

Contour Fatigue II

Olga Balema, Adriano Costa,
Niloufar Emamifar, Namio Harukawa,
Jac Leirner, Kate Spencer Stewart,
Stanislava Kovalcikova and
Franco Vimercati

17 April – 23 May 2026

Emalin is pleased to present *Contour Fatigue II*, the second iteration of an exhibition concerned with containment as both a material and relational condition. Containment can lend form, transforming one thing into a carrier for another; where it fails, it becomes entrapment. Where the first *Contour Fatigue* (Emalin, 2025) attended to that failure – its leakages and ruptures – this exhibition turns to duration, to the mark that pressure leaves in form and to the often uneven question of who holds and who is held.

A vessel is changed by what passes through it. It remembers in the way that materials remember: as the slight and irreversible alteration of internal composition that engineers call fatigue and the rest of us call time. Perhaps this is also what contact is, the moment a boundary gives way and something passes through that cannot be fully recalled, leaving the form different from what it was, continuous at its limit with something beyond itself. To have been in genuine relation is to carry the record of it, marked by what could not be fully contained, and changed by the duration of having been held.

Stanislava Kovalcikova (b. 1988, Slovakia) works in painting, often staging environments in which mythological and contemporary imagery compound on the same surface. *Red Cross* (2026) depicts a figure kneeling before the viewer, head bowed toward the ground, light emanating from the buried face. The titular glowing cross dominates the composition behind. The painting draws on the iconographic conventions of the *ex-voto* and the tradition of mystical painting, in which the body is held in the posture of its encounter with something beyond itself and the image functions as a material record of that contact. It also invokes the biblical transfiguration, where the body, under the pressure of what it encounters, becomes luminous, though here transgressing its terms, turning the light inward and downward rather than outward. The figure is held in supplication, redemptive, neither collapsing into it nor released from it, so that the face, at its most buried, is also at its most radiant.

Olga Balema (b. 1984, Lviv, Ukraine) works in sculpture with materials that register time through their use and transformation, often allowing process and duration to remain visible within the work. Her practice is marked by repetition and iteration, with forms that loop back and redirect attention to the structures that contain them. *Untitled* (2022) is composed of cut and recombined fragments of a PVC banner, linked into a continuous surface through repeated operations such as taping and gluing. Part of a series of flat vinyl sculptures, it incorporates a digital print of an

EMALIN

4-8 Helmet Row
London EC1V 3QJ
www.emalin.co.uk

earlier work, first manipulated through a printing interface and then later through movement, incision and reconfiguration. Frottages taken from a sidewalk near the artist's studio, together with the gradual imprint of footsteps, are absorbed into the work over time, so that making and unmaking occur together within the same surface. *Threat to Civilization 9* (2015), shown in the following room, is a transparent PVC form filled with water, within which steel rods are held in tension – the two in continuous contact, its appearance shifting over the duration of the exhibition. Both forms suggest a structure that absorbs and contains its own prior states, distended and held under pressure.

Adriano Costa (b. 1975, São Paulo, Brazil) works across sculpture, installation and painting, often with discarded or overlooked materials. By displacing objects from their habitual contexts, his work brings into view the meanings that accrue through use and abandonment. *Pop Songs / Beggars Banquet* (2022-2026) are a series of bronze sculptures cast from moulds retrieved from Costa's foundry in São Paulo. Inverting the usual logic of casting, Costa casts the mould itself, fixing in metal what would typically be designated as expendable, here made permanent. The works retain the sequence of casting stages, each registering the impression of the last. Their surfaces bear traces of handling, fingerprints, compression and deformation, so that the process remains legible in the finished object; some record the rubber bands that once held the mould together, their forms cast into the surface alongside everything else. Costa chooses bronze for its history, one shaped by attachment and systems of valuation. That assumption is the work's material. The more firmly bronze is held as enduring, the more completely the work draws it toward the conditions of its making, returning to heat and transformation – the fire where it came from – thus remaining contingent and always subject to change.

Franco Vimercati (b. 1940, Milan, Italy – 2001, Milan Italy) was an Italian artist often situated in proximity to Conceptual and post-Minimal practices from the 1970s onward. Working exclusively in black and white photography, he photographed everyday objects frontally and without compositional intervention, grouping them in serial ensembles that emphasise repetition and minimal variation. *Esposizioni multiple* (1999/2020) subjects a single object, a glass vessel, to multiple exposures, until it appears to vibrate, registering duration as something that accumulates in, shifts and destabilises the image. Across his practice, Vimercati returned repeatedly to the same objects, proposing photography as a discipline of held attention rather than capture.

Jac Leirner (b. 1961, São Paulo, Brazil) works in sculpture and installation through accumulation and seriality. She collects everyday objects, organising them according to modular and serial principles into new formal arrangements, the materials retaining the indexical trace of the systems – economic, industrial, institutional – through which they have passed. *Cadenas* (2014) belongs to a body of wall-based work in which Leirner uses cable, cord and chain as structural and formal units. Here, two steel chains, fixed at each end across seven metres, fall into the curve that gravity produces when a flexible structure is left to its own weight. *Folders* (2026) comprises forty-six document folders collected from art galleries and institutions, held together in a concertina form and placed across aluminium profiles set on trestle legs. The folders are the administrative substrate of the art world's own circulatory systems, the instruments through which institutional life organises and perpetuates itself. Leirner extracts them from that function and reassembles them as sculpture in what she has described as a terminal position, the end of their circulation, held now by the logic of accumulation.

EMALIN

4-8 Helmet Row
London EC1V 3QJ
www.emalin.co.uk

Namio Harukawa (b. 1947, Osaka, Japan – 2020, Tokyo, Japan) was a Japanese artist known for his highly detailed ink drawings depicting scenes of erotic domination. Male figures are immobilised beneath the bodies of impassive seated women, transformed into furniture, folded into the architecture of another body. Harukawa's draftsmanship is precise and deliberate, his line holding its subjects in place with an almost architectural firmness. The scenes are rendered without violence; there is no struggle in them, nor resistance, and submission reads as a kind of formal resolution, where the self gradually dissolves into the geometry of another's enclosure.

Kate Spencer Stewart (b. 1984, Phoenix, US) works on square linen canvases, a format that refuses the orienting conventions of both portrait and landscape, holding the image in a relation of equality with its own edges. Stewart builds her paintings through successive acts of layering, obliteration and return, with each chromatic structure or mark remaining active beneath the one that follows, so that what is visible on the surface is never quite separable from what it has covered. In *Apostle* (2026), a dense, dark brown field built from lead white and black earth pigments accumulates through marks that spiral upwards to catch the light, the paint performing a material subterfuge, arriving at a surface that reads as patina, as oxidation, as something other than what it is. The painting approaches, with considerable deliberateness, the problem of how an image might be made where the act of rendering and the resistance to being rendered become difficult to distinguish.

Niloufar Emamifar's work often explores the causal connections between site, situation and subjectivity, and the psychosocial dynamics inherent in built space. *The Air Conditioner* (2016–2025) was produced in Lecce, Italy from iron ingots melted down from a decommissioned air-conditioning unit originally located in an insurance company in Tehran. The unit first appeared as part of a temporary public sculpture in Tehran in 2016. It was subsequently reassembled and returned to its original site in northeast Tehran, where it remained in operation until November 2018. The work was then transported to New York and melted into iron ingots, which were exhibited at the SculptureCenter in 2019 and again in 2021. In 2025, Emamifar brought the ingots to Lecce, where a local ironworker carved them into doorstops. These were exhibited in *Disjecta* at Progetto, Lecce where they functioned to hold open the gallery's doors. At Emalin, the doorstop continues this operation: here it holds open a door not usually accessible to the public.

Olga Balema (b. 1984, Lviv, Ukraine) lives and works in New York, US. She received an MFA from University of California, Los Angeles, and subsequently completed further studies at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam, and Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Maine. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions have been held at Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg, CH (2025); Trautwein Herleth, Berlin, DE (2025); Kunstverein in Hamburg, DE (2025); Bridget Donahue, New York, US (2023); Croy Nielsen, Vienna, AT (2022); and Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (2021).

Adriano Costa (b. 1975, São Paulo, Brazil) lives and works in São Paulo. Selected solo exhibitions have been held at Pivô, São Paulo, BR (2025); AU PASSAGE, Paris, FR (2025); Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo, BR (2025), Emalin, London, UK (2024), A Sud, Pescara, IT (2023); Mendes Wood DM, New York, US (2023); SALTS, Birsfelden, CH (2022); Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, DE (2018); and Instituto Tomie Ohtake, São Paulo, BR (2018).

EMALIN
4-8 Helmet Row
London EC1V 3QJ
www.emalin.co.uk

Niloufar Emamifar lives and works in New York. She holds a BFA in Architecture from Soore School of Architecture, Tehran, Iran, and an MFA in Studio Art from the University of California, Irvine. Her work has been exhibited at institutions including Museum Abteiberg, DE (2026); Kunsthalle Zürich, CH (2026); Progetto, Lecce, IT (2025); Künstlerhaus Stuttgart, DE (2023); Kunstverein Kevin, Vienna, AT (2023); MoMA PS1, New York, US (2022); The Renaissance Society, Chicago, US (2022); SculptureCenter, New York, US (2021); the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, US (2021); the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, US (2020); and Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, US (2017).

Namio Harukawa (b. 1947, Osaka, Japan – 2020, Tokyo, Japan) was a pseudonymous Japanese fetish artist. He developed his career in the 1960's and 70's contributing illustrations to pornographic magazines. Notable publications include the two-volume Kyonyū Katsuai (2000); Callipyge (2009) and Maxi Cula (2012) by the French publishing house United Dead Artists; and the anthology The Incredible Femdom Art of Namio Harukawa (2019). In 2013, his work was exhibited at the Museum of Eroticism in Paris, marking his first solo exhibition outside Japan.

Jac Leirner (b. 1961, São Paulo, Brazil) lives and works in São Paulo, Brazil. She received her BFA in Fine Arts from the Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado, São Paulo, in 1984. Major institutional exhibitions have been held at The Swiss Institute, New York, USA (2023); Ludwig Museum, Cologne, DE (2019); IMMA – Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, IE (2017); Museum of Contemporary Arts of Shanghai, CN (2016); Museo Tamayo, Mexico City, MX (2014); Estação Pinacoteca, São Paulo, BZ (2011); Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, BZ (2002); 47th Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy (1997); Documenta IX, Kassel, Germany (1992); Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C., US (1992); ICA, Boston, US (1991); and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, US (1991).

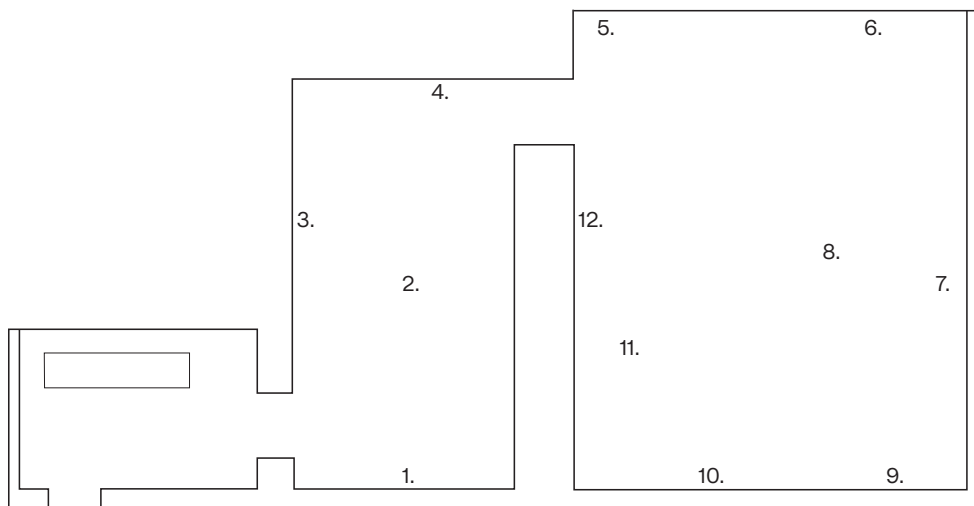
Kate Spencer Stewart (b. 1984 Phoenix, US) lives and works in Los Angeles, US. She graduated with a BFA from Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, US in 2006 and completed her MFA in painting at University of California, Los Angeles, US in 2017. Recent selected solo exhibitions have been held at Soccer Club Club, Chicago, US (2026); Bureau, New York, US (2025); Emalin, London, UK (2025); Paul Soto, Los Angeles, US (2025); Emalin, London, UK (2023); and La Maison de Rendez-Vous, Brussels, BE (2022).

Stanislava Kovalcikova (b. 1988, Slovakia) lives and works between Paris, France and Düsseldorf, Germany. She graduated with a BFA from the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (Tomma Abts) in 2005 and completed the MFA at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf (Peter Doig) in 2018. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at Kunstverein Freiburg, DE (2026); Emalin, London, UK (2024); Aspen Art Museum, US (2024); Antenna Space, Shanghai, CN (2023); Caprii, Düsseldorf, DE (2023); Galerie Khoshbakht, Cologne, DE (2023); Museum of Contemporary Art – Belvedere 21, Vienna, AT (2022); 15orient, New York, US (2021).

Franco Vimercati (b. 1940, Milan, Italy – 2001, Milan Italy) lived and worked in Milan, Italy. Solo institutional exhibitions have been held at Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Rome, IT (2023); Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, São Paulo, BZ (2021); Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Madrid, SP (2019); Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, DE (2014); Palazzo Fortuny, Fondazione Musei Civici Venezia, Venice, IT (2012); and Fotografia Europa, Reggio Emilia, IT (2009).

EMALIN

4-8 Helmet Row
London EC1V 3QJ
www.emalin.co.uk



WORKLIST

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Stanislava Kovalcikova
<i>Red Cross</i>, 2026
oil on board
125 × 40 cm
49¼ × 15¾ inches</p> | <p>7. Jac Leirner
<i>Cadenas</i>, 2014
aluminium, steel
in two parts, each: 30 × 350 × 5 cm
11¾ × 275⅝ × 2 inches</p> |
| <p>2. Olga Balema
<i>Untitled</i>, 2022
print on vinyl, tape
499.5 × 488 cm
196⅝ × 192⅞ inches</p> | <p>8. Jac Leirner
<i>Folders</i>, 2026
folders, aluminium, steel
in two parts, each: 99 × 300 × 78 cm
39 × 118⅞ × 30¾ inches</p> |
| <p>3. Adriano Costa
<i>Pop Songs / Beggars banquet 6</i>, 2022-2026
bronze
7.5 × 6 × 13.5 cm
3 × 2⅜ × 5¼ inches</p> | <p>9. Adriano Costa
<i>Pop Songs / Beggars banquet 8</i>, 2022-2026
bronze
5.5 × 12.5 × 13 cm
2⅞ × 4⅞ × 5⅞ inches</p> |
| <p>4. Franco Vimercati
<i>Esposizioni multiple</i>, 1999 / 2020
gelatin silver prints
in five parts, each: 48 × 43 × 3 cm (framed)
18⅞ × 16⅞ × 1⅞ inches</p> | <p>10. Kate Spencer Stewart
<i>Apostle</i>, 2026
oil on canvas
167.6 × 167.6 × 2.5 cm
66 × 66 × 1 inches</p> |
| <p>5. Niloufar Emamifar
<i>The Air Conditioner</i>, 2016-2025
mixed iron
2.5 × 8 × 4 cm
1 × 3⅞ × 1⅝ inches</p> | <p>11. Olga Balema
<i>Threat to Civilization 9</i>, 2015
soft pvc, metal, water
25 × 103 × 49 cm
9⅞ × 40½ × 19¼ inches</p> |
| <p>6. Adriano Costa
<i>Pop Songs / Beggars banquet 5</i>, 2022-2026
bronze
4.3 × 11.5 × 14.5 cm
1¾ × 4½ × 5¾ inches</p> | <p>12. Namio Harukawa
<i>Untitled 28</i>, 2011
pencil on paper
35.8 × 27.5 × 3.2 cm (framed)
14⅞ × 10⅞ × 1¼ inches</p> |