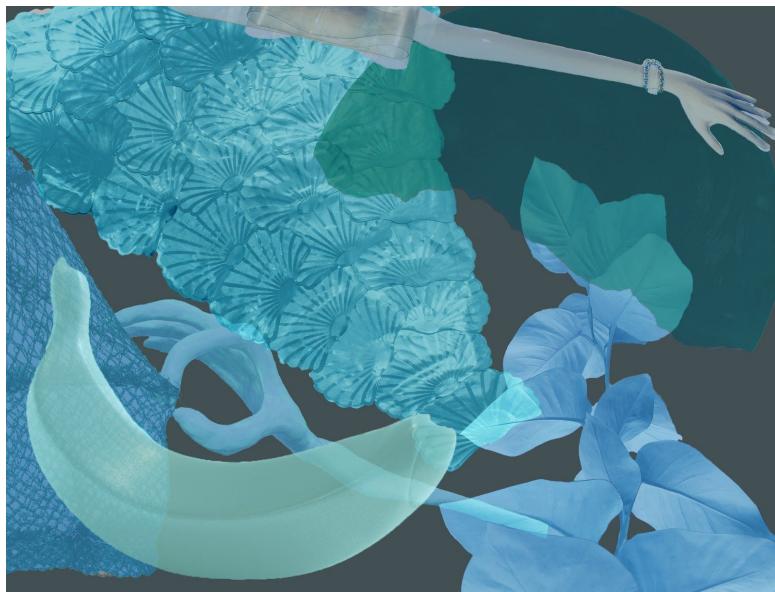


## MATERIAL GIRLS: *in•ti•mate*

December 7–14, 2018

Random Access Gallery  
Smith Hall, #117, University Pl  
Syracuse, New York 13244

Opening Reception  
Friday, December 7, 2018  
5-8pm



"In its expression through language, intimacy relies heavily on the shifting registers of unspoken ambivalence," writes Lauren Berlant, on the centrality of intimation—the act of indicating or making something known in an indirect way—to intimacy. Intimacy and closeness reduce abstract concepts and feelings to immediate bodily metaphors (i.e. cold feet, a stiff upper lip, etc.) and social relations (i.e. mother and child, lovers, etc.) These shorthands provide a framework that makes our experiences, and therefore the experiences of others, comprehensible. They allow the possibility of empathy: to understand and be understood, see and be seen, love and be loved in return.

The desire to be close can open new spaces and even usurp existing relations; it is a powerful impulse that renders us vulnerable to larger institutional powers and to one another. As we move closer, the bigger picture inevitably becomes fuzzier. In seeking comfort, we shrink our world to private spaces, while the social forces and problems of living "out there", in the public sphere, continue to shape our stories. We are presented with powerful, often exclusionary, cultural narratives in which notions of intimacy are tied up in the act of possession- i.e. subsuming the context in which the object of affection exists. But further, when we seek to close the distance between one another, we risk losing the distinctiveness that was initially alluring. With distance we lose detail, but with closeness we lose form and perspective.

In *in•ti•mate*, the six core members of MATERIAL GIRLS present sculptural and digital works around themes of intimacy and context, paired with a collaborative video work titled *Deep background*. The works in the exhibition circle around desire, intimacy, and indulgence, troubling and troubled by the inherent distance between distinct beings and bodies. Laura Marks describes the erotic as "the ability to oscillate between near and far... the able to become an object with and for the world, and to return to being a subject in the world." Moving discursively through context and contingency, the collaborative video and the individual pieces swing between near and far, drawing close for the promise of intimate understanding and receding to maintain perspective.

### *Deep background*

Composed of videos shared between the six core members of MATERIAL GIRLS in a group chat, *Deep background* uncovers a series of moments that intimate to a vast, intangible web of artistic influences, ideas, and feelings. Here artistic labor is shown as a slow accumulation of these everyday occurrences—a network formed of collaboration, littered with misdirections and dead-ends—in stark opposition to the modernist lighting bolt of inspiration from nowhere that strikes a singular genius (“Eureka!”). Installed in the back room of Random Access Gallery, “Deep background” provides a parallel channel of information to the artworks installed in the main gallery, displaying that which has been lovingly collected, utilized, rendered opaque, or discarded entirely in the artistic process.

### **Biography**

MATERIAL GIRLS is a feminist collective of sculptors and digital artists formed in 2016. Founded by Cameron Cameron, Devra Freelander, Hilliary Gabryel, Claire Lachow, Gracelee Lawrence and Rachael Starbuck, MATERIAL GIRLS organized in response to their communal frustration at the lack of representation for non-male sculptors in the art world.

Each individual member of MATERIAL GIRLS retains a vibrant and active independent studio practice, but they come together to collaborate on site-specific installations and curatorial projects. These exhibitions highlight both their own work and the work of other artists in their extended network. They are committed to providing an inclusive platform for female-identifying, non-binary, and femme artists and thinkers to make and share work, foster conversation, and support one another through our practice. MATERIAL GIRLS' greater mission is to continuously expand their global network of artists.

MATERIAL GIRLS have co-authored immersive installations, presented curatorial projects, and exhibited works at SPRING/BREAK Art Show (New York, NY & Brooklyn, NY); SVA M.A. Curatorial Practices @ the Pfizer Building (Brooklyn, NY); No Vacancy 3 by ALT ESC (Brooklyn, NY); Trestle Projects (Brooklyn, NY); the Church Troy (Troy, NY); the Museum of Human Achievement (Austin, TX); and Sadie Halie Projects (Minneapolis, MN.)

### **About Random Access Gallery**

Random Access Gallery's exhibitions, performances, artist talks, and panel discussions offer a space for broadening the scope of interdisciplinary collaboration and experimentation in contemporary creative practices. Through dynamic curatorial initiatives and inclusivity, Random Access Gallery brings together local, national, and international artists for critical conversations. Random Access is located in the historic Smith Hall in Syracuse, New York and is funded through the generous contributions of Syracuse University's School of Art and CASP.