

ARTFORUM

“You never look at me from the place from which I see you”

SCULPTURE CENTER
44-19 Purves Street
January 15–March 19

Curated by Kristen Chappa, this group exhibition presents work by the eleven artists currently participating in SculptureCenter’s “In Practice” program. A formal/conceptual duality characterizes most of the pieces on view, with the sculptures’ material presence frequently relying on an equally significant conceptual base. The difficulty here is translating this duality into a simultaneity, and understanding *how* we see what we see.

Yve Laris Cohen’s *Coda*, 2012, exemplifies this exercise. Accompanying his six performances is a sprung floor, a soft platform used in dance to absorb shock. Installed in a narrow basement corridor, the deck is complemented by a stunning nearly seventy-five-foot expanse of black marley (a material used for dance floors), which juts out with a Donald Judd–like authority on an adjacent wall. Cohen is only partially interested in the object’s visual lure. The materials listed on the wall label—sprung floor, dancing transsexual—hint at a subject/object blur that extends into his performance. Bookended by two small audiences on either side of the passageway, the dance that ensues is both mesmerizing and banal. Cohen removes his white T-shirt and uses it to wash the entirety of the marley, with uniform strokes going up and down each vertical stretch. He reaches the end, re-dresses, and pirouettes swiftly back to his beginning post. As he repeats this series, his breath becomes audible, and small gestures, like the preparatory stance before spinning, become consecutive markers in the score.

In a nearby room is A. K. Burns’s “touch parade,” 2011, an enthralling series of five reperfomed fetish videos from YouTube. Each video reveals some part of Burns’s body performing various acts: hands putting on several pairs of rubber gloves in *touch parade (glove love)*, or, my favorite, *touch parade (pedal pump)*, where bare feet are filmed stopping and accelerating a moving vehicle. Both Burns and Cohen, in particular, underscore the significance of desire (and lack) in the process of seeing. Here seeing is an unscripted experience where subject and object remain undefined.

— Samara Davis



Yve Laris Cohen, *Coda*, 2012. Performance view.

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