

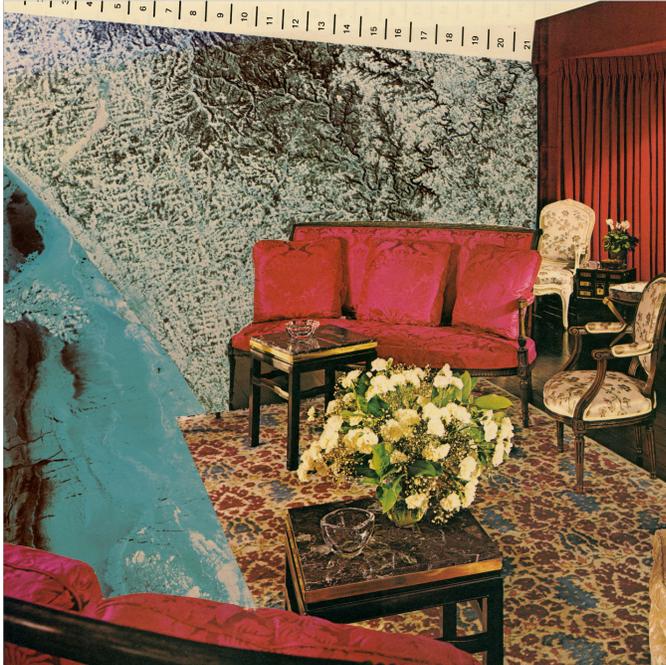
UNSEEN HAND

Knockdown Center

Curated by Nikita Vishnevskiy

March 4 – April 9, 2017

Opening Reception Saturday March 4, 6 – 9 pm



Todd Fink, *Withdrawing Room* (2017). Digital c-print, 36" x 36".

Knockdown Center is pleased to present *UNSEEN HAND*, an exhibition that features Tom Butter, Lars van Dooren, Juliette Dumas, Todd Fink, Langdon Graves, Rachel Harrison, Corin Hewitt, Ross Knight, Andres Laracuente, Jen Mazza, William McMillin, Thomas Stevenson, Alina Tenser, Steven Thompson, and dan Waller.

UNSEEN HAND is a group exhibition that brings together fifteen artists who employ various mediums and processes to question technology and expand upon its conventional definition. The artists exhibited assert their practice as an encounter with a technological event, whether by disrupting the technical order, poetizing methods of industrial production, or inciting sensuality via devices typically associated with disconnection. The exhibition warns us of the danger in comprehending technology merely through scientific merits.

We often encounter an abstraction when dealing with everyday objects whose digital nature is neatly tucked inside of smooth forms. These forms deceive us through allusion to a natural or organic appearance. With a quick gesture we can control them, foregoing the need to comprehend any mechanisms involved. In these instances, we are left in the position of a spectator. We lose agency.

To recover agency, we can look to the analogy of a gloved prosthetic hand which can no longer be recognized as a prosthesis. The operator is detached and the observer misperceives the activity of the hand as sensuous. The goal of the exhibition is to remove the glove, by way of artwork, in order to encounter the prosthesis fully.

Kinetic sculpture *Rope Trick* (2015) by **Tom Butter** is triggered by a foot pedal that the viewer must press in order to set the sculpture into motion. The wiring system is exposed so the viewer is aware that the triggered pedal sends a current, turning on several visible motors that move a long piece of rope from side to side. This slow, somewhat awkward, undulation becomes a physical representation of that unseen electric current, ultimately humanizing the mechanism.

Lars van Dooren's artwork messenger (2017) continues his interest in sculpture as a self-limiting workspace that contributes to its own development as well as its offspring. The altar-like object includes a smoke chamber where the used scraps of drawings and errant studio fragments are burned in ceramic vessels — their translation imprinted on smoke-infused glass. Van Dooren's past installation elements are offered up for continual destruction and renewal, a process where sculptural longevity is linked to the fleeting and ephemeral.

Juliette Dumas' Ice Painting (2015) is a cast ice mass mounted to the gallery wall. As the sculpture melts, it slowly disappears making visible the forces in its environment. The speed of melting is effected by the room temperature which depends on the structure of the walls, insulation, and nearby sources of heat. Symbolically, the work is a reminder of the responsibility we have for our environment.

Todd Fink is a musical composer and lyricist. He is a lead vocalist in The Faint and co-founder of the band CLOSENESS. He takes an active role in designing visuals and album art for both bands. Fink's lyrics and collages are forewarning of the paranoia and anxiety caused by accelerated technological progressions.

In her site-specific installation *Unclosing* (2017), **Landon Graves** re-creates and challenges the governing orders of the domestic interior. Among the familiar regimented decor, inspired by her childhood home, the viewer may encounter dream-like and "impossible" scenarios, induced by the imaginative and the phantasmic.

Rachel Harrison's sculpture *Magic Chef* (2017) doesn't exist merely as an art object, but rather it mimics the more tangible situations which could arise at a place of consumption, labor, or production. The cognition of the work is constantly shifting between the understanding of its conceptual framework, its recognizable displacement, and the value of gestures involved in its creation.

To make *Drying Flowers with Microwaves* (2010), **Corin Hewitt** built a makeshift laboratory in a gallery space. Working behind the confinement of a ten-foot wall, he preserved plants and flowers using microwaves, water, and silica sand. He then used the dried flora to construct meticulous still-life arrangements. Viewers could intentionally catch glimpses of the artist photographing the still-lives in three rectangular mirrors positioned above the wall, creating a threefold relationship to photography in which the microwaves preserving plant life, the act of photographing still-life, and the controlled mirrored image coalesce into one durational performance process.

Object production and viscera are married by physics in the works of **Ross Knight**. His forms imply a carnal predisposition ingrained in our mechanisms and gadgets. Knight fabricates his near minimal sculptures by way of exploiting prototyping materials to create an arrested moment of technological concomitance.

In his photographic works *Keys (black and white)* (2010) and *Real Good Steel and Wood* (2010) **Andres Laracuente** performs a series of digital and tactile manipulations. First, images of consumer products such as cleaning wipes and keypads are captured using a flatbed scanner. Then the scans are re-photographed with hands painted with color saturated facial makeup. The hands reach toward the prints to emphasize our physical relationship to mass produced objects.

Jen Mazza refers to her painting as a machine to make meaning. In her series *Open Letter* Mazza's hand is caught in a constant negotiation between depicting the natural floral subject and a mechanically reproduced background. In both instances the hand is a careful scribe, yet the nuance of her brush stroke reveals a complex and intimate relationship to the subject matter.

William McMillin's piece, *Migration Found Nesting in Nikon* (2017) is a memorial, presented as a series of images extracted from the camera of the artist's deceased father. The progressive decay among the images, caused by a failing sensor, serves as a poetic metaphor for the transient body.

Thomas Stevenson's *Part III of Invisibility Project* (2017) is comprised of a helium-filled weather balloon floating in the middle of the gallery. The balloon contains electronics that disrupt the signals of cellular devices from local wi-fi networks. Consequently, the viewers will be compelled to engage with the exhibition, "freed" from the tyranny of constant connection and perpetual tracking.

In **Alina Tenser's** video sculpture *Kismet Tutorial* (2016), table surfaces, hidden by a green screen, are discerned through observation of precise hand movements. With the aid of digital media the artist is able to communicate through the means of touch, subverting the sense of disconnection associated with the digital age.

Steven Thompson's *Death Plaid Records*®, *Ghost Album* © 2017 is a multifaceted project. A pyramidal vinyl case made in the artist's painstaking style houses a record called the Ghost Album. With musician and artist Jacob Bills, Thompson pressed an original score and subsequently the LP press plates -- exact physical inverses of the original -- were digitally reversed themselves, re-cut and re-pressed in vinyl. According to Thompson, playing the album is listening to inaudible air of the original score: any distortion, any alteration in sound, is evidence of the interaction with ghosts.

An obsessive friction inhabits **dan Waller's** sculptures. Objects are assembled at micro scale and transformed from the inside out. Their forms are concealed in bed sheets and window grates -- keepsakes of courtships and screens for sensual activity. Waller insists they must be rusted to be used, as if they're authenticated by their past, sanctified by the absorbance of human energies and emotions.

About the Curator

Nikita Vishnevskiy is an artist and curator born in St. Petersburg, Russia in 1984. He received his BFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2007 and his MFA from Parsons in New York City in 2009. As an artist Vishnevskiy has exhibited in the U.S. and abroad at venues including: Church of St. Paul the Apostle, New York, NY, Honey Ramka, Brooklyn, NY, Invisible Dog Art Center, Brooklyn, NY, Knockdown Center, Queens, NY, and Museum of Modern Art in Moscow, Russia. As a curator he has organized exhibition at venues including: HERE Art Center, New York, NY, Invisible Dog Art Center, Brooklyn, NY, Honey Ramka, Brooklyn, NY and Cloying Parlor, Brooklyn, NY.

About Knockdown Center

Featuring programming of diverse formats and media, Knockdown Center aims to create a radically cross-disciplinary environment. The particularity of our architectural environment and history leads us to gravitate toward projects that demonstrate a sensitive reactivity to site and environment. Visit our [website](#), or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

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