

P R E S S R E L E A S E

In 1936 the Surrealist artist **Eileen Agar**, RA painted a watercolour in the South of France titled Thumb Rock. In the 1980s she returned to the theme of landscape painting, but it was a return, not so much to the subject matter itself, as to the strange and anthropomorphic or animalistic hauntings which she first caught sight of in the early part of the 20th Century. Her particular playful and idiosyncratic appropriation of the Surrealist zeitgeist of the 1930s, and the repetition of earlier motifs fifty years later, reminds us how important notions of the unconscious have remained in the making of works of art ever since.

The Secret Life of Stuff sets out to re contextualise Agar's work and the idea of the 'unconscious' in relation to the work of four contemporary artists. The title alludes to the need to open up this term, away from its psychoanalytical meaning which was so important to Surrealism, and to recover a wider understanding that extends beyond the subject. For the artists exhibiting work in this show it is the role materials play in making art that is instrumental in actualising those unconscious forces which we suspect are there and which we yearn to see.

For **Bernice Donszelmann** it is the implicit and unconscious forces that live within words and language that her rhythmic compositions project into the sight of the viewer. The viewer is also a reader, standing before the work as it unfolds its sequence. Meaning seems to give way to the force of movement and the act of reading, where words become objects and their acoustic materiality an almost tangible presence.

Catherine Ferguson's abstract paintings enfold an admiration for various pictures from different historical periods. You won't necessarily be able to identify the work of Caravaggio, for example, within the images but these paintings were made with his works in mind: fragments and passages and memories juxtaposed with works by others. In their making the paintings explore, unfold and try to repeat the invisible, unconscious forces which make Caravaggio's work so compelling, not as a theoretical idea but in practice, through the composition of specific materialities of paint and surface.

The sculpture of **John Gibbons** exceeds the material stuff from which his works are made and carries the movement of an internal life out into the world. The physical processes of working with metal are technical, skilful and forceful. At the end there is an object and there is a surface which speaks so eloquently of that history. The surface bears the trace of a relationship to the materials used and the processes by which its unconscious capacities, there from the start, become actualised in the end. Far from being about the physical properties of metal these capacities were waiting to connect with the DNA of the sculptor, his capacities and inheritances, in order to breathe new life into the world.

Della Gooden's wall assemblages are formed from circles, graphite lines and shadows, which continually revise their relationships to each other; mutating into new arrangements and even forming breakaway pieces. As the circles and graphite lines shift and change, shadows pace back and forth, directed by the lights above and the sunlight through the window. The work is spatial, transient and time-based. In looking, we sense acute relationships of measurement and scale, the friction of a surface and the softness of a pencil. Affixed silently to the wall, the circles' weightlessness and enclosing of space contradict our own bodies' experience of gravity, which holds us down. Other imaginary spaces emerge as we scan across with our eyes or walk on.

ARTISTS :**Eileen Agar****Bernice Donszelmann****Catherine Ferguson****John Gibbons****Della Gooden****INFORMATION**

For further information, Hi-res images, or to arrange interviews please contact: Rebecca Fairman at Arthouse1.
+44 (0)77131 89249
rebecca@arthouse1.co.uk

Venue: ARTHOUSE1.
Address: 45 Grange Rd, London SE1 3BH
Preview: Thursday 6 September 6.30-9pm
Exhibition open from
7th - 29th September 2018

Opening Hours: Thursday to Sunday,
3pm - 7pm or by appointment

Travel: London Bridge, Borough,
Bermondsey tubes. Buses No.1, 78, 42

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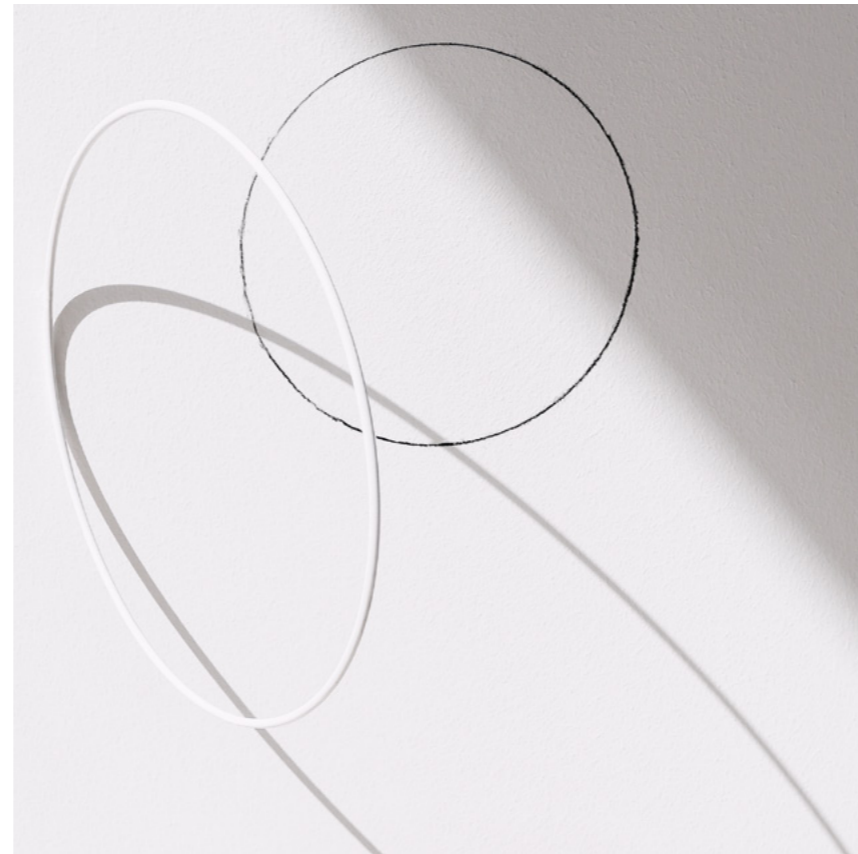
Eileen Agar *'Untitled'*, 1985 Acrylic on canvas 61 x 61 cm



Catherine Ferguson *'Couple Colour'* 2018 Acrylic on aluminium 30 x 30 cm



John Gibbons *'She Moved/Her Hair'*, 2015-16 Stainless steel, varnished. 47.5 x 35 x 50 cm



Della Gooden *'Egg And Spoon'*. 2018. Graphite on wall, metal & shadow lines. size: variable



Bernice Donszelmann *'Foot'*. 2017 Video projection