

Molitor

Margaret Honda

Sculptures, Drawings

Opening:
31 October
6—9 pm

Exhibition:
1 November 2024 —
15 January 2025

Margaret Honda has developed a practice in which the historicity of objects, autobiography and process function as working materials. In the constellation of works that comprise *Sculptures, Drawings*, which developed independently from each other over the past seven years, this idiosyncratic approach comes to the fore. Following exhibitions centered around singular installations at the Art Institute of Chicago (2023) and the Carnegie Museum of Art (2019), Honda's first solo gallery exhibition in Europe offers a unique opportunity to trace connections between works, and across her oeuvre more broadly. Here, the rigorous and imaginative way in which Honda starts with materials, or moves towards them, is itself made palpable.

Honda's careful attention to materials often prompts an examination of how malleable methods of construction can be. Sometimes this begins with observation of the world around her, as in the mooring rope noticed while researching lacemaking in Venice, which led to stitching hemp in a punto in aria lace technique in *Lace* (2024). Or her dog's food and water bowls, which haven't been used since 1999, that Honda cast in a rubber reminiscent of a chew toy in the pair of works both entitled *Food Bowl and Water Bowl* (2024). There is an openness implicit in this approach, as alterations in scale or function serve to loosen a sense of fixity: attentiveness to how things are becomes a way to destabilize assumptions and facilitate a subtle rethinking. Honda's work is often spurred by curiosity about what something would look like—or more precisely, be like—as an object. For *Shoes* (2022), for instance, Honda wondered what Daisy Duck's shoes would be like if made to fit a domestic Pekin duck of the artist's height. Collaborating with a cobbler who typically makes character shoes for theme park actors, Honda also draws attention to histories of cultural production particular to Los Angeles, where she has lived and worked since 1995. *Food and Water Bowl* began as a project with the late Jack Brogan, a fabricator who collaborated with key figures in the history of Minimal, Postminimal, and Conceptual art. Brogan's practice influenced Honda's own artistic development, in particular her interest in demystifying and foregrounding the role of art production.

Honda's drawing practice also begins materially, and with a characteristic resourcefulness, in that her starting point is the paper itself—the quality, the number of sheets—that she has in the studio or on hand. After she was given a stack of cross-section paper, for instance, she was compelled to revisit the

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first 35 CT scans of a frog she used when creating the internal organs for an older work—frog (2019) in which she rendered a frog from a Bramantino painting in lifelike detail—and resulting here in *CAS-H-217695 0000-0034* (2024), presented in a binder on the gallery's mezzanine. Indeed *Sculptures, Drawings* offers a keen insight into Honda's investment in an atemporal and nonlinear approach to history, as she revisits previous artworks, her own biography, and modes of cultural production, folding them into the present. Crucially, Honda is convinced that an artwork, like all else in life, has no static or final form. As such, her interest in material is equally in its reverse—the dematerialization which she often takes as the beginning or continuation of a sculptural process, rather than its conclusion. In *Decompositions* (2024), a collection of childhood stuffed animals that had begun to disintegrate due to vinegar syndrome, are encased in Marvelseal—an aluminized material reminiscent of the silver packaging for rolls of film—in which Honda had previously encased a group of artworks that had been in storage in her *Marvelseal Work* (2020 - 2021). In turning to personal effects and memories as material, albeit obfuscated here, Honda imbues a minimalist visual language with a sense of identity historically eschewed by such aesthetic registers.

The way in which Honda engages the incorporeal—a kind of inverse materiality—is evident in the two groups of drawings that occupy the basement. In her *Optical Wipes* (2024) drawings, Honda makes an immaterial visual effect concrete by reproducing the array of patterns used to transition between two shots in a film as published in the 1946 edition of the *American Cinematographer Handbook and Reference Guide*. In her *Way Home Drawings* (2023), Honda indicates movements, rather than things, by tracing her routes home from school and work, in chronological order, from the mid-1960s until the present. The abstracted shapes that convey shifts between scenes and remembered routes each indicate a transitional state—a condition to which Honda's practice is closely attuned—as if to make concrete the at once ordinary and ineffable quality of passing through space and time. In other words, what it's like to be a part of the world.