

Stewart Uoo

No Tears in Rain

21 March – 23 April 2014

Opening reception Friday, 21 March, 7-9 pm

On his way to Europe, there are moments when Stewart Uoo imagines himself a character in Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants, followed by moments when that sentimental image dissolves under the influence of more violent and real abstractions, and the only possible identification is with the pants and their money-like movement that infects everything.

For his first exhibition at Galerie Buchholz, Uoo presents new sculptures that take their forms from security gates commonly used to protect ghetto properties in New York. While these welded armatures may channel the mutation of Soho Minimalism into late-80s squatter style under the effects of economic crisis, harder drugs and other contagions, most of us are of course seeing them on screens, where their urban hardness poses like a selfie: they don't want to be only hard, they want to be rampant. Uoo has applied a sort of sci-fi horror make-up to the window gates, using silicone, paint, tufts of human hair and stains of trompe l'oeil rust, and there is something Paul Thek-like in the oozing of simulated flesh and slime within formalist iron maidens. Sculptural special effects mimic and travesty the disciplinary rhythms of the metropolitan infrastructure, which becomes – as in a Cronenberg film – yet another vector for erotic communication.

In addition to the sculptures, Uoo has produced a new series of photographs shot with Heji Shin. Seeking an intimate atmosphere Uoo invited Shin, an artists known for her editorial photography, who has also worked illustrating sex education manuals for teenagers in the past. These images are modeled by Juliana Huxtable, Dese Escobar and Eliot Glass, figures and shapers of the current New York club/social media/art/fashion context. Counter-normative desires converge around the living-death of the fashion image, whose waning powers are at least good for a troubling moment of transmission and transit. While “expand or die” has become the New York art world mantra for today, expand and die is closer to the truth: blowing-up, whether on the market or on Instagram, can also be a way of exploding identity within the orgasmic cycles of crisis capitalism. Here, gender, race, beauty and success are also special effects, or the hallucinatory flashbacks of a world that may have already ended. Constructing abstract bodies or avatars to people the ruins, transgender desire is now moving in the same channel as science fiction.

We would like to thank Heji Shin, Julien Alleyne, Michael Anthony, Marcus Chang, Joey George, James Giles, Erin Grant, Alex Gvojic, Rian Hart, Kana, Edward Lowrenz, Sherry Matthews, Michael Potvin, John Kelsey.