Soft Hardware
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Co-curated with Anaïs Castro

Across painting, sculpture, and installation, Soft Hardware considers making as a sustained form of thinking. The participating artists attend closely to material properties and to the accumulated knowledge embedded in processes of cutting, carving, joining, layering, weaving, painting, drawing, shaping, and assembling. Their works make visible the decisions that produce them: the adjustments, repetitions, hesitations, and embellishments through which form gradually comes into being.

Soft Hardware proposes a productive tension between material and method. The title suggests pliability and tactility, forms of knowledge that come from muscle memory, while also evoking the structures that allow things to function: the armatures, joins, supports, frameworks, and systems that hold an object together. It points toward an understanding of objecthood as both constructed and lived: things whose very existence depends upon accumulated gestures, techniques, and acts of maintenance.

The exhibition is particularly attentive to what happens when surface and structure are understood not as separate domains, but as interdependent forms of material intelligence. Ornament emerges as a language of pattern, embellishment, repetition, rhythm, and display. Through these formal vocabularies, surfaces register labour and discipline, carry inherited forms of knowledge, preserve cultural memory, and encode histories of looking and making. Repetition, in particular, becomes both a method and a repository: a way of transmitting gesture, accumulating experience, and keeping knowledge alive through the body and the hand.

This attention to the act of making also shifts our understanding of infrastructure, which exceeds the monumental or the architectural. In the exhibition, it exists also as the intimate, provisional, concealed, or the handmade: a seam, a support, a repeated mark, a joint, a carefully calibrated surface. It is found in the systems that allow forms to stand, but also in the habits and techniques through which artists sustain their practices. What holds a work together may be as materially consequential as daily routines that bring an artist into their studio.

Across the exhibition, form is supported, elaborated, reinforced, repeated, and transformed through material decisions. The works resist the distinction between thinking and making, proposing instead that knowledge can reside in the hand, in repetition, and in sustained attention to matter.

As the first in a two-part project celebrating Franz Kaka's tenth anniversary, Soft Hardware reflects on a decade of the gallery's engagement with practices that approach contemporary art through material experimentation, formal invention, and rigorous processes of making. Rather than offering a retrospective account, the exhibition looks outward, bringing together distinct artistic languages to consider what it means to construct, sustain, and transform an object. In this sense, the exhibition begins with a deceptively simple proposition: that making is itself a way of knowing—and that the things we make continue to carry the traces of who, how and why they were made.

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