

## *Loggia*

Conor O'Shea - Energy Stains  
18.7 – 31.8.2018

Press release:

In her seminal book *Overlay*, Lucy Lippard describes how many conceptual post-war artists turned to ancient pre-historic art as inspiration for their practice. It seemed a way in her view for artists 'to move toward a reintegration of the political and the cultural, the personal and the natural and all the permutations thereof'<sup>1</sup>. A way of re-storing an alternative, more mystical, world order.

Conor O'Shea's new exhibition *Energy Stains* performs itself as a site of near ancient mystical becoming. Reminiscent of the work of Eva Hesse, six sculptures mounted to the gallery walls and ceiling inhabit the exhibition space. Each is made from cut-out strips of different drawings, some monochromatic and others more abstract with various colourful motifs, and subsequently dipped in wax. It was whilst viewing a collection of artefacts in a Paris museum, that O'Shea came with the idea for this process of wax dipping, a technique once used for the preservation of important documents for long arduous sea journeys. A practical process which here takes on a metamorphic, transformative quality for the pursuit of aesthetic becoming. These works have undergone similar experiences: created in Sydney, Australia, where O'Shea lives and works, wax strips have been transported by the artist to be installed in the gallery space. These processes of travel, cutting, dipping, and assemblage provide a ritualistic and performative dimension to O'Shea's work.

Through the assemblage of strips of wax paper, each sculpture is composed of different circular motifs and forms, with various levels of tension and intensity. They take on different anthropomorphic personas from an underworld: they are at once rotting carcasses, S&M harnesses or tentacular beings. They belong to a pre, or post human world. As coined by Donna Haraway, a world where we are rather 'compost', a symbiosis of organic forms<sup>2</sup>.

-Juliette Desorgues, 2018

With thanks to Rebecca Jagoe for her guidance with this text.

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1 Lucy Lippard, *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Pre-History* (New York: The New Press; 1983, 1995), 13.

2 Donna Haraway, 'Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene', edited extract from chapter 2, in Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), accessed 10.07.18, <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/75/67125/tentacular-thinking-anthropocene-capitalocene-chthulucene/>