

Cooper Jacoby
PRESS

Flashart, March 2016

Review

by William Kherbek

Cooper Jacoby

Mathew / Berlin

Our feet, as Oscar Wilde observed, may be eternally treading the ontological gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars. Some of us, however, as Cooper Jacoby's solo exhibition "Stagnants" at Mathew Gallery demonstrates, are looking at the gutter. Here Jacoby presents four casts of sewer drains from around Los Angeles and a sculpture consisting of paint and CPU connector pins. The works are linked by their titles to the practice of acupuncture (e.g. *Brain Hollow*, *Veering Passage*, *Spasm Vessel*, all 2016) and to the dynamics of flow and stasis upon which it focuses.

The casts establish a potent dialogue between the absent concrete and metal shapes from which they were formed and the fiberglass, epoxy resin and vinyl of which they are composed. Eerie pools of immobile liquid just at the edges of the open drains and grates add another level of formal friction that provides a welcome reminder that material representation still has uses in an age of digital aesthetics. The woeful state of these urban pressure points validates their literalism; signifiers of urban decay often exist in art as backdrops for a kind of vapid sloganeering, but coming face to face with the shattered concrete of some street corner of LA in the setting of a West Berlin gallery bluntly physicalizes the distance between the rhetoric of inclusion and the reality of institutionalized priorities and privilege.

This immediacy is perhaps complicated by the rather labored sketching of acupuncture-based diagrams into the basins of the sculptures; also the decision to create an elevated, steel grate platform to which the viewer must ascend in order to see the show may overdo the exhibition's "urbanized" metaphors (it's also not very disability-friendly). Nevertheless, if Jacoby's works demonstrate nothing else, they are a reminder that there are just as many stories flowing by in the gutter as there are among the stars. We ignore them at our peril.

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Cooper Jacoby
"Stagnants", installation
 view at Mathew Gallery,
 Berlin (2016)
 Courtesy of the Artist and
 Mathew Gallery, Berlin