

The approach

12/04/2017, 10:53

At The Approach, the Female Body Takes Center Stage | artnet News

artnet (<http://www.artnet.com>)

artnet Auctions (<https://www.artnet.com/auctions/>)

On View (<https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/on-view>)

Gallery Hopping: Abstract Female Physicality Takes Center Stage at The Approach

A mostly female group show brings together artists from two generations.

Caroline Elbaor (<https://news.artnet.com/about/caroline-elbaor-464>), April 12, 2017



In “The problem with having a body / is that it always needs to be somewhere,” the latest group show at The Approach (<https://theapproach.co.uk/>) in London, we are given a compelling and complex survey of both historic and contemporary artists that offers an intimate, visceral examination of the female body, with nipple-like forms, intrauterine devices, and motifs of birth control pills.

Curated by the gallery’s assistant director Nora Heidorn, the exhibition manages to successfully address the trajectory of cross-generational artistic practices while simultaneously maintaining a current edge. This is achieved by juxtaposing the works of Heidi Bucher, Kiki Kogelnik, Zilia Sánchez, and Ana Vieira from the 1960s and 1970s with recent work by Alexandra Bircken, Juliana Cerqueira Leite, Paul Maheke (the show’s sole male artist), and B. Ingrid Olson.

The approach

12/04/2017, 10:53

At The Approach, the Female Body Takes Center Stage | artnet News

The works on view employ a wide range of materials—including latex, plaster, sculpted canvas, wax, mirror, textiles, video, and photographic processes—to ultimately explore the female body in space. There is a palpable sense of the physical, made evident through the processes in which the artists produced the objects: almost all are the result of direct contact between the body and material used.

What really works here is the show's ability to highlight contemporary practices by providing the framework of historic artists. It is remarkable that the practices of these older female artists existed long before that of artists who work in the same vein today. Regardless of year in which they were produced, the works come together seamlessly, with the older works informing the younger—even if they were made without knowledge of one another.

For example, themes evident in Alexandra Bircken's *Doris* (2013) are mirrored in the 1964 Kiki Kogelnik piece, *Female Robot*, in that both take on an element of the unnatural, leading one to associate the female body with a science project. As described in an accompanying text by Heidorn, like Kogelnik's *Female Robot*, Bircken's work "equally proposes woman not as natural and essential, but as technologically and pharmaceutically supplemented."

Upon entering the gallery, one is immediately confronted by *Obermühle, Parquet room nr. 9* (1980-82), an installation work by Heidi Bucher, in which the late Swiss artist cast a parquet floor in latex. Displayed on a low platform, one might accidentally stumble on it. In a touch of curatorial cleverness, we are always reminded of our own body in space while moving through the exhibition.

"The problem with having a body / is that it always needs to be somewhere," is on view through May 14 at The Approach (<https://theapproach.co.uk>) in London.

Follow artnet News (<http://facebook.com/artnetnews>) on Facebook.