

ROMAN ROAD

PRESS RELEASE

MIA DUDEK and ALIX MARIE

MDAM

Private View:

Wednesday 26 April 2017, 6pm – 9pm

Exhibition:

Thursday 27 April – Friday 26 May 2017

Opening Hours:

Wednesday – Friday, 10am – 6pm

Saturday, 12pm – 5pm and by appointment

Roman Road is pleased to present *MDAM*, a duo exhibition by Mia Dudek and Alix Marie, two recent graduates from the Royal College of Art, London. The exhibition addresses themes of postgenderism and considers how humans are progressively losing contact with the physical body through the increasing automation of sexual pleasure.

With her exhibited works in *MDAM*, Mia Dudek investigates the idea of a broken physicality between individuals. As visitors enter the gallery through the open passage, on each side of the void is a part of a photograph by Dudek representing an abstracted, fragmented body that has been split into two, detaching and reformalising it into new structures. The veins in the depicted model's pale skin conjure a sense of fragility and allude to a translucent and corporeal surface that has sensitivity to touch. Directly after, visitors are confronted with *Body Recast III* (2017), a large concrete wall through which Dudek has echoed the texture of the skin, metamorphosing and embodying sensory consciousness to an unyielding, inanimate object. She has created holes through the sculpture, which connote a sense of the physicality being broken and a rupture in the barrier that allows for human interconnectivity. At the same time, these elements suggest 'glory holes', holes located in partition walls made to facilitate anonymous sex between humans, and generate further a discussion of detached sexuality.

Beyond Dudek's wall, we see the idea of humans losing touch and emotional connectivity further explored in Alix Marie's recent sculptural works created by using and casting various Japanese sex toys. For her *Pharmacopornographic Relic* (2017), Marie has employed one of the chemicals used to process photographic film, growing a double dildo out of photographic bleach crystals. She is currently researching into mass-produced anthropomorphic objects and the impact of sex technology on society. Looking at dildos and flesh lights in particular, which are machine-made objects designed to resemble the look and feel of male and female genitalia, Marie exposes the artificiality and evolution of these devices. The exhibition includes two snake-like figures; the curvy shapes of serpent bodies are mimicked in ribbed ventilation pipes and the heads are made from inside-out flesh lights, revealing the 3D interior of such objects devised to imitate a woman's vagina. While Marie's *Eve* (2017), the first of these pieces is shown on the floor, her *Lilith* (2017) is mounted on the wall and resembles a fountain as water spurts from the snake's end into a chemical waste barrel. A substance known as a wetting agent, another chemical used in photographic film processing, has been employed to create foam in the barrel and at once a sexual double entendre linked to photography.

The use of dildos and other sexual prosthetics by both female and male bodies essentially curtails the hegemonic male aura of these objects. As Donna Haraway suggests in her essay *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985), the model of a post-gender world will be oblivious to patriarchal views on sex and gender and can potentially help to recode our language to initiate a more free and equal environment. As society continues to evolve and with the increasing automation of sexual pleasure, it can be said that we have begun to deconstruct the binary of traditional gender roles and to rethink perspectives on sexuality. *MDAM* presents the work of two young artists who investigate and respond to such changing notions of the body and human connectivity in our world today.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Alix Marie (b.1989) is a French artist whose work, engaging with the mediums of photography and sculpture, is rooted in her explorations and notions of architecture and the body. She graduated from Central Saint Martins College in 2011 with a first class honours degree in fine art and later completed an MA in photography at the Royal College of Art, where she received a distinction for her dissertation work about photography and fetish. Her work considers the photograph as object and she continues to take her practice forward into new directions by investigating the medium's potential for materiality and three-dimensionality. Marie has featured in exhibitions around Europe, Asia and in Morocco, and has taken part in a number of international residencies. She recently won the 2017 Portfolio Review Award and will have a solo show as part of the Düsseldorf Photo Weekend in 2018.

Mia Dudek (b.1989) is a Polish artist based in London whose practice is directly influenced by mass housing constructions and the global phenomena of urbanisation. She explores existential encounters of the body and the alienation of the individual within urban fabrics. Dudek graduated from the London College of Communication in 2012 with a first class honours degree in photography and recently completed an MA at the Royal College of Art, London, as a recipient of a scholarship award for her distinctive portfolio. Through her practice she investigates the idea of assemblage and connection between synthetic materials and different photographic techniques. Dudek's work has been featured in a number of exhibitions around Europe as well as in publications, including *24 Artists to Watch* (Modern Painters, December 2014).

ABOUT ROMAN ROAD

Roman Road was founded in 2013 by Marisa Bellani and initially began as a project space. The peculiarity of the premises has had a direct impact on the gallery's programme since its beginning. Tall and with a small footprint, the space led the director to challenge artists to employ the architectural elements in order to develop or restructure a body of work. Artists have frequently been asked to use the exhibition as a medium and have managed to transform the gallery room into a unique work of art. In 2014, the building underwent refurbishment to instate an additional private viewing space that gathers varied works by the gallery's represented artists, which are viewable by appointment. Since completing this renovation in 2015, Roman Road has established a qualitative programme, including participations at art fairs, and has seen its represented artists, especially Antony Cairns, become internationally recognised both by institutions and collectors.

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Mia Dudek, *Casing I*, 2017. LFOHDUFKLYDOSULQW+DKQHPKOHDUWD, 68 x 72 cm, edition of 5. Courtesy of Roman Road and the artist. © Mia Dudek