

The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis is proud to present an exhibition of works by the widely acclaimed American artist Richard Artschwager, in the first focused look at the artist's exploration of rubberized horsehair.

With an artistic career that spans almost fifty years, Richard Artschwager has established himself as one of the most widely acclaimed figures in the history of post-war American art. A true maverick who consistently eludes trends, Artschwager has constructed a powerful legacy that continues to resonate in the work of younger generations of artists.

Working across all media, Artschwager has long specialized in the relationship between perception and deception. This exhibition focuses on a material he has used throughout his career to explore the tactility of the visual experience: rubberized horsehair. These unusual works, produced over a thirty year period, depart from the crisp lines and sharp forms of his better-known Formica furniture works, blurring the clarity of sculptural form and throwing the object out of focus. They allow for what the artist has called a "perfect imprecision." A material commonly found in upholstery, rubberized horsehair is typically hidden from view underneath the soft edges of a sofa. Here, Artschwager reverses the relationship between an object and its raw materials, asking the inner-body of an object to become its own surface. His hairy silhouettes of life-size human figures seem to dance, float, climb, and rejoice; yet they remain faceless and out of reach. With forms that manage to be both recognizable and nameless at the same time, Artschwager complicates our sense of perception, rendering the accessible inaccessible.

In contrast to a contemporary art conversation weighed down by irony, strategy, and cool self-reflexivity, Artschwager's exhibition at the Contemporary foregrounds a sincere celebration of making and looking at objects and pictures.

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