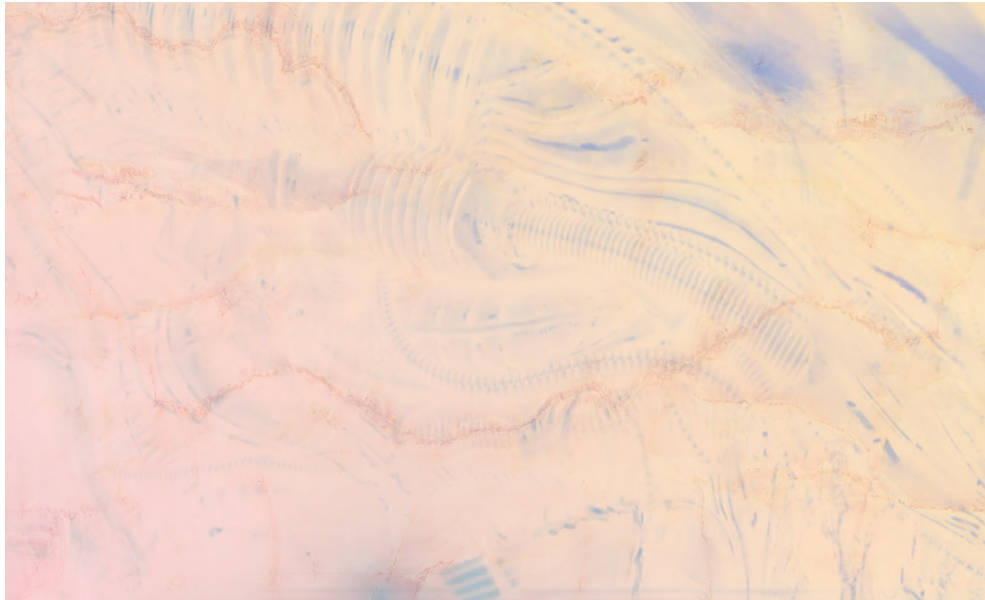


MATERIAL GIRLS: *xenomorphs*

SPRING/BREAK Art Show 2018: A Stranger Comes to Town

March 6–12, 2018



The desires of female and non gender-conforming bodies have been historically feared and regarded as transgressing the boundaries of the “natural order” — cast as eternal strangers in the world of men. This fear is explicitly explored in Ridley Scott’s *Alien* (1979), in which pregnancy and birth take on a horrifying dimension after a male crew member becomes the alien queen’s unwilling host. This “birth” scene has remained seared in the popular imagination for its violence on a traditionally male ideal: the autonomous individual with strict bodily boundaries. As Barbara Creed states in her essay ‘*Alien and the Monstrous-Feminine*’, “We can see [the film’s] ideological project as an attempt to shore up the symbolic order by constructing the feminine as an imaginary ‘other’ which must be repressed and controlled in order to secure and protect the social order.” The titular alien queen is called the Xenomorph, translated from Greek to mean “strange form”.

Fear of the formless and fluid stems from a desire to maintain distance and borders, a practice in retaining power for those who already possess it. But there is strength in the formless for its ability to seep, flow, infiltrate, contaminate, and transgress artificial boundaries. The outpouring of emotions, sexuality, softness, empathy, bodily fluids (milk, blood, tears, etc.) that are associated with non-male bodies threaten fragile bodily border walls, which are needed to cleanly demarcate the seeing “subject” from the seen “object”. Donna Haraway, in her essay ‘*Situated Knowledges*’, provides a feminist framework to understand this condition: “Objects are boundary projects. But boundaries shift from within; boundaries are very tricky.”

In *xenomorphs*, the six core members of MATERIAL GIRLS will present sculptural and digital works with tricky boundaries in conversation with one another; drawing upon themes of alien sci-fi fantasy to destabilize the fixity of the human figure, digital spaces, and everyday objects, invoking transgressive visual tropes, such as transparency, reflection, and cavities, which challenge the closed “body” of their own forms, flowing into one another and their environment. The space of the exhibition is scored with an original soundpiece by MATERIAL GIRLS, *we feel an affinity*, featuring familiar pop songs elongated into sweeping soundscapes, and punctuated by recitations of texts by Virginia Woolf, Lydia Davis, Rosemarie Waldrop, Helene Cixous, Siri Hustvedt, Patti Smith, Laura U. Marks, Annie Dillard, Max Ritvo, D.W. Winnicott, Murasaki Shikibu, and William James. Together, the presentation of these works culminate to form a kind of heterogeneous body: porous, manifold, and generative; reflective of the makers’ shared interests in tactility and bodily awareness of space as a feminist undertaking.

Biography:

MATERIAL GIRLS is a nonlocal collective of six female-identifying artists formed in 2016. They have shown work nationally at SPRING/BREAK BKLYN IMMERSIVE, Brooklyn NY (2017); Sadie Halie Projects, Minneapolis MN (2017); Trestle Projects, Brooklyn NY (2017); Alt Esc: No Vacancy 3, Brooklyn NY (2017); and the Museum of Human Achievement, Austin TX (2018). Their work focuses on the power of objects and the negotiation between digital and physical space, as well as the facilitation of a supportive network for female-identified artists. MATERIAL GIRLS core members are Cameron Cameron, Devra Freeland, Hilliary Gabryel, Claire Lachow, Gracelee Lawrence, and Rachael Starbuck.

Individual Bios:

Cameron Cameron (b. 1991, Texas) received her BFA from the University of Texas at Austin in 2014, attended Virginia Commonwealth University Summer Studio Program in 2015 and is a MFA candidate (2018) at the University of California, Los Angeles. Cameron uses sculptural interventions to compensate for generic imagery, and questions how the mundane may represent the feeling of loss or longing around the disorder of the day-to-day. She has participated in Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Ox-Bow School of Art, Grin City Collective Residency, and the Art Students League of New York. cameron-cameron.com

Devra Freeland (b. 1990, New York) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She received her BA from Oberlin College and her MFA from Rhode Island School of Design. Freeland is the co-founder of MATERIAL GIRLS, and has participated in the Arctic Circle Residency (2017), Socrates Sculpture Park Emerging Artist Fellowship (2017), Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Workspace Residency (2016-2017), Spring/Break Art Show (2017), and the Virginia Commonwealth University Summer Studio Program (2013). devrafreeland.com

Hilliary Gabryel (b. 1991, Lynchburg, Virginia) lives and works in Queens, NY. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2013. She is the co-founder of MATERIAL GIRLS and acted as co-founder of the interdisciplinary Ridgewood, Queens based project space ERA VI VII VI between 2014-2016. Her work has been shown in New York, NY; Austin, TX; Minnesota, MN; Richmond, VA. Residencies include the Wassaic Project (2017), ASMBLY Session #1 (2017), and VCU Summer Studio Program (2013). hkgabryel.com

Claire Lachow (b. 1989, New York) is an artist and writer. Lachow received her B.A. from Oberlin College in 2011, and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She has been published in Foundations Magazine and the Atlas Review. Selected exhibitions include Local Host Gallery (2017), Trestle Gallery (2015), M2 Projects (2015), Schema Projects (2014), the White Castle Presents (2014), and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Cleveland (2010). clairelachow.com

Gracelee Lawrence (b. 1989, North Carolina) recently returned from Thailand where she was a visiting artist at Chiang Mai University. She received her MFA in Sculpture + Extended Media at the University of Texas at Austin in 2016 and her BA in Sculpture from Guilford College in 2011. She is a co-founder of Pig and Pony Gallery and a contributing writer for the International Sculpture Center Blog. She has shown work internationally and was a 2016-17 Luce Scholars Fellow, a recipient of the 2015 UMLAUF Prize, the 2013 Eyes Got It Prize, and the 2011-12 Ella Fountain Pratt Emerging Artist Grant. graceleelawrence.com

Rachael Starbuck (b. 1988, Florida) is currently living and working in Austin, TX. Starbuck received her MFA in Studio Art from the University of Texas at Austin in 2017 and her BFA in Sculpture + Extended Media from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2011. She has been a resident at ACRE Projects, The Contemporary Artists Center at Woodside, The Wassaic Project and The Vermont Studio Center and has shown work in Richmond, VA, Providence, RI, Chicago, Austin, Houston, New York and London. rachaelstarbuck.com