

Re-Enchanted Matter

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Plastique Fantastique, Godai Sahara, Maxima Smith, Lara Smithson,
Korallia Stergides, Elly Thomas, Tom Worsfold*

Curated by **Hot Desque**

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To re-enchant matter is to enact a metamorphic transformation. In the artist's studio or, in light of recent events, possibly in a living room, artists are constantly navigating the *matter* of their practice. Ideas and material are transformed from one state into another as they are dismantled, dissected, doubled, only to be re-configured as the maker's own. Once the process is complete, something new has hatched.

Metamorphosis is a continual process in nature, as well as being a cultural creation found in mythology, fairy tales and magic. Historically, tales of metamorphosis emerge from the folds of social transition and states of flux. In 2020, the outbreak of COVID-19, the climate crisis and civil protests including the Black Lives Matter movement, have heralded dramatic shifts across the world that highlight both our need *and* capacity for change.

The artworks in *Re-Enchanted Matter* demonstrate the desire to enact a transformation - from the completed act, to being caught midway through the process. Elly Thomas' papier-mâché sculptures create hybrid forms out of the formlessness of their original material. This results in components with no fixed assemblage, to be stacked and played with, existing in a constant state of potential change. Meanwhile, Kara Chin's video *Followers* presents a 3D rendered marble sculpture, giving animated life to a usually static substance, as it is seen floating and rotating endlessly in a virtual void. Further breaking down distinctions between different forms of life, artist collective Plastique Fantastique inhabit their termite avatars. In this new world of 'Zero City' even termites communicate over Zoom.

Not just matter is transformed, but also language through metaphors that imbue cross-fertilised meaning into substances. Delicate cast carvings of bamboo blossom and flying fish fins are fused together in Godai Sahara's alchemical mix of amber and sugar 'candies'. Bamboo only blossoms every hundred years and here, having been flown over from Japan, the artist offers us a rare glimpse of this moment in a poetic gesture.

The topic of metamorphosis is by its very definition always changing and vastly expansive. The exhibition and accompanying publication demonstrate the constantly shifting nature of things and the transformative process inherent in art-making. To re-enchant matter is to re-mystify, re-imagine, re-order, re-build.



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