

# OVERDUIN & CO.

## PRESS RELEASE

Oliver Payne  
"A Brief History of Slime"  
artist talk: Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 7pm  
Oliver Payne in conversation with Nick Forgacs

Overduin & Co. is pleased to present "A Brief History of Slime," by Oliver Payne.

### ***What is California?***

*California is the funnel and the filter between the whole of America and the rest of the world.*

*California contains Hollywood, Disneyland, Haight and Ashbury, Silicon Valley, The Valley, Gangster Rap, Liberals, Neo Nazis, surfing, pornography, weed, the mall, the mountains, the freeway, the forest, prisons, millionaires and billionaires.*

*California is by far the largest producer of pop culture in the world.*

### ***What is Puke?***

*Puke is a slang word meaning Regurgitation. The first recorded use of the word Puke was by William Shakespeare in his play - As You Like It. written in 1599. However, the word remained relatively obscure until it rose in popularity in the 1960s.*

*By 1977, the cartoon depiction of a puking punk was a crude but effective way of illustrating a rejection of oppressive societal values. A sickness in the body politic. A human, visceral and violent reaction to inhuman ideas.*

*But by the end of the 1980s, Puke had come to represent the effects of overconsumption.*

### ***What are Nukes?***

*A nuclear weapon is called a nuke. Like Nike and puke. Nukes are the bomb.*

*Since the invention of the atomic bomb, the modern world has been defined by the knowledge that life on earth can be eradicated at the press of a button.*

*Over the decades, the perpetual feeling of being under threat of nuclear destruction and the precarious uncertainty of the future of the human race has had a profound effect on the collective public psyche.*

*A perpetual stalemate known as Mutually Assured Destruction has served as a proxy for some sort of faith or spiritual understanding. Under this precarious stalemate, Nuclear War became distant, abstract, and theoretical. It took place on paper and in computer simulations.*

*Cold War Paranoia was a relic from a world with less stuff and more time.*

### ***What is Slime?***

*Slime is also known as goop, gak, oobleck, Ooze and ectoplasm.*

*Slime has long been a source of fascination for mankind. First as a natural phenomenon in the physical world produced by slime molds and amphibians, then later as a man-made substance that has its origins in the development of synthetic polymer and plastic materials starting in the 1920s.*

*Slime and Silly-Putty were byproducts of the emerging age of plastics. A form of run-off or exhaust produced on the path to creating polystyrene, polyester, polyvinyl alcohol, and polyurethane skateboard wheels.*

*But the first mainstream example of man-made slime for entertainment purposes was in the 1958 film, The Blob. A big red blob terrorizes American townsfolk in movie theaters, diners, a doctor's office and a romantic look out point.*

*Some people believed the Blob represented the red menace of communism, others thought it was a metaphor for consumerism.*

*More important than either hypothesis is the fact that this film is a very early example of the Teenagers being the heroes. The adults and authority figures are largely unhelpful and generally get in the way. Shown as part of a double feature in drive-ins, The Blob was for teenagers, and about teenagers.*

*Mattel Toy Company released their slime toy in 1976. This was the first pre-packaged, raw slime and it came in a miniature plastic trash can.*

*In its most simple form, Slime isn't a toy like other toys. It's not a model, replica, or a pretend version of a thing. It's the thing itself. It's not a game. It has no rules on how it's used. It has no modes or functions. It cannot be turned off or on. Whatever it does, it's doing it all the time.*

*It has no appendages, articulation points or accessories. It serves no purpose but it's neither decorative or ornamental.*

*It simply 'is'. Slime is just slime for the sake of being slime. It's a purely tactile and sensory object to be appreciated for how it feels rather than what it does.*

*Cool and clammy. Slime goes splat.*

*The potential possibility of making even more money from packaging plastic waste meant that this golden age of pure, unadulterated slime could not last. Mattel soon offered a range of slime containing various gruesome shaped plastic objects and even a slime based board game.*

*People were wallowing in slime. The following decade saw the rise of children television channel Nickelodeon and their slime based game shows, starting with the Canadian 'You Can't Do That on Television' in 1981. Children watching at home, dreamed of being immersed and engulfed by torrents of slime.*

*Slime and a slimy ghost named Slimeer were prominently featured in the hugely successful, 1984 film, Ghostbusters. He Slimed me.*

*Pretty soon, many more slimes met the market. Nickelodeon produced Gak. Ghostbusters had ectoplasm play-gel. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles released retromutagen ooze. Mattel incorporated Slime into their Masters of The Universe line of toys.*

*All these new slimes had their own backstories, special properties and purpose.*

*As the decade got more slimy, it also underwent a sort of mutation.*

*A Level 5 meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor in 1979 and the Level 7 disaster at Chernobyl in 1986 puked up an image of radioactive nuclear waste and visions of mutants that appeared first as traumatic and horrific and eventually as a cartoon.*

*The reality was crusty and rusty, corrosive and leaky, the cartoon rendition was bright and bouncy, tubby and drippy.*

*Nuclear-waste, mutants and slime were now inextricably connected and together contributed to Gross being the dominant trend in children's toys, cartoons and candy throughout the late 1980s and for most of the 1990s. The themes were grotesque, putrid and rancid but the presentation and feel was seductive, silly, safe, slick, fluorescent and funny.*

*Slime was largely absent from pop culture for the first decade of the new millennium as it failed to find its place in the rapidly changing digitalized world. But echoes of its form could be found everywhere. Right angles were officially out and every appliance, device, contraption and personal belonging became an ergonomic blobject.*

*Slime finally found its home on the internet in around 2016 on YouTube and Etsy. The internet afforded a new generation to reimagine slime as a squashy stress reliever in the form of ASMR videos. Watching somebody manipulate slime with their hands produced in viewers something very similar to the sensation of doing it themselves. Slime making tutorial videos followed as did a new market for bedroom slime creators to sell their home made slime products. Slime had lost its radioactive image.*

*Slime was now sweet and soft, pink, and purple. It evokes cupcakes and rainbows and unicorns, emojis and gifs and other digital detritus*

**Oliver Payne** (b. 1977, London) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. He received his BFA from Kingston University of Fine Art in London. Solo exhibitions have been organized by Gavin Brown's Enterprise in New York, Herald St in London, Frederico Vavassori in Milan, Nansuka Underground in Tokyo, Aishonanzuka in Hong Kong, and 356 Mission in Los Angeles. Payne's work has been exhibited internationally at the Serpentine Gallery in London, the Kunsthalle Zurich, The National Museum of Contemporary Art in Oslo, MoMA PS1 in New York, the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Payne's work is included in the permanent collections of the Tate Britain in London, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, and The National Museum of Contemporary Art in Oslo. Payne is also the publisher of Safe Crackers fanzine, and organizer of a series of performances titled, "Chill Out" in which he requires all mobile phone and internet systems to be turned off in order to allow the public to immerse in a listening session for "Chill Out," the concept album by late-80s British house band KLF. The most recent iteration of "Chill Out" was hosted by the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

For more information and images, please contact the gallery at [office@overduinandco.com](mailto:office@overduinandco.com). Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10am to 5pm or by appointment.