives? Citing the fact that the anatomy of the human hand has radically changed since the invention of tools 1.7million years ago, de Joode is interested in what physical changes this screen-based existence might be instigating.

"I like the idea of turning the sculptural object into surface, then back into sculpture and back into surface. I'm drawn to tactile, sensual materials in my sculptural objects, and use it as a way to point out the polar differences between the screen and the real object". The act of translation between formats and media, from biological to technological and back again, is constantly at play in de Joode's sculptures. Fleshy skin-tones on shapes that seem to be glitches from malfunctioning software are merged with the cool, neutral tones of corporate communication, and even classical sculpture. Multiple references are weaved into a single narrative in her sculptures, just as the internet provides a beguiling bricolage of mismatched information. (<http://postmatter.com/currents/rachel-de-joode/#/>)



IMPOSE

Cruise Corp

RACHEL DE JOODE: DOING STUFF WITH THINGS

{ Dimensional flip-flopper does good tonight in Bushwick. }

ALAINA STAMATIS | FEBRUARY 16, 2013



"Human Bodies Covered In Clay Surface," humans, photoprint on textile, 2013.

While walking on Grattan St yesterday evening in the IBZ (Industrial Business Zone) of Morgantown, Bushwick, I pass a pick-up truck with the license plate: RELINQT. I decide not to Instagram it so as to save battery life on my phone for an interview with sculptural artist Rachel de Joode.

When I arrive at Interstate Projects, the gallery's owner Tom Weinrich escorts me in through the functional entrance, down a hallway of the gallery's immense workshops and studios that cannot be seen during public events. Interstate is Weinrich's incubator for emerging contemporary art, often offering established national and international artists their first New York solo show.

In an interview with Arts In Bushwick Weinrich said he was interested in laying roots in Bushwick partially because it reminds him of a Rust Belt city, as he is a native of Pittsburgh. At the time of that interview, Interstate was a modest suite in a loft building on Bogart St. The current location of Interstate Projects, 66 Knickerbocker Ave, is a converted steel factory.

We reach the grand white gallery space where de Joode, who is Dutch-born and based in Berlin, is preparing the site of her first NY solo show, "The Hole and the Lump," which opens tonight. She sees that I have coffee and wearily suggests that we go for a walk to get her some. I take out my phone.

How do you chose the materials to work in?

In this show there is a lot of clay. I started to like clay because it's so maleable and it's like the perfect physical thing to work with, and it's so sculptural. When I was in Mexico, in a copy shop, this guy came up to me and he said he's a shaman – I don't know if that's true, it could be. We were chatting and he was like, "Oh, these are so beautiful, these hands with clay. You know that the human body came from clay," which is what the Mayans believe. I really like that it's the ultimate earthly, raw, physical material. It's partly a gut-feeling and partly a choice that I work with clay.

And then I work with a lot of fake objects. So there's terracotta in there, but there's also plastic terracotta, and there's wood and then there's plastic wood. It's always about how those things are the same, just in different form. You could stay, "that's not wood," but it's still atoms...

And it's still doing the same job.

Exactly, it's the same. No judgments. I'm not saying that one is better than the other.

Unpretentious.

Exactly. Fake and real play a big role in my work, and in this exhibition, clay plays a big role.

Were you always thorough at documenting work? And in what way does art documentation function as artwork for you?

I have always been very thorough at documenting it, but I think it started playing more of a role as I started to see and watch so much art online through Internet-circulated documentation. I mean, I'm kind of lazy sometimes with going to openings, so I just see it online, so it gets to be my experience with the work. I think everybody does that. When you look at Contemporary Art Daily, it's all so beautiful. And you start to think, "I need to have photos as beautiful as that!" You're kind of conforming to that.

On the other hand, I've made a lot of still lifes. In a way that's just the documentation of work placed together or of an installment. So they go hand-in-hand even though they're coming from two point of views of making.

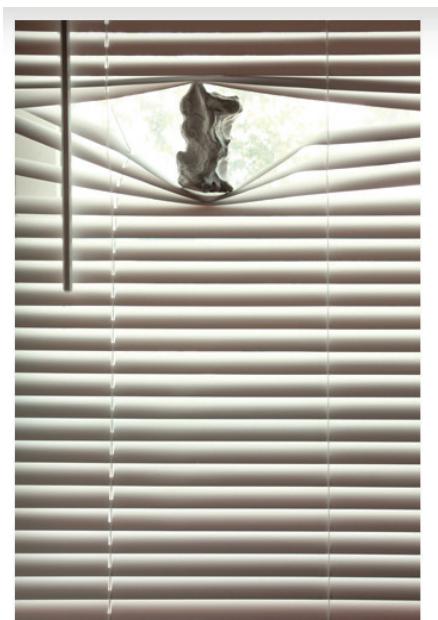
There's an evolution in my work where I'm starting to get away from putting objects together and then photographing them – away from making something three-dimensional (into something) two-dimensional.

In this show I have a group of sculptures that are cut-out pieces. I thought, if you photograph something for documentation it doesn't need to have a back because you just photograph the front.

Yeah, there aren't usually 3 angles of the same piece. There's just one shot of the piece.

Just one! So that's what I did. You put it down and you photograph it and that's it. It has to do with the fake or real, but it's not a justification. I don't mean it in an ironic sense, it's just more like, "Oh, I can do this." It's more like an alienation.

Everything in the show has more or less to do with sculpture, because it's the most three-dimensional art work that you can have. You can walk around it and it's heavy or it's light.



Sculpture in the Space Between the Blinds, 2012

Neumeister Bar-Am

De Joode shows me her textiles printed with textured clay images. She has crowd-sourced 2 models to cop “Rodin poses” as part of a performance during the opening.

It's about clay and physicality, but they all need a surface. I was fooling around with this clay when it was wet, so I needed to photograph it to keep it because it was so ephemeral. I liked it as a painting or a photo, as a two-dimensional thing, so I printed it flat and then I resculpted it. These are on canvas and beneath it is plaster. So they're weird, resculpted puddles. To paint with a photograph, or sculpt with a photograph, or paint with clay, to jump between different ways of working and keeping on the process... They're funny.

It's looks to me very rock-ish and very landscape-y. It's abstract but then concrete again by crusting it. A photo is a thing because you can hang it on the wall, but it's not really a thing. But this is a thing. I'm giving them a chance at being real objects.

I was thinking of how, without space, the object cannot exist. If there was no space to put it, the object would not be there. The one needs the other. I'm always thinking of the white cube, which is just a set, it's not a real space like the street. It's normal to display your works but it should be as normal to display your works in other places.

All the sculptures have a hand or fingers, but sometimes you don't recognize it. I photographed the hand and then I printed it out – and that's where I met the shaman – and then I cut it out. On these sculptures there are hands, fake wood, real wood, puff pastry, plastecine, debris, and some wet stuff. It makes more sense to photograph things that are ephemeral and not able to last. Like a sweating sculpture is awesome.

I studied film, or time-based arts, and I made a lot of movies-

That's what “time-based arts” means? Film?

It means things related to time. So it could be performance or film. I wasn't fixated on making films but I graduated making two. I never really made any films afterward because it's too hard with all of the production and people involved. I moved to photography because it was so fast and easy and solo.

Which is more powerful: gravity or time?

I guess time is more powerful, because you die. Without gravity you can live. In my work, I'm more responding to gravity, and in my life, it's definitely time. Time sucks. I never have enough time. Time is like an enemy. But gravity can be your friend.

If there is a university course based around your work in 150 years, what do you think it will be titled?

“Doing Stuff with Things.” That's my email sign-off, and that's basically what I do. I do stuff with things. That's it.

Rachel de Joode's The Hole and the Lump at Interstate Projects, 66 Knickerbocker Ave at Grattan St
February 16 – March 17, 2013



Clay Scrollbars And Several Rocks, 2012



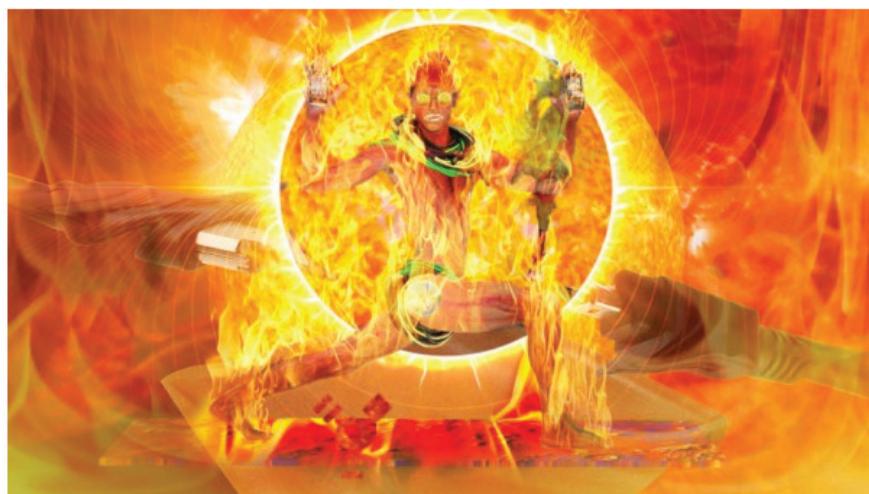
Encrusted Puddle Thing, 2013. The piece is on a podium of paper begrimed with aerosol stone spray, not shown here.



¡Disfruten la Apocalipsis!

 December 19th, 2012 by [Johannes Thumfart](#)
 3

Successful Lifestyle-Strategies for the End of the World.
Images by Rachel de Joode and words by Johannes Thumfart.



Firewire Salutation

The Maya Calendar of 2012 was one of the dominating memes of the year. Nevertheless, in two days, on the 21st, the end of the world won't happen. Here's how to enjoy this apocalypse and other scenarios of transition, the Age of Aquarius (starting in 3573), meltdown sunsalutes, tsunami, technologic-telepathic iCal sphinx, solar panel toenails, wires, and transhuman pole shifts.

One of the best things about Mexico-City is that there are practically no tourists. The city is regarded as dangerous, ugly and maybe also as plainly dull and boring in comparison to the hot spots in southern Mexico – tropical paradises with eternal spring break and thrilling drugwar-background-noise spicing up all that sunbathing and mojito-sipping. Nevertheless, in Distrito Federal, as Mexicans call their capital, the advertising activities around 2012-specific tourism are enormous. 2012-catalogues and 2012-posters are everywhere — 2012-workshops, 2012-meditation weekends, 2012 yoga-classes and so on.



Half-Man / Half-iCal

Given the general anti-urbanist bias of apocalypse-truthers, those events in fact take place in the countryside — in Yucatan where the Mayans lived, and in the nowadays hippie-paradise Oaxaca or plainly in the Estado de Mexico, which is something as Brandenburg is to Berlin and Long Island or New Jersey are to New York. In the 25-million person mega-city itself, December 21st 2012 seems to be nothing more than a gigantic billboard-event, similar to a Soccer Championship or the Super Bowl — a tendency very fitting to the 2012-myth, which most notably via William S. Burroughs began as an underground narrative in the seventies which has since developed into massive, global media hype. For the mainstream, the 2012-meme started with Emmerich's movie already in 2009, the actual year was opened by an Axe-Deodorant — the 2012 edition.

One can't help but wonder why the myth of the apocalypse, that originally was an underground craze, became so compatible with contemporary capitalism. One reason is of course that its contemporary form can be labeled with Naomi Klein as "Disaster Capitalism". The disaster, the state of exception, became the normal state in our societies which are constantly busy with preventing financial, political and ecological collapse. These mostly imaginary imminent ends of the world justify all kinds of emergency measures such as the bailout plan. Never, after the end of the cold war, has the end of the world been thought of by so many, so frequently. Amazing reality tv-shows such as Doomsday Preppers and Doomsday Bunkers show just how many take this seriously.

Another reason for the compatibility of capitalism and the apocalypse is revealed by end of the world advertisement. Since we really cannot believe in a single thing claimed by advertisement anymore, the apocalypse is the last dream to sell, the last dream we all honestly share: That one day, the Lattés of Starbucks will be over, the never ending stream of middleclass idiots in suits who try "to make it" will cease to exist, Rihanna, Madonna, Beyoncé and Gaga will stop singing and their audience will cease to care. In a way, contemporary capitalism became so repulsive that selling its end is the last possible product. In this regard, the saddest thing about 2012 will be that this promised end just won't come, as usual.

Neumeister Bar-Am



Solar Panel Toenails

Photography & Concept: Rachel de Joode

Styling: Erin Lewis

Retouching / 3d compositing: Jacinto Astiazarán / jacintoastiazaran.com, Tomás Díaz Cedeño / fairefairefaire.com, Nora Ricci, JOSÉ ANTONIO LÓPEZ

Hair & Make-Up: Eva Laura Zamora Vilchis, Alejandro Rincón Gutiérrez

Featuring: Debora Delmar, Zemmoa, Sofia De Lara, Alberto Bustamante, Aaron Changpo, Jacinto Astiazaran, Johannes Thumfart.

Fashion: Uriel Urban U+U, Nike, American Apparel, O'Neil and 'punto de reunion' by PJ Rountree.

Thanks to Nextel Mexico and Preteen Gallery, Mexico City.



Dis December 2012

BULLETT

Artist Rachel de Joode on Absurdity, Authenticity and Playing with Your Food

by Anna Khachiyian

Dutch-born, Berlin-based multimedia artist **Rachel de Joode** makes weird and funny things out of random stuff, which sounds a lot less climactic than it really is. De Joode pulls her ideas from a well-worn repertoire of household items, faux finishes, gags, props and food, leaving us to tease out hidden meanings that don't always exist. Sometimes, the result is auspicious, like the pack of Kraft singles chafing under the weight of a plastic capital or a landslide of pizzas and tennis gravel. Other times, it's plain silly, reveling in the play of unlike surfaces. Still, there's something "sensical" about the senselessness of her work, which looks like a cross between the clearance bin at Party City and the contents of the average American's stomach. The effect is otherworldly yet profane, a constellation of objects that calls attention to the utter chaos of the universe.



The Four Elements, 2011



Life Is Very Long, 2012



Tongue Piece, 2012

To achieve this look of randomness, de Joode relies on blending sculpture and photography, while arranging, documenting and dismantling her creations, often in the same breath. The process reveals a tension between the physical life of an artwork and its afterlife in cyberspace. As co-founder of an online publication, **Meta magazine**, and an auction house, **De Joode and Kamutzki Auctions**, she also has a handle on the business side of things. These days, de Joode is busy preparing for the publication of her first book on the Real Things series as well as a solo show opening this February at **Interstate Projects**, New York.

Food is an unusual yet ubiquitous feature of your work. How did this fascination come about? Food is omnipresent in human existence, which is what I like about it. It's a primal and common element, which makes it something that anybody can relate to as a signifier. Also, the long tradition of food in art is something I like to play with and refer back to in my work. From prehistoric cave paintings to Egyptian wall drawings, to Greek and Roman frescos that are meant to signify prosperity, to the highly symbolic religious depictions of the Middle Ages, to allegorical Renaissance still life, to the modernist still life of Cezanne or Van Gogh or Andy Warhol, and finally, to the conceptual work of Rirkrit Tiravanija, Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Paul McCarthy, food in art is very a widespread phenomenon. No doubt it will remain prevalent as long as both food and art exist in the human world.

What's the story behind elements like the bananas and the chickens?

To me, bananas are both a reference to evolution – a phallic symbol – and to pop culture and Andy Warhol. Bananas have a comic aspect, which I can very much appreciate.

Chickens embody consumption, globalization and production. A chicken is a living being – humans and chickens share 60% of their genes. This live entity is turned into a throwaway product, an encrusted fried snack. Globally, 60 billion chickens are farmed for consumption every year, which is more than 6 million per hour. I don't want to take a political stance here, but what I want to point out is the oddity and melancholy of humans turning this bird into an inanimate object that's mass-produced and distributed. This is a complete mystery to me.

The antithesis of the food seems to be your use of rocks, which are both unaesthetic and prehistoric in a way. Can you tell us a little about their significance?

I like the combination of things that are, or seem to be, everlasting and things that are ephemeral. There is a drama in the consolidation of something dying and something infinite. Also, I like the word "rock" a lot.

Speaking of which, many of the materials you work with are highly perishable. Isn't that kind of ironic for sculpture?

That's why I turn most of my sculptures, in which I use objects with temporary lives, into still life photographs. This allows me to catch the "moment" where things are "in order." Afterwards, the installation may fall over, go bad, etc.

I create temporary sculptures that I "freeze in time" through photography. Of course, in the classical sense, sculptures are made in marble, stone, bronze, etc., which gives the impression that they last "forever." But, when you look at ritual sculpture, like altars for example and, really, at the sculpture of the last century onward, then I don't find my work method or my material use to be particularly ironic. What I do isn't new – I haven't invented the wheel by doing still life photography. Actually, it's a very traditional way of working. What is ironic, on the other hand, is the idea of making an artwork, a physical piece, only to have it exist as a document circulating on the internet.

Many of your pieces start out as physical arrangements, which are then photographed and taken apart while others are made to exist in real space. Is there a difference between creating an sculpture for digital documentation vs. for its own sake?

Yes, there's a big difference. A sculpture documented in a photograph or digital image obviously doesn't have to be archival itself, whereas a physical sculpture more or less does, at least as long as the exhibition lasts. Also, the physical presence of a sculpture has a very different impact. The relation of the viewer to the sculpture in 3D space with regard to its shape, its tactility, the ability to walk around the work, the reflection of lights and the constraints of the space, etc., all of these elements make the experience very different from experiencing it on a screen. When I work on a piece that will exist in 3D, there is more to think about: the work should be able to be viewed from all angles, it should exist in the context of the space and for a certain length of time. Though one way of working doesn't exclude the other, making sculptural entities for 3D space demands surrendering to factors I can't control. Still, at the moment I find it more exciting to make works in "real space" even though it's definitely more of a hassle.

Is your placement of objects (and people) typically premeditated or do you favor a more random approach?

I improvise through lists. Meaning, I make many lists of streams of thought, keywords, little scribbles and vague sketches. I'll make about 3 long lists (or lists of lists) a day. When I start working on a piece, I have my lists, my sketches, the chosen materials, and then I let go and do things partly as planned but, most importantly, I leave room for improvisation, which in the end makes up for 50% of the work.

BEAUTIFUL/DECAY

PAINTING

SCULPTURE

PHOTOGRAPHY

ILLUSTRATION

DESIGN

ARTIST INTERVIEWS

Artist Interview: Rachel de Joode

September 11, 2012 by Aaron Berger



Rachel de Joode is a Dutch artist living in Berlin. Recently, she's produced a prolific number of sculptural works that break down common perception through the use of unique materials, concepts, and execution. Her work is patently of our time, drawing on themes of technology, isolation, and highly saturated levels of information exchange. But her commentary remains singular, even in the face of some fairly evident influences. De Joode is also the co-founder and art director of META magazine.

We asked the artist a few questions about what she's been up to lately and the various processes surrounding her sculpture-making.

All images courtesy of the artist.

Why Sculpture?

Up to the last year or so I've been mostly using (digital) photography/the Internet as a medium for the viewer to experience my work, which is (prior to being photographed) mainly sculptural/3-dimensional.

I.e. I would build something in my studio- an installation, sculpture, or sculptural collage- and photograph this in the studio set up as a modern still life or as something referring to product photography.

Recently, I've lost interest in this method of flattening and I got excited by creating things in the physical world and presenting 3-dimensional art-objects in an exhibition.

In current times this is, of course, a contradiction, since the photograph (the documentation) of this 'real' art object is viewed many more times than the (real/physical) object itself. The relation of the sensual object to its environment is something which I am interested in, and want to explore.

Coming back to your question: this relation to body and space can best be translated in sculpture, since sculpture is a 3-dimensional medium. Sculpture is somehow the most 'real' of arts.

Neumeister Bar-Am



You recently completed a residency program at the Utica Sculpture Space in upstate New York. How'd that go?

Regarding any crafts, I am an autodidact. I studied time-based arts at the Rietveld, the focus here was more on conceptual development, not so much on techniques. These two months at Sculpture Space were especially nice to learn and explore different crafts and methods of producing sculpture. I learned to weld and use the table-saw! Also, I learned a lot from the other residents—how other people work, their developments, the different ways of seeing.

I had a really good time. It was great to be all the way out in Utica, which is somewhat isolated. You can concentrate and relax. It was great to have the time and space to work hard and not worry about cash-flow, since it was a funded residency.

I produced about 13 sculptures for 4 different shows, it was a productive time.

Are there any historical/antiquated symbols that you do resonate with? If so, what are they?

Hmmm, I actually believe that I do ‘resonate’ with historical or antiquated symbols, I don’t necessarily want to make a separation between the now and the past.

It might be true that I refer more often to ‘now-symbols’ because we live now. But a lot of things that I use or point out are also timeless, like, for example, hair, or the use of food or planetary symbols.

My work evolves around the matrix of everyday life in our current time. The object’s ability to transfer and to measure our ‘humanness’ is a central interest of mine. What I mean with “our humanness” is the human condition—the thing itself which makes us humans; what defines us as human beings. Questions like ‘Why are we here?’ and ‘What does it mean to be human today?’ are recurring points of departure.

The idea that all of us are by nature unwillingly thrown in the abyss of our lives on this planet is fascinating to me, even more bewildering is that it actually seems to be that most of us can simply cope with the idea of life. (don’t you find it strange to be alive?)

Coming from this: essential to my work is the senselessness of our life/our world and the banalities of the real world. The symbols I use to illustrate this notion can be from any time, but are mainly contemporary.



Beautiful/Decay, September 2012

Neumeister Bar-Am

What are the benefits of combining different artistic formats into one work (i.e. performance pieces presented simultaneously with specific installations)?

The medium serves the message. And, therefore, when a topic is best translated through a performance, then the work should be a performance. When the topic is best translated through a photograph, then it should be a photograph. It's all rather fluid.

With performance you can play with time, with sensual space, with the body. With sculpture you can play with 3-dimensionality. With photography you can play with capturing. When you present different pieces in different formats you can put together different intentions, making the presentation one whole experience, like in a way you make a music piece with different instruments.

You currently have a show at Oliver Francis Gallery in Dallas. Writing for a local paper, a reviewer said that the “exhibit suggests a real chasm between the work and its intent, at least as described in the printed list of works at the front of the gallery...” — But what’s so wrong with providing a verbal context for art? It’s not like you forced people to look at the catalog. Is there a way to talk about one’s own work without coming off as an asshole/bullshitter, and is this type of thing on your mind when working on META, your online arts publication?

The writer questioned whether the act of ascribing meaning to an artwork is something that the artist (or curator) should do.

Well, I think it's ok when people don't get my work. I don't justify the work, or educate through description. I simply like descriptions. Descriptions have a comic-balloon like quality. I think it's fun to read the (literal) intention of the artist, and this is precisely what I wrote in this particular print out which accompanied the show.

For example:

“Statue Being Unveiled: Myself Standing Upside Down in 2 Dimensions”

Description: A 7-foot tall cutout photo, mounted and placed in a clay base. This faux statue depicts the artist standing upside down, posing as if to be an unveiled statue.

Material: clay, print, plastic, wood

This description is maybe not that what everyone sees or associates with the work, yet I don't think it eliminates ways of seeing. It's more like ingredients listed on a pack of cookies- you can also choose to not read it.

You can choose not to read the hand-out, it's not as if the descriptions are written directly ON the art-piece....

Any review is a good review. Nevertheless, let me quote Jennifer Chan's text here:

Since Marcel Duchamp submitted an upturned urinal as a "Fountain" into a salon show in 1917, the evaluation of art grew to rest on the intellectual appeal of selecting an object. An artist would isolate or arrange it with other objects, and call it art. The rise of installation throughout the Sixties marked a shift in the judgment of taste – from authored uniqueness to the assemblage and contextualization of objects within any space. Artists take over the role of object-curation for the cause of creating meaningful and memorable cultural experiences for the gallery-going public. Thus, selection and modification of existing things takes precedence over the finesse of handcraft.

I.e. after Duchamp you can't question whether the artist should provide the context.

Also, I haven't read any relevant art critiques attacking any artist on the use of descriptions. So in regard to this particular local critique, it doesn't really bother me so much. Ok, she didn't like the hand-out and maybe she didn't like each work....ok, well, so what....

Maybe my love for curiosities and off-the-road information overlaps [with] both my work, as well as [with] META.

But with META, we show things which inspired us (META is a collective run with 3 others), things which feed our curiosity. This is, in the end, something different than creating art. So I don't really think of META as a contextual extension of my art-practice. I feature things I am interested in, and so, one is able to find parallels to my work. But this is not the set-up.

What was the impetus for opening up your own auction house, De Joode & Kamutzki?

This project was started with me contemplating about curating a show. Then I thought: 'well, why another show, there are 10,000 shows in Berlin constantly'. Apart from this abundance of exhibitions I am often bothered by the lack of interest in the art-object itself at openings. People mainly come to network and to get drunk. Which is no problem, but I wanted to do something which is celebrating art in its most profound way. I teamed up with Maria Kamutzki and we decided that we wanted to trigger people to buy art out of love, fascination and admiration. Because art is something essential. This led to us opening an auction-house. We've held 2 successful auctions so far. The next one is planned for the beginning of 2013.

Which visual artists inspire you?

This is something which is in constant motion. Sometimes I look into the work of a certain artist and I am totally into it. Then, I kind of forget about a particular artist for a year, then I revive a certain artist.....so, I find this question rather hard to answer. Nevertheless, as for 'the now', I am into: Elmgreen Dragset, Ryan Trecartin & Lizzie Fitch, Frans West, Shana Moulton, Kate Steciw, Mika Rottenberg, Werner Herzog, Aleksandra Domonovic, Cyprien Gaillard, Virginia Poundstone.....

Which non-visual artists inspire you?

Philosophy: Graham Harman, Baudrillard

Space: The Mars Rover Mission

T. S. Eliot

Neumeister Bar-Am

Can you talk a little bit about the Berlin arts scene? Pros? Cons?

Con: the overwhelming amount of post-grads exploring the Berlin scene and the lack of a serious art-economy. Berlin feels sometimes too much like a playground (which is obviously also a pro)

Pro: There is somehow always something interesting to do. (This is actually both a pro and a con. A con because it's also somehow 'social pressure' of being present)

What's next for you?

I will be in Mexico City from October 'til December. In October, my work will be on the Art Fair in LA. In November it'll be on the Art Fair in Chicago. I will give a lecture in Mexico. There is a solo show planned in the beginning of 2013 in NYC.



Beautiful/Decay, September 2012

COOL
HUNTING

Rachel de Joode

The magic-surreal, inflatable neo-dada work of a still life sculptor

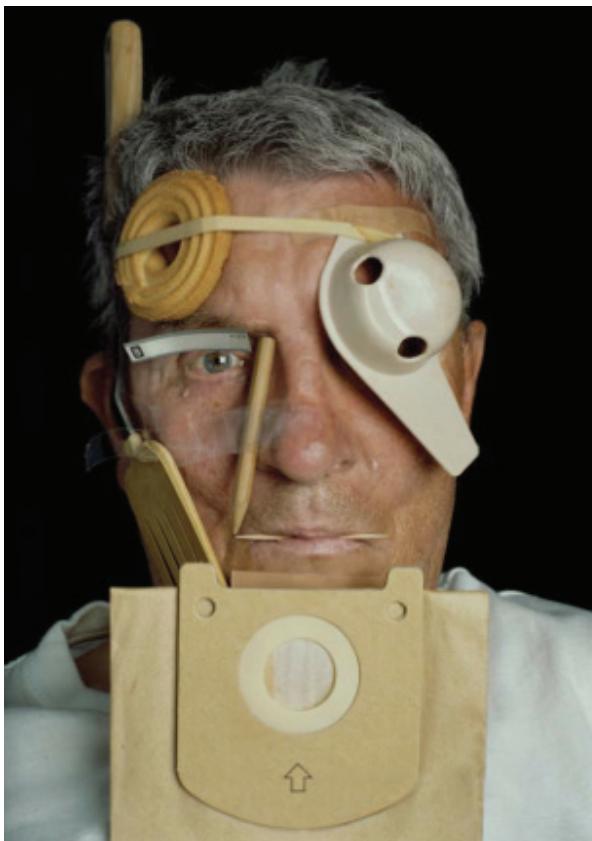
by Perrin Drumm in Culture on 02 April 2012

Rachel de Joode is a Berlin-based sculptor who specializes in still lifes made from materials like a stack of Kraft singles, an oozing banana, a wooden club piercing a pile of white bread, wigs, people and a giant inflatable chicken foot. Her most recent work "**Life is Very Long**" is a part sculpture, part performance piece composed of tennis gravel, styrofoam and 60 frozen Dr. Oetker pizzas. She draws inspiration from history, philosophy, space travel and obscure scientific facts, which may help to explain why she classified the sculpture "A Peanut, Half a Horse, a Chicken Foot, a Burning Cigarette and a Black Hole" as "magic-surreal inflatable neo-dada". If that doesn't clear things up, perhaps this explanation will shed some light:



"The elements displayed have individually symbolic meanings: the peanut metaphors evolution, primates and a mental condition, half a wild horse is a metaphor for amputation, restraint and magic shows (box sawing trick). The burning cigarette is a metaphor for fire (the element), smoke (blurred vision) and the dawning of the end, the chicken foot is a voodoo charm which is symbolically used for the "scratching" of the vision of the future. The black disk is representing a black hole which is a symbol for the mighty unknown. Together these ingredients form an inflatable perspective of the future human condition, revealing the dawning of the end of the post-modern world."

She continues her exploration of art, science, culture and nature as the photo editor and art director of **META Magazine**, which "traces the uncommon threads between common topics, presenting its readers with views into the abyss of visual information and with experiments in associative reading," de Joode explains. "We have contributors such as Olaf Breuning, Tao Lin, Cai Guo-Qiang, Pieter Hugo, Jan Kempenaers and Alan Shapiro among other scientists, historians, artists, activists, occultists and theorists."



She's also the co-founder of [De Joode & Kamutzki](#), a new auction house that aims to increase the accessibility of contemporary art. "We don't see art as a luxury good that one might consider purchasing when they already have everything else that money can buy," de Joode says. "Our mission is to inspire you to invest in great artwork not for the sake of its resale value, the status symbol attached to it or as a way to spend surplus money. We want people to buy art out of love, fascination and admiration. Because art is essential."

Her work will be featured in two exhibitions in April: "tropico post - apocalyptic" at [extra extra](#) in Philadelphia and "[Bad Girls of 2012](#)" at [Interstate Projects](#) in NYC. Meanwhile, she's working on a short film with dancers [Jared Gradinger and Angela Schubot](#) before she leaves for a two-month residency at Sculpture Space in Utica, all while Panama-based gallery [Diablo Rosso](#) prints an edition of her work for [Zona Maco](#), the contemporary art fair in Mexico City. I was lucky to catch up with her this week for a quick chat.

You studied time-based arts at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie. What does that mean?

What are time-based arts?

It means art which is somehow related or dependent on time—like film, web-based art or performance. Nevertheless, this department is a kind of free art meets conceptual art department. You could basically use every type of media you wanted, the focus was more on your idea, on your concept.

How do you select the materials for your sculptures? Is it an intuitive process or is there a lot of trial and error?

I choose objects which I find iconographic for the current human condition, objects which relate to

Neumeister Bar-Am

the everyday, like pizzas, or computers, or coffee mugs, or remote controls. These objects are just “there” somehow. I am not constantly on the lookout. It’s more about opening your eyes. Like when I think of using a telephone in one of my works, all of a sudden I notice all these great telephones everywhere. In the end it’s either/or. Sometimes I have an image in my head and then I need to find a certain object. Sometimes the object comes to me and I get inspired to do something with it.

When I start to assemble an installation or still life I think a lot about the texture and the colors. Colors really work on the emotions and so you can do a lot with this. Mostly I color-code the objects or arrange them tone-on-tone. Setting up a still-life is like making a sculptural collage. It’s cutting and pasting, somehow it’s the same as photoshopping.

I have a table with objects (ingredients) lined up and then I just try to put them together until it works. I never use all the objects that I picked out in front. Then the hardest part is having things sit and stand together. Things always fall over. I scream and condemn the objects. Gravity is my worst enemy when I make an installation!

For “A Peanut, Half a Horse, a Chicken Foot, a Burning Cigarette and a Black Hole,” how did you fabricate the inflatables? Why use inflatable objects as opposed to another sculptural form?

In 2010, I was invited by the Oslo-based artists Sverre Strandberg and Anna Daniell to make an inflatable piece. They organized and curated the show “Giant Ball”, an exhibition of inflatable art pieces held in Oslo’s football stadium.

It was very natural to design this still-life. The piece was produced in Korea. The concept, design and the high-res images I delivered for the print on the inflatable material are mine. The curation and production are Sverre Strandberg and Anna Daniell.



Cool Hunting, April 2012

Neumeister Bar-Am

The cool thing about it is that I could make something like “Half a Horse” which would be very hard to make in reality! The sculpture definitely turned out great and it is so small to carry around, which is a big bonus! I just need to built the structure which it stands on.



You've said work addresses “the nature of humanity and questions who we are and why we're here.” Has your work led you closer to answering these questions? What have you discovered about our humanity through your work?

Actually, I think I will never find out. It's so ridiculous! It is really so ridiculous that we are alive. It confuses me a lot. I guess we need to simply do some funny and nice things, things we want to do and do them right enough to also be able to enjoy them. People are very strange, what they do, how they live, what they want from life. The only realization I made is that we are all very similar. All humans want things, they desire things.

All images courtesy of Rachel de Joode.

RACHEL DE JOODE BASED-IN-BERLIN: ARTIST STUDIO VISIT

Article by **Jessyca Hutchens**;
Studio visit photos by **Chloe Richard**



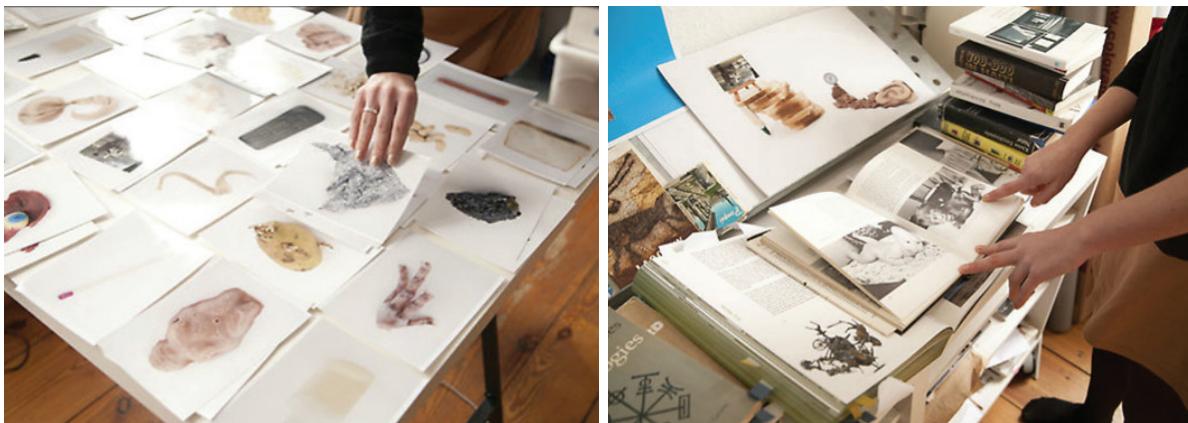
Rachel de Joode, Altar: "Growth" (2009); 40 x 60cm Rachel de Joode's studio

Rachel de Joode's studio, a large room in an old Berlin apartment, is filled with a universe of things. An ordered universe of things. On shelves lined in boxes are an assortment of objects and materials: plastic chickens, a giant medical ear model, bones made of cardboard, foam, peanuts, plastic bananas, fabrics, a skeleton, Toast bread, real stones, fake stones and so on. These things aren't merely stuff, the kind that lies around your apartment, but things that have already began to be re-ordered or re-contextualized somehow, a process that will finally be realized through an artwork. Working across photography, sculpture, installation and performance, De Joode's objects are always centre-stage – carefully arranged and displayed, yet functioning as free floating signifiers.

In her photographic / sculptural works, De Joode frequently mixes real objects with made objects, fake objects with found ones. Some objects are selected purely for their formal qualities, for instance Size Matters (2007), is described simply as 'Skin colored objects measured on the face of a man.' Others quote the art historical – De Joode's frequent use of real potatoes and bananas are a not-so-sly reference to Van Gogh and Warhol respectively.

But the real power of De Joode's work lies in her ability to alienate objects from their original contexts. This is achieved not through sheer randomness or abstraction, but by newly categorizing each object within a system.

In her Altar (2009) series, small sculptural clusters were created in urban environments to reflect seven elements of contemporary existence: food, energy, transmission, light, the physical body, nature and home and incorporated elements such as cigarettes, twine, animal carcasses, shoes, toothbrushes, and hamburgers. The result is an exercise almost in neo-mysticism, a sacred spectacle emptied of any specific spiritual meaning, but one that retains a sense of power through the connotative power of the objects themselves.



Rachel de Joode's studio

While De Joode has long incorporated human figures in her work, and for a long-time worked as a fashion photographer, last year she began collaborating on a number of performance installations that seem almost to bring her sculptures to life. In Conjunction (2010) at HBC, De Joode collaborated with Donna Huanca to create an installation that would host performances by Helga Wretman and Tallulah Holly-Massey. The piece interprets an astrological event called an appulse (when two celestial bodies appear near in the sky) and involved the two performers moving through the installation almost as though performing some long-forgotten ritual. In June of this year, De Joode produced a piece for the Lab for Electronic Arts and Performance titled Bone. The body as raw material in collaboration with dancers Jared Gradinger and Angela Schubot. → The surreal and almost mythic quality of much of De Joode's work is intensified through performance, almost as though her sculptural worlds have been waiting for inhabitants.

As well as being a prolific artist and collaborator, de Joode is heavily involved in many other aspects of the contemporary art-world. Earlier this year de Joode started a contemporary art auction house with artist and auctioneer Maria Kamutzki, with general aims towards accessibility. In their manifesto they reason; "many people who are actually passionate about art would never consider purchasing it." And so the pair aim to match up "The Right Art to the People and the Right People to the Art". De Joode is also co-founder of the experimental magazine project META magazine – an online publication that allows viewers to browse by association.

Artist Statement:

Rachel de Joode's artistic intention is to decipher human existence in absurd and surreal ways, through photography, installation and performance she seeks to portray the otherworldliness in the most profane aspects of her world. De Joode regards her work as anthropological research into the relationship between man and objects in postmodern culture.

Additional Information

Current Exhibitions / Projects:

KUNSTIHOONE CITY GALLERY
"Light Trapped In Matter" – SOLO SHOW
Exhibition: August 11 – 28, 2011
Vabaduse Square 8, Tallinn, Estonia

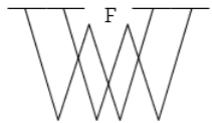
YAUTEPEC GALLERY
curated by Gerardo Contreras of **PRETEEN GALLERY**
"Rat Piss Virus Give It To Me" – GROUP SHOW
Exhibition: July 21 – August 20, 2011
Melchor Ocampo 154-A, Mexico City, Mexico

See more of Rachel's work:

Rachel de Joode's Website:
www.racheldejoode.com

Meta Magazin
www.meta-magazine.com

De Joode & Kamutzki
Auctionhaus
dejodeandkamutzki.com



Rachel De Joode. Altars

Catégorie: art, photography -
Pas de commentaires
30 August 2010



Altar, definition: An altar is any structure upon which offerings such as sacrifices and votive offerings are made for religious purposes, or some other sacred place where ceremonies take place. Altars are usually found at shrines, and they can be located in temples, churches and other places of worship. (c) Wikipedia

Altars is one of the new photographic work by Dutch artist RACHEL DE JOODE. Her intention is to decipher human existence in absurd and surreal ways, through installations, mise en scenes and still life photography: "I seek to portray the otherworldliness in the most profane aspects of our world. My work depicts people and objects and their performative gestures. I explore the balance between the mystical subconscious and the rational daily life."

According to the service/mission/function of every Altar piece, a special selection of items is arranged and applied at specific places that reference both their primal purpose and their metaphorical energy, for which many of them were once renowned and appreciated. These altars appear to be secrete entities, placed in a number of urban locations, including public spaces, strips of urban nature, facades of domestic building and parking lots. They serve to praise, bless and connect us to important components of human culture: food, energy, transmission, light, the physical body, nature, home, growth, time...

