

*Backwash*

Imogen Brent and Cameron Klavsen

25 Sep – 1 Nov 2025

The body fascinates because of its inner obscurities. Riddled with openings though it may be, a body is never truly penetrable; its interior phenomena remain irreducibly obscure. To call something a body is to grant it an inward mystery—and yet, bodies are never self-contained. They come into being by pressing against other bodies, enveloping one another, and trafficking fluids. There is something faintly infantile about the intellectual or artistic impulse to think of everything as a body, like the baby who must put everything in its mouth in order to know it. To embody the world is to imagine that it might be tasted, and to recognize that you yourself will also be devoured.

For the sculptures in *Backwash*, a two-person show by Imogen Brent and Cameron Klavsen, it is not enough to think of bodies themselves—we must think of the interactions that make them: *fold, enclose, whorl, pierce, clench, release; helix coils, whip lashes, lamina flutters, socket grips*. Respectively in metal and resin, Brent and Klavsen play out the kinds of animating tensions that are constantly unfolding within hidden layers of matter, or at invisible scales. Their exhibition makes palpable the fact that bodies are not objects but acts of shaping, patterns of pressure and release.

Brent's sculptures in steel, aluminium, and bronze reveal a piercing fascination with interior cavities and structures. Skeletal anatomy is evoked by the ethereal *To the quick*, whose title suggests dissection. If you feel tempted to poke a finger into this sculpture's central orifice, remember that its folds are actually hard and cold. Or if you'd rather prick your fingertip upon the needle-like spines dangling from *Faux Pocket*, beware—the delicate metal might give before your insistent flesh. In works like *Rear Sight (Nest)*, Brent's forms look more like weapons than organisms, strengthening their oscillation between violence and fragility. Without resolving easily into representation, her art stages an affective theater reminiscent of certain perilous insect erotics, like the praying mantis who approaches his mate knowing she will tear off his head. Desire is a risky encounter with forces that may destroy the body seeking them.

Where Brent dramatizes the piercing moment, Klavsen lingers in the swollen aftermath of exchange. His sculptures appear as transparent membranes, filled with juices and subjected to strange physical pressures. They sag from hanging points, or hover as if buoyed by invisible currents. Klavsen generates surfaces of unusual complexity, using mathematical simulation to model cerebral wrinkles that gather visceral force. *Rare Encounter (blush)* evokes the sort of soft-bodied sea creatures who hold their shape only when suspended in fluid. *Easy Comedown (Weathered Hide)* pulls us in

between sensuality and body horror, evoking baroque drapery as well as a mosquito distended with blood—an image whose sense of revulsion or rapture depends on which body you imagine inhabiting. One might even picture sucking the peach-colored liquid from within the thigh-like forms of a piece suggestively titled *With Greater Fear Than I Receive It*.

The two artists share a fascination with polarities of control and surrender. For Klavsén, this tension plays out along the axis of gravity, as his crystalline resin vessels appear to strain softly against the forces that shape and bind them. Control is innate in Brent's agile metalwork, especially in her precisely bent curves, while release comes in moments like the near-audible hiss of the steel spike that punctures a carapace in *Dead Heat*. Both artists are attentive to points of inflection, to the moments of genesis where matter turns back on itself, as in the double helix of Klavsén's *Torn Coil*. Ambiguities of scale make the exhibition feel at once embryonic and cosmic, while the show's title, *Backwash*, suggests the turbulent return of water from an inner sea. *It's not the ocean to drink*, one work reassures us, but the phrase rings ironic, for Brent and Klavsén attempt to hold forces of excess in sculpture—forces only the body is capable of taking in.

-Alex A. Jones

Imogen Brent (b. 1999, Sydney, Australia) resides and works in New York and earned her BFA from Pratt Institute in 2021. Solo and two-person exhibitions include Parent Company, with Max Popov, New York (2025); Kaleidoscope Gallery, with Max Popov, Brooklyn (2024); Pratt Institute, Brooklyn (2021). Group exhibitions include Cheremoya, Los Angeles (2025); Mery Gates, curated by Collin Clarke, Brooklyn (2025); Pop Up Gallery, curated by Klara Vertes, Queens, NY (2024); Harsh Collective, curated by Etta Harshaw, Brooklyn (2024); Intima, curated by Brianna Griffin, Brooklyn (2023).

Cameron Klavsén (b. 1992, Boston, Massachusetts) resides and works in New York. Klavsén earned his BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art. Solo and two-person exhibitions include *Changed Forever* (two person exhibition with Hernan Rivera Luque) Billman Gallery / Kaleidoscope, New York, 2025; *Degenerate Cinema*, The Mildred Complex(ity), Narrowsburg, NY, 2023; *Fishbowl* SPRING/BREAK Art Show, Los Angeles, CA, 2022. Group exhibitions include *Reduction to Satire (Reeuctio ad Saturam)*, New York, 2022.