

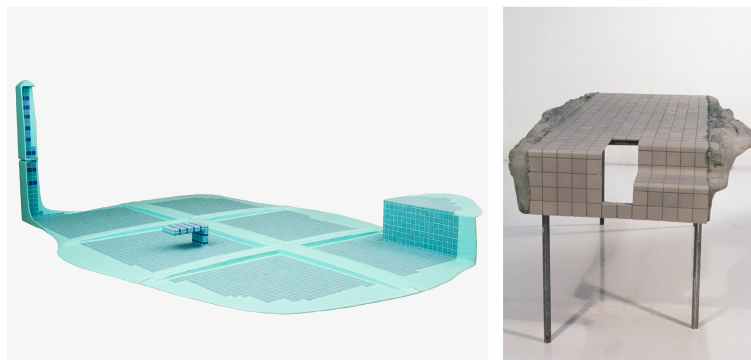
01 Sep 2023

Tishan Hsu
skin-screens-2
September 1st - October 21st 2023

Tishan Hsu's practice conveys an embodied technology, centered on the cognitive and physical effects of transformative technologies on our lives. To address these issues, Hsu consciously chooses to use traditional media, such as painting and sculpture, which evoke a feeling of 'slowness' that resonates with the viewer's direct physical experience in perceiving the works. The works create a sense of illusion of body and screen, while at the same time becoming objects in their own right. It is in this paradoxical situation that a hybrid experience of two and three-dimensional spaces begins to take shape. Often, Hsu's works seem to float, at times hovering over the floor, detaching from the walls or mounting on wheels. Their curved corners, already introduced in the 80s, feel like precursors to the app icons on our smartphones.

In *double-breath-green-2*, photographic imagery and organic shapes interact within a distorted screen landscape, which on a visual, and perhaps tactile level, recalls the skin. The screen as skin discloses our current state of communication, of looking at screens and getting enveloped in them, in order to be close and connected to each other: our bodies are consigned to these screens, trapped in them. In this way, *double-breath-green-2* also documents a historical shift from reading a written page to reading a screen. This development ties in to what Vilém Flusser described as the "techno-image": a type of image made possible by new technologies that poses as nothing but a picture while hiding its underlying conceptual character. The incapacity of viewers to decode such images is precisely what makes them effective. A colored glow emanates from the back, recalling the glow of computer screens in the dark. And already in the work's title, we can sense the type of split, or double character of the body that Hsu addresses. This body is interfaced with the screen, turning it into a body-screen.

tablet-skin-screen has been newly developed for Schmela Haus and takes up Hsu's continuing involvement with the idea of flatness, as in earlier works such as *Ooze* (1987, left) or *Walking Gray* (1980, right).



This large-scale installation features the recurring element of a modular grid, related both to developments in art history and to the more general question of how space



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itself is defined and constructed. Composed of modular tiles, the grid in *tablet-skin-screen* defines its own surface, while simultaneously birthing an object – moving from gridded surface to organic form. Hybrids between human and animal, cellular, micro and macro come together in the work. The modular grid also takes on the role of a mediator between body and architecture. In Hsu's exploration of the technological, the grid relates to computational mapping, and functions as a conceptual and visual basis for facial recognition and other data applications that measure and define the world we live in as bodies.

In *gray-zone-6*, the grid of facial recognition casts a net over a person's face, thereby producing and mapping this face in a screen within the larger screen of the surrounding space of the drawing. Placed under glass, the work itself is emblematic of a screen; a screen that itself is becoming organic in the emerging bulge of the frame. Drawing on Dura-Lar drafting film from both sides, Hsu creates another type of screen, reminiscent of past technologies. The nebulous shapes, still in the process of becoming, simulate a fleshly environment that speaks to the gut. A protuberance in the frame accentuates the work's object-like character, and implicates the frame itself in the work.

Tishan Hsu (b. 1951 in Boston, Massachusetts) spent his early years in Zürich and then grew up in Ohio, Wisconsin, Virginia, and New York. He studied environmental design and architecture at MIT and received his BSAD in 1973 and M.Arch in 1975. While at MIT, Hsu studied film at the Carpenter Center, Harvard University. In 1979, he moved to New York, where he currently resides. In New York, Hsu's works were first shown at Pat Hearn Gallery and in 1987 in a solo-exhibition at Leo Castelli. From 1985, his works have been exhibited extensively across the United States, Europe, Mexico, and Asia. From 1988-90, Hsu lived and worked in Cologne, Germany and from 2014-16 in Shanghai, China. Hsu has been a professor of visual arts at Sarah Lawrence College and a visiting professor at Pratt Institute and Harvard University.

Recent survey exhibitions have been on view at SculptureCenter, New York (2021) and Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2020) and Hsu has had solo shows at Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York (2021) and Empty Gallery, Hong Kong (2019). His work has been shown at the 58th Carnegie International: *Is it morning for you yet?* and the Venice Biennale: *The Milk of Dreams*(2022). In 2021, his work was included in the 13th Gwangju Biennale: *Minds Rising, Spirits Tuning*.

A selection of group exhibitions with his works includes the following institutions: Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas; Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (2023), Museum Brandhorst, Munich; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Leeum Museum of Art, Seoul; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz (2022); Museion, Bolzano; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2021).

