

For her first solo exhibition at Bad Reputation, Diane Severin Nguyen presents six photographs along with an alteration of the gallery by installing a circular window to re-situate our vantage point from inside out.

Nguyen constructs photographic images as a means of material transfiguration, allowing the limitations of the lens and its consequent two-dimensional print to suspend a physical moment long enough to catalyze new tactilities and transformations. The materials are profane, plant-based, coagulated, metallic, sentimental and slippery; their labels and functions are ex-communicated in favor of a more urgent plausibility, a non-linguistic and speculative one. A dominant symbolic space is re-configured from a position of semiotic intimacy, the kind of closeness that words might be unable to sustain. Light is a transient prosthetic like sunset, iPhone flash, battery-powered LED, fire. The camera intervenes moments before the unbecoming of these temporary and excessively touched arrangements. Redemption is refuted by stillness, and if the camera has any sympathies, they are peripheral.

The images propose a way of *feeling through looking* by starting with a basic, dis-individuated conception of life; *flesh* as the moment before a body is formed; and how a photograph can form (or deform) stable representations of *body*. Human bodies are absent, though our own bodies may be recalled by phenomenological impression. By decentering the anthropomorphic subject, the artist exhumes the tradition of “still life” to question the material conditions required for personhood and empathy.

Re-assigning value to the familiar can be a radical act. Photography is entangled in this attempt, existing simultaneously as both found object and architect—a democratic fluidity which cannot be fully contained by any sovereign boundary. To reclaim authorship within the ubiquity of this liquid language might also confess to its impact.

Diane Severin Nguyen was born 1990 in Carson, CA. She lives and works in Los Angeles. Nguyen completed her BA from Virginia Commonwealth University (2013) and is an MFA candidate from Milton Avery School of the Arts, Bard College (2019). Bad Reputation is pleased to debut her first solo exhibition in the United States. A two person exhibition will follow at Bureau, New York in February.

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