

bitforms gallery

IDEAL CONTAGION

July 11 – August 18, 2019

Opening Reception: Thursday, July 11, 6 – 8 PM

Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Saturday, 11 AM – 6 PM & Sunday, 12 – 6 PM

bitforms gallery is pleased to present *IDEAL CONTAGION* curated by David Hunt, featuring the work of Barry X Ball, Richard Dupont, Peter Gronquist, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Jon Kessler, and Ted Lawson.

IDEAL CONTAGION suggests a much-needed respite from technology as a force or mechanism for acceleration, disruption and interruption, in favor of largely monochromatic primary structures in a quiet, contemplative key. The exhibition as a whole suggests a looming middle future where our current tsunami of data and information—largely blank, implacable and bewildering—is seamlessly internalized by each individual artist as a kind of liquid anima, which in turn becomes the material substrate of their work.

In this manner, technology is subsequently transformed from a passing zeitgeist fetish—subject to cool and distant appraisal or critique—into something inscribed on, or within, the artist's own body, buried bone-deep, etched like algorithmic scrimshaw into the far recesses of his or her own mind. It is this "human circuit" which *IDEAL CONTAGION* seeks to foreground and address.

Additionally, each artist in the exhibition signals a modernist categorical imperative familiar to mainstream "Art History," such as landscape, body art, or appropriation—academic divisions that have yet to percolate and trickle down into traditional digital and techno-art discourse.

Barry X Ball (b. 1955, California) is a contemporary sculptor based in New York. His sculptures, although paying reverent homage to their historical antecedents, are completely new. Through the use of unconventional materials and innovative methods, the artist has reinvigorated the age-old tradition of figurative sculpture. Ball employs an elaborate array of equipment and procedures to realize his works, ranging from the cutting edge to the traditional, from 3D digital scanning, virtual modeling, rapid prototyping, and computer-controlled milling, to exquisitely-detailed hand carving and polishing. With their simultaneous fever-pitch intensity and surreal stillness, Barry X Ball's bravura works make an expansive case for the reconsideration of contemporary sculptural practice.

Richard Dupont's (b. 1968, New York) artistic practice includes installations, sculptures, prints, paintings, and drawings. His work draws from a variety of themes and references including the body, process, and system art movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The experimental nature of these earlier movements is reexamined through the 21st century lens of digital technology. An interest in the social implications of biometric technologies underpins much of his work.

Peter Gronquist (b. 1979, Oregon) is a multi-disciplinary artist working in diverse mediums and materials ranging from video and painting to sculpture and site-specific installations in our natural and built environment. Whether harnessing the wind itself with a massive, silver monochrome flag rippling in the middle of the desert, or activating the soft, penumbral glow around an industrial lighting fixture, Gronquist always leaves behind a record of frozen yet fleeting moments charged with his own personal subjectivity.

Lynn Hershman Leeson (b. 1941, Ohio) is widely recognized for her innovative work investigating issues that are now recognized as key to the workings of society: the relationship between humans and technology, identity, surveillance, and the use of media as a tool of empowerment against censorship and political repression. Over the last forty years she has made pioneering contributions to the fields of photography, video, film, performance, installation, as well as net-based media art.

Jon Kessler (b. 1957, New York) critiques our image-obsessed, surveillance-dominated world. His machines are at once complex and lumbering, combining mechanical know-how with kitschy materials and imagery. Structurally complex and narratively engaging, Kessler's multimedia sculptures often deliver an emotional punch beyond their humble means. With his distinct vocabulary, the artist taps into our all-too-real modern-day anxieties.

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Ted Lawson (b. 1970, Massachusetts) is an American artist working across all media. His work is an ongoing interrogation of the male psyche, questioning notions of institutional privilege, asymmetrical power dynamics, and the discomfort of intimacy in a world where traditional discursive relations are constantly upended and continually under siege. Characterized by a sense of hyper-compressed energy and visceral intensity approaching a state of exhaustion, Lawson frequently deploys a God's eye POV to lure and then entrap the observer, releasing them moments later after having subjected them to his enigmatic effects.

Founded in 2001, bitforms gallery represents established, mid-career, and emerging artists critically engaged with new technologies. Spanning the rich history of media art through its current developments, the gallery's program offers an incisive perspective on the fields of digital, internet, time-based, and new media art forms.

For images and more information on the exhibit, please visit www.bitforms.art. For publicity requests, please contact info@bitforms.art or call (212) 366-6939.