

Materials of Metamorphosis

**Veronique d'Entremont, Sharon Koelblinger, and Benedict Scheuer
Curated by Lauren Leving**

September 6 - 28, 2019

Opening Reception: September 6, 2019, 6 - 9pm

Open Hours: Sundays, Noon - 4pm and by appointment

ACRE Projects is pleased to present *Materials of Metamorphosis*, an exhibition that explores the ways personal histories are interwoven with histories of materials, calling attention to an object's potential to concertize memory as a way to resist inherent ephemerality. Within this exhibit, artists Veronique d'Entremont, Sharon Koelblinger, and Benedict Scheuer examine memory embedded in ritual and ideas shaped by a sense of place. Their artistic investigations result in interdisciplinary practices with work spanning across sculpture, video, performance, and drawing. Fragments of physical evolutions capture histories, acting as the vessel to hold memory, and in a sense become the material diary of the maker.

Both Koelblinger and d'Entremont create sculptural works that give a tangible presence to their familial traditions while unabashedly critiquing the spiritual institutions in which they were raised. Using their work to think through concepts of collective consciousness and shared memory, they make the unseen visible. The artists rely on texture and dimensionality of material to hold and trigger memory, illustrating the metamorphoses that exist as a result of systems of sharing.

Growing up in an intentional community in rural Iowa, Sharon Koelblinger uses her artistic practice to reflect upon ritual as a means to attain collective nirvana while simultaneously exhibiting skepticism in the ability to achieve it. The physical act of making is used to deeply explore this tension; she frequently relies upon craft techniques as a vehicle to explore the parallels that exist between labor-intensive, repetitive processes that unavoidably lead to deep contemplation and meditative rituals her community draws upon to achieve transcendence. Within *Materials of Metamorphosis*, she exhibits a braided rug created from silk, secured from thrift stores and dyed black. By weaving together thrifted materials using the ritualistic activity of braiding, Koelblinger places the histories of individual items of clothing in conversation with one another, creating a shared memory. However, by overlaying them with a uniform pigment, she erases their individuality, akin to the most conservative sects of spirituality.

Also employing processes drawn from community and familial folk customs, Veronique d'Entremont considers how we are shaped by the social and institutional spaces we inhabit—from our families of origin, to religious and art institutions—and seeks methods to transform our relationship to these systems. Her sculptures, *Made Real, By Process of Annihilation* investigates spiritual traditions that might disrupt intergenerational trauma by treating the associated patterns as a curse that can be released. This body of work consists of bronze “burnout” castings of fruit, branches, and fabric, pins, nails and other objects. d'Entremont's technique was adapted from instructions found in a 1909 book of Sicilian Folk Traditions for releasing a curse while the objects refer to the process of “transubstantiation,” performed at Catholic Masses, where bread and wine are transmuted into the literal body and blood of Christ. An accompanying essayistic video work, *If Every Mother Were a Saint, Heaven Would be Full By Now* elaborates on this process-based narrative in the artist's attempt to understand a complicated family legacy of suicide and Christian Mysticism, set against a

backdrop of Catholic Church bureaucracy, medical diagnosis, and the volcanic eruptions of Mount Etna.

While Koelblinger and d'Entremont rely on practices passed down, Benedict Scheuer focuses on documenting the present, in the moment before it becomes memory. He spends his summers cultivating a garden with his partner on the Appalachian Hillside, capturing its growth each day through watercolor; the practice of painting becomes a ritual in itself to ensure that each morsel of metamorphosis is preserved. His visual journal, though a 2d depiction, holds the colors, scents, tastes, and textures of each carefully curated element in the garden.

Accompanying these watercolors, *Materials of Metamorphosis* presents sculptural collages that act as a visual language in which the garden's progress coalesces with moments from the artist's summer. Akin to Felix Gonzalez-Torres' untitled text portraits that place personal and historical events, the bodily imagery and vibrant, plant-like pigments found in Scheuer's work intermingle to create a full story rather than parallel narratives of nature and human life.

Veronique d'Entremont is an interdisciplinary artist invested in collaborative practice, radical pedagogy, and community organizing. Through reciprocal spiritual, pedagogical and studio practices, she investigates art as a medium for healing individual and community experiences of trauma, mental illness and institutionalization. In 2016 Veronique co-founded the Liberated Arts Collective with Manuel Barrios, Denis Durbin, Paul Macias and Walter Wilson, who were each released from serving term-to-life sentences in California State Prisons that year. She has exhibited in New York, Boston and in Los Angeles, at The Pasadena Museum of California Art, Commonwealth & Council, Human Resources, Chapman College Art Gallery, and Torrance Art Museum. Veronique received her BFA from Massachusetts College of Art and her MFA from UCLA in 2012, and was a 2012 recipient of the Joan Mitchell MFA Fellowship.

www.artveronique.com

Sharon Koelblinger works in photography and sculpture to explore how the material properties of a print, the architecture of the gallery, and the position of the viewer's body can alter the perception of an image. She aims to actively engage the audience through requiring the viewer to approach photographs with the range of motion that they would look at a sculpture. She has exhibited her work in solo exhibitions at Vox Populi Gallery and Black Oak House in Philadelphia. She has participated in group exhibitions at The Sculpture Center, Cleveland; Blue Star Contemporary, San Antonio; and Upfor Gallery, Portland. She has been awarded residencies at I-Park, ACRE, and The Vermont Studio Center. Koelblinger holds an MFA in Photography from the Tyler School of Art and a BFA in Sculpture from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

www.sharonkoelblinger.com

Benedict Scheuer is an interdisciplinary artist listening to the subjects of his daily life. Today, these subjects include the flower and vegetable garden that he grows with his boyfriend, glasses of water, his body (physical, mental, and spiritual), psychedelics, clouds, and photographs. Believing that truths profoundly reveal themselves through mindful attention,

Scheuer embraces an intuitive making that favors feelings, improvisation, and play taken very seriously. Emerging from this process is a colorful palette and the intersection of mediums ranging from watercolor drawings, soft and hard sculpture, photography, video, journaling, songwriting, and performance. Scheuer is currently located in Columbus, Ohio where he is studying to receive an MFA in Visual Art from the Ohio State University.

www.benedictscheuer.com

Lauren Leving is a Chicago-based curator and arts administrator currently working as the Exhibitions Manager at Wrightwood 659. She holds a Master's in Museum & Exhibition Studies from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She has worked as the Curatorial Fellow for Hyde Park Art Center, at 6018North, and in commercial galleries in both Chicago and New Orleans. She is interested in promoting equity and inclusion within art spaces, and is deeply invested in using programming as a resource to reduce barriers to access for marginalized communities. Her research investigates the ways the intersections of materiality and pedagogy shape artistic and personal identities.