



VSVSVS, Not together, but alongside, 2015.

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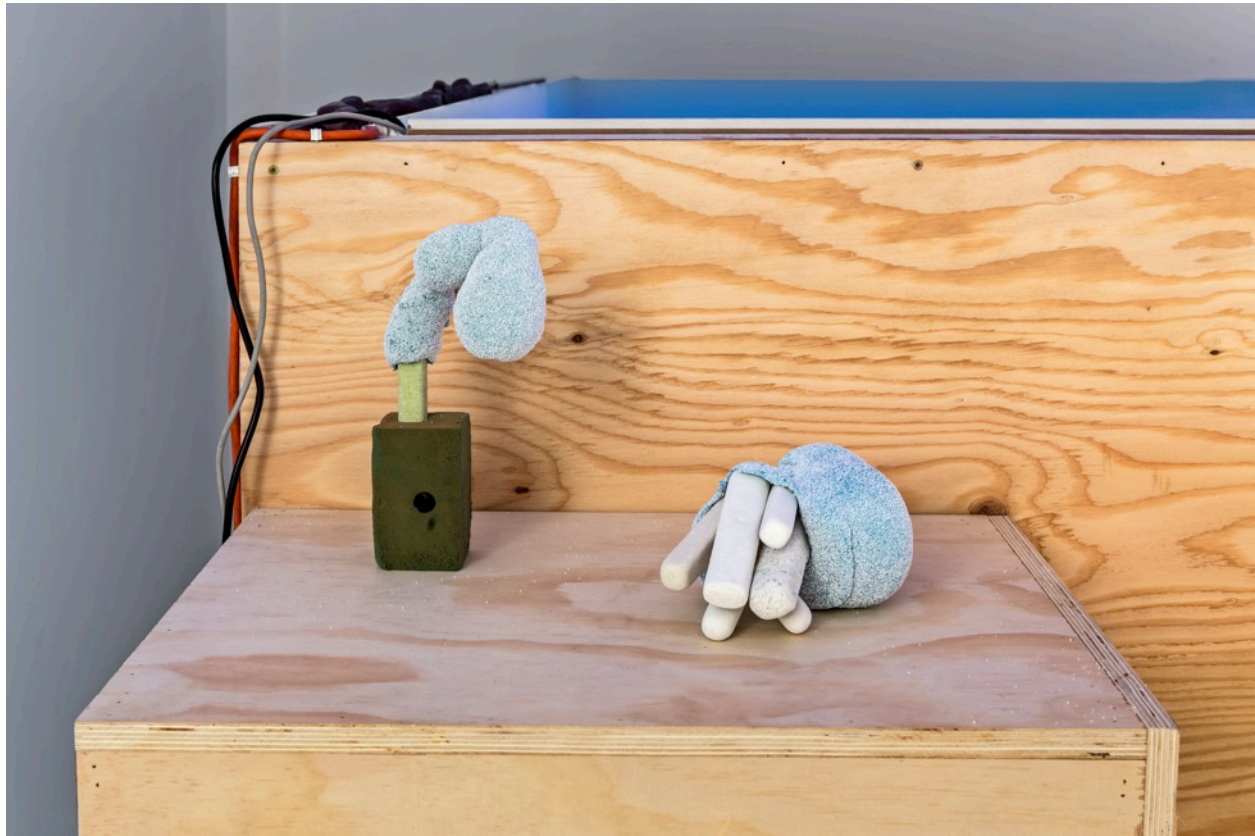
Karen Kraven Flip Flop, Punch Front

Opening Friday 29 May 2015 at 7PM
Exhibition 29 May – 25 July 2015

Front gallery:

VSVSVS *Not together, but alongside*

29 May – 25 July 2015



VSVSVS, *Not together, but alongside*, 2015

Not together, but alongside explores the potentiality of relationships between the viewer and the artist, the collective and the individual, the gallery and the studio. In VSVSVS' large scale installation sprawling through the front gallery of Mercer Union, platforms become seats, objects perform and the potentiality of action plays out. Their material exploration and unfixed nature in the work conflates the formal and the comedic. The disparate elements that comprise the installation further emphasize its makers as a group of individuals with different ideas and art practices working together. That spirit and the process of discovering alternate viewpoints extends to the gallery visitor, because the experience is a negotiation of both physical bodies in space and what it means to assess or determine: to do or undo, the separation between the studio or gallery, and experiment or art object.

VSVSVS is a seven-person collective and artist-run centre based out of a warehouse in the Portlands. Formed in 2010, the groups activities encompass collective art making including drawings, video works, sculpture, installation and performance, a residency program and exhibition space, as well as individual studio practices. Members include Wallis Cheung, Ryan Clayton, Anthony Cooper, James Gardner, Stephen McLeod, Laura Simon and Miles Stemp. Recent exhibitions include Katzman Contemporary, Toronto; Centre Bang, Chicoutimi; Niagara Artist's Centre, St. Catherine's (both 2015), *Taking [a] part*, Mercer Union, *More Than Two (Let It Make Itself)*, Power Plant (both Toronto, 2014); and *space mods*, Cambridge Galleries, Preston (2013).



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Back gallery:

Karen Kraven *Flip Flop, Punch Front*

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Karen Kraven, installation view of *Flip Flop, Punch Front*, 2015

Karen Kraven's works set up unexpected encounters between sculptures and images, uncanny resemblances and misleading juxtapositions. *Flip Flop, Punch Front* continues Kraven's interest in sport with an exploration of adornment, performance and conceptions of gender, class, race and nation state. The title of the exhibition refers to specific moves within gymnastics where action, stasis and the ability to push oneself manifests through composed performance. Focusing on excerpted elements of gesture, costume, decorated nails and leotards, and unbridled conviction, Kraven gathers bodily forms and images prompting the question of what is missing from the action.

Karen Kraven received her MFA from Concordia University in 2012, where she was the recipient of the Dale & Nick Tedeschi Fellowship, and her BFA from the Ontario College of Art and Design in 2006. Recent solo exhibitions include the Institute for Contemporary Art at the Maine College of Art, Portland (2015), *Razzle Dazzle Sis Boom Bah*, Darling Foundry, Montreal (2014), *A Mucker and a Grinder*, Parisian Laundry (2013) and *As Above, So Below*, Centre Clark, Montreal (2014). Her work has also been shown at Centre Dare-Dare, Montreal (2010), Leonard & Ellen Bina Gallery, Montreal (2011) and Blackwood Gallery, University of Toronto Mississauga (2011). She has participated in artist's residencies at The Banff Centre and with Reverse Pedagogy, Venice. From 2013-2016, she will have a Montreal Artist's Creation Studio at the Darling Foundry, Montreal. Kraven currently lives and works in Montreal.

All images courtesy of the artists and Mercer Union. Photography by Toni Hafkenscheld.



Karen Kraven, installation view of *Flip Flop, Punch Front*, 2015



Karen Kraven, *Aby*, Velour spandex, paint, mdf and thread, 2015