

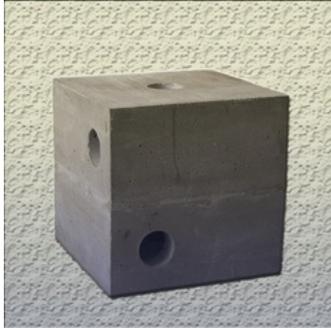
ARTFORUM

“Ajar”

REVERSE

28 Frost Street

October 11–November 3



A.K. Burns, *Concrete object; a noise show*, 2008–13, concrete, microphones, microphone stand, speakers, 12 x 12 x 12”.

Kerry Downey and Joanna J. Seitz’s video *King Suite 201*, 2013, is one of the most playful and convincing works in “Ajar,” a group show that brings together artworks by A. K. Burns, Lea Cetera, Brie Ruais, and Julia Sherman. In the film, dancer Pedro Osorio enters a hotel room by riding the top half of the door and engages with objects throughout the space in unpredictable ways, for example plunging his head into an ice bucket or holding a painting gently in his teeth—absurdity calling attention to how ensnared the body is by environment. This is at the crux of Natasha Marie Llorens’s curatorial design; she has culled artworks that collapse contradictory meanings into one form. The works on view present the embeddedness of sociocultural and particularly gender-based tensions within materials, which amplify as they cohere into a single aesthetic object. That each artist deals with the body points to the way physicality can act as political resistance in its simplest denominator.

Brie Ruais’s ghostly sculpture, *Holding up a Space for Appearance: Hollow Column (Hold up a plaster-soaked length of fabric until it sets: 20 minutes)*, 2012, embraces absence as intensely as it does physicality, and Julia Sherman plays with this binary via an infrared reflectogram of the ambiguous, if erotic, detail of John Singer Sargent’s 1883–84 *Madame X*’s left arm. Lea Cetera’s *Movable Jaw*, 2013, takes up furry fandom, looking at identity in transience. In *Concrete Object; A Noise Show*, 2008–13, a hollow cube with holes, Burns’s invites one to listen to its “orifices” (said to be “wide enough to admit several fingers”). These directives effectively implicate one within the work, causing the sculpture to take on a performative element. The resonant orifices also project the sound of one’s motions and the ambient sounds of the gallery itself, presenting the body as an open work, amorphous, and abstract.

— *Abraham Adams*