

PRESS RELEASE
TOUCHPIECE CURATED BY JUSTIN BEAL
MAY 21 - JUNE 24, 2017
Opening reception: May 21, 2017 from 4-6pm

In the spring of 2006 Frances Stark was working on a show in Los Angeles to be titled, *STRUCTURES THAT FIT MY OPENING*. A neatly shrink-wrapped stack of 500 invitation cards had come back from the printer with a typo—the title of the show, printed in magenta sanserif capitals, read: *SRUCTURES THAT FIT MY OPENING*. Several calls were made and a corrected set was ordered for rush delivery. Frances gave me the bundle of misprinted cards and they have been sitting on a shelf in my studio since.

This stack of errata could serve as a prologue to this exhibition. The intended title evokes both an architecture and an orifice and the question of how one might or might not accommodate the other. The failure of the typesetting is a reminder that any interaction between building and body, as unmediated as it may appear, is always subject to the influence of language. So too are the broader implications of Stark's *structure* and her *opening*, both of which can be variously defined in relationship to the larger contexts of the art world, the body and the built environment. The stack itself, as an object, remains tightly bound in a clear plastic skin.

This exhibition takes its title, *TOUCHPIECE*, from a series of sculptures made by Phyllida Barlow between 1983 and 1989. Barlow's title is a compound form of the term "touch piece" used to describe a coin believed to cure disease and influence behavior. A touch piece, unlike the more general category of amulet or talisman, must be touched for the desired power to be obtained or transferred. The object is activated by its interaction with a body.

I organized this exhibition while working on a larger piece of writing about the gradual decline of the analogous relationship between bodies and buildings across a broad history of architectural discourse, excerpts of which are included in this exhibition's forthcoming catalog. It follows that much of the work in the show directly addresses the way bodies interact with objects. To borrow a phrase Peter Greenaway used to describe his 1986 film, *The Belly of an Architect*, a central concern of this project is "the relationship of the soft body to the hard core."

The exhibition includes works by Kevin Beasley, Andrea Branzi, Hans Breder, Tom Burr, Talia Chetrit, Shannon Ebner, Paul Lee, Hannah Levy, Sarah Lucas, Donald Moffett, Adam Putnam, Heather Rasmussen, Davina Semo and Kishio Suga.