

BODY TALK

Bonanza
Mads Lynnerup
Manners
Christian and Kevin Nagler
Renée Rhodes
May Wilson

August 1-
September 27,
2015

We've become blind from so much seeing. Time to press up against things, squeeze around, crawl over—not so much out of a childish naiveté to return to the playground, but more to acknowledge that the world begins to exist at the limits of our skin and what goes on at that interface between the physical self and external conditions doesn't detach us like the detached glance.

— Robert Morris



Robert Morris' words, excerpted above from a 1971 letter regarding his famous fully-interactive *Bodymotionspacethings* exhibition at the Tate Gallery in London, now seem a prescient warning in the midst of our present virtual worlds. Morris played a central role in defining multiple artistic movements over the 1960s and '70s, including Minimalism and Process Art. In short, he aimed to shift the perception of art-making and consumption as a passive act to one that fully engages the body. Taking this art historical precedent as a point of departure, *Body Talk* explores how technology is rapidly changing the human experience by prompting a reengagement with the corporeal.

Presenting works in performance, sculpture, video, and large-scale installation, the exhibition stages form-, movement-, and fitness-related approaches by six emerging Bay Area artists and artist collectives. Their work builds on pioneers of postmodern and minimalist dance, such as Anna Halprin, Yvonne Rainer, and Simone Forti—just as Morris' association with these artists through his choreographic work with the Judson Dance Theater influenced his development as a pioneering sculptor. As we become evermore disembodied from daily life through digital culture,

Body Talk aims to locate an expanded awareness of how we might physically engage the world, using our entire bodies—not just our heads (or iPhones)—as tools for gaining experience and knowledge.

May Wilson and **Bonanza** (a collective comprised of Conrad Guevara, Lindsay Tully, and Lana Williams) nod to the history of Minimalism and Process Art, engaging the language of formal abstraction to stage a corporeal encounter with the viewer. The weight and scale of Wilson's anthropomorphic and intentionally clumsy sculptures, comprised of vinyl, industrial felt, nylon strapping, and concrete, prompt a visceral and empathic response to the human form. These works embody material exploration and bear the traces of their making, often mimicking human characteristics through the expression of stretch marks and wobbles that defy their underlying rigidity. Highly influenced by their surroundings and often held up by or tethered to the surrounding architecture, Wilson's works encourage the viewer to explore them in the round.

Similarly, Bonanza's work spans a swath of the gallery space demarcating a "flex zone" and invites a durational and immersive experience of the work. The trio's dynamic use of painting, sculpture, and light

creates an interactive mise-en-scène of sculptural components that “act-out” shifting identities by stretching, bending, and bowing into shape. For this site-specific work, a platform-cum-yoga mat serves as a stage on which their objects “perform” and their treatment of the gallery’s existing skylights and windows with colored gel applications aim to create a meditative space for the visitor. The curve of a large metal sculpture, in conjunction with the installation as a whole, acts as a metaphor for their overarching concerns of flexibility—encompassing the blurry boundaries between medium and authorship.

Mads Lynnerup and **Manners** (a collaborative project of Lisa Rybovich Crallé and Sophia Wang) mine the realms of fitness regimes and exercise tools to disrupt the static nature of art objects displayed in the museum context as well as routine behaviors. Lynnerup conflates the fanatical tendencies of the contemporary art world with that of our culture’s obsession with working out through his custom-made sculptural forms that reference and function as gym equipment. For example, *Exercising Grill* (2011), a welded and powder-coated steel abstract wall sculpture, is designed to be activated by trained fitness professionals, as seen in the accompanying video *Demonstration* (2011). In addition, two collage pieces, created with brightly colored loose forms that float inside the frames, are designed to be taken off the wall and manipulated by a designated performer. These works aim to debunk the concept of art as precious commodity by transforming the gallery space into a gym.

Emerging from Crallé and Wang’s curatorial project *Heavy Breathing*, an artist-led series of absurd fitness seminars unfolding over the summer of 2015 throughout the Bay Area, Manners’ large-scale sculptural environment *Basic Edition*, created for this exhibition, extends their exploration of “somatic learning,” or learning through the entire body, to the formal realm of the gallery space. The duo’s work is comprised of porous sculptural forms made of pegboard, screens, and plastic netting set against a hand-drawn gridded background that serves as the field and prompt for an elastic movement score enlivened by performers and viewers over the course of the exhibition. Their approach is reminiscent of Simone Forti’s *Dance Constructions* (1961), in which choreographed tasks around objects melded everyday movements with dance, and Bruce Nauman’s early experiments that approached sculpture via

performance. In opposition to the polite conventions implied by their collaborative moniker, Manners’ work tests and revises the categories of agent, object, and environment.

Christian Nagler (with Kevin Nagler) and **Renée Rhodes** apply longstanding backgrounds in dance to their work, which address a range of topics through the body. In past work, Nagler has paired seemingly disparate and elusive subjects, ranging from finance to critical theory, with aerobic activities to create a kinesthetic process of thinking. With his latest video work, *Shoulder Babies* (2015), produced in collaboration with his brother Kevin Nagler, the artist continues this way of working but extends it into a fictional world constructed from fragments of speech and dancerly movement to probe financial and ecological margins. This video performance follows two surreal figures moving along freeway embankments and through office parks. The two perform what the artist has dubbed ‘illegal soul downloads’ and strive to transform themselves into human capital on the outskirts of Silicon Valley. The work questions risk, the intangible value of life, and what it means to be human in a moment when the physical seems ever more fleeting.

Mining the intersections between dance, technology, and human social interactions, Rhodes’ work highlights the body as an intelligent device for measuring and recording space. In her past project *Maps for Moving Landscapes*, Rhodes crowdsources a history of the lost landscapes of San Francisco and processes this collective memory via a body-based language of mapmaking. For this exhibition, Rhodes presents a series of site-specific outdoor durational performances as well as a workshop entitled *Visitor Center* that will lead participants through a series of somatic exercises within the di Rosa landscape to regain and unlock their own potentiality as mapmakers.

In a time when digital technology is redefining our sensory experiences, *Body Talk* champions the idea of experiencing and communicating with the world through the entire body, beyond what we perceive with our eyes alone. By thinking, feeling, and seeing through a full engagement of our physical selves, we are reminded of the flesh-and-blood materiality that has always made us human.

—Amy Owen, Curator

Exhibition Checklist:

In the listing of dimensions, height precedes width precedes depth.

Bonanza (Conrad Guevara, Lindsay Tully, and Lana Williams)



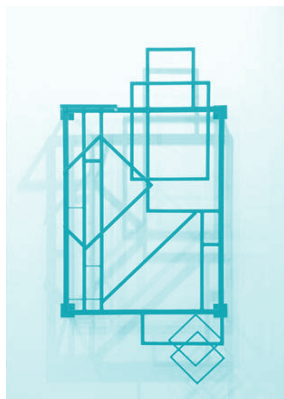
they know better, 2015
Mixed media
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artists

Mads Lynnerup

Astro Bright #1, 2011
Cut, acid-free paper
23½ x 17½ inches
Courtesy of the artist and Lora Reynolds Gallery

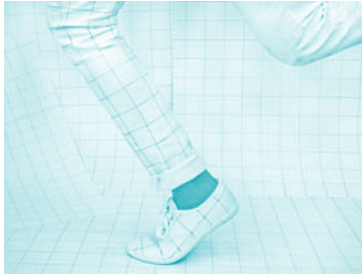
Astro Bright #4, 2011
Cut, acid-free paper
23½ x 17½ inches
Courtesy of the artist and Lora Reynolds Gallery

Demonstration, 2011
Single-channel video
Looping
Courtesy of the artist and Lora Reynolds Gallery



Exercising Grill, 2011
Steel and resistance tubes
96 x 48 x 18 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Lora Reynolds Gallery

Manners (Lisa Rybovich Crallé and Sophia Wang)



Basic Edition, 2015
Paint, paper, pegboard, plastic netting, screens, and wood
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artists
Activated by performances August 1 and September 26, 2015

Christian and Kevin Nagler



Shoulder Babies, 2015
Single-channel video
Looping
Courtesy of the artists

Renée Rhodes



Visitor Center, September, 2015
A workshop and series of site-specific performances at di Rosa

May Wilson

Linger, 2015
Concrete, nylon strapping, and vinyl
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist



Staunch, 2015
Concrete, industrial felt, nylon strapping, and vinyl
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

Note: Checklist as of date of publication. Some changes may occur.

Artwork information shown below images, with the exception of:

Bonanza, *Eighteencharacters* (installation view, Interface Gallery), 2014; Renée Rhodes, *Maps for Moving Landscapes* (video still), 2011.

Acknowledgments:

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