

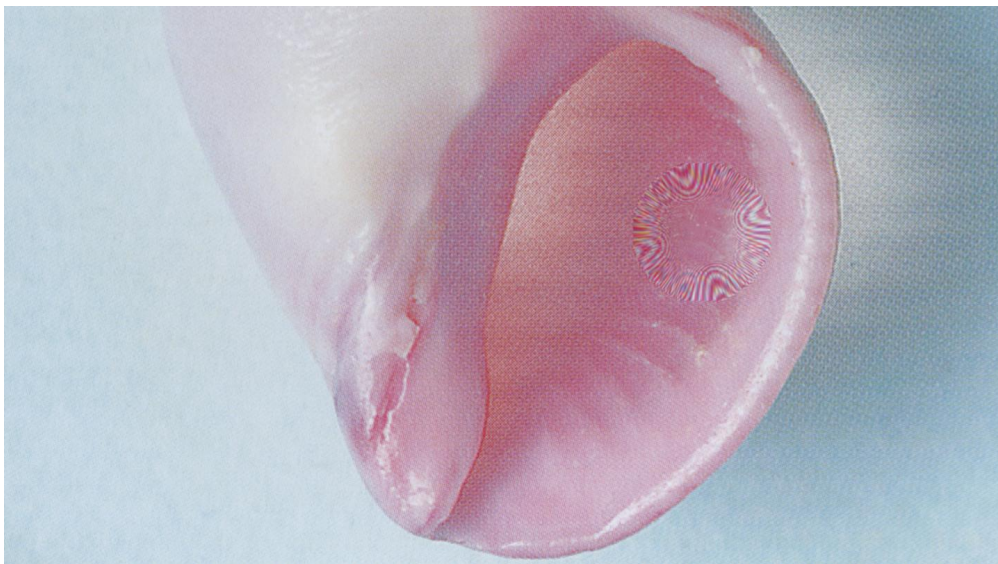


ART

oversized condoms and more at the belly and the members exhibition

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The Belly and the Members is a new, multidisciplinary exhibition that takes the fragmented body as its central field of enquiry. Opening 6 September at Cob Gallery, here curator Antonia Marsh picks her top five things to look out for.

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detachment from our bodies, sexually or otherwise. Enlarged to the point of absurdity, London-based Louis Morlet's sculpted prosthetic penis accompanies his video *Soft Splashing* and sits alongside an equally oversized latex condom. Resisting a faithful depiction of his penis, Morlet warps and skews the male organ into something self-aware. Separated from the rest of the body, the penis expresses myriad traumatic states of desire, horror and castration and becomes conscious of its anxieties and twisted motivations. I saw the video Louis made as part of a larger and impressive immersive installation at an exhibition in Kings Cross earlier this year. When I was selecting works for *The Belly and the Members*, I convinced him to let me present the video alongside the penis that appears within it. While it reveals his process, I think including the penis in the show extends the reach of the work and makes it more relatable to a viewer. We become more aware of our body parts as separate entities and I think this level of self-reflection is of real importance."



2. *John Henry* by Chase Hall

"To create the facial markings in *John Henry*, New York-based artist Chase Hall pressed his face into his studio table after coming to realise that his ancestors would have worked on the same table over a hundred years earlier. Looking for their abstracted portraits, representing an acknowledgement of history and as a connection to his ancestors, with this action Hall examines the pressures of black identity and the work becomes at once a self-portrait and a metaphor for these pressures more widely. This performative and very personal work stands out in Chase's practice, who otherwise mostly focuses on either photographic portraits, paintings or sculpture, and he only made three, so it feels very special that we have one in the show."



3. Laura Watters' wall-sculptures

"LA-based artist Laura Watters calls her works wall-sculptures, and I've always had a soft spot for works that transcend categorisation in this way. These little pieces reference fetish subculture in their material associations, where PVC is twisted and folded into multitudinous creases. Gaps, orifices and protrusions actually permeate the entire gallery space in cathartic gestures that range from sensual to aggressive and I think Laura's work is a great example of the former. Surrounded by all the work, you can't help but look into her folds and relate them back to the body."



4. *Lawn Enforcement and Personal Satisfaction* by Jack Greer.

"After leaving the Still House Group, New York-based artist Jack Greer briefly took a break from his studio practice to make video work, so it's great to have his new paintings on show and to introduce them to a London audience. In these works he obsessively and methodically collects his notebook musings and diaristic entries over an extended time period onto single, circular canvases. The writings that amass to form the paintings look at the history of lawns as a marker of class or cultural cleanliness and sexuality, desire and relationships respectively. What's most fascinating to me about these works is that Jack covers up earlier writing with paint, to create space to then write a new text over the top. This process of layering over past



5. *The Shell* by Matilde Soes Rasmussen

"Blown up to an almost monstrous scale, this found photograph has undergone various levels of digital editing to raise questions of manipulation and authenticity in photography. With ten years working as a professional model behind her, self-image and (female) identity in photography often figure in Matilde's work. She only just finished studying at the progressive Danish photography school Fatamorgana and is already about to begin at the Valand Art Academy in Gothenburg. I've shown her work in a number of exhibitions now, I think she's an extremely talented photographer whose work is razor-sharp despite its subtlety and often seemingly banal subject matter. The piece in the exhibition is a great example of that: despite its fragility as an object, on this scale the seashell confronts the viewer with an engulfing image of female sexuality and power."

The Belly and the Members is showing at Cob Gallery from 6-23 September



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