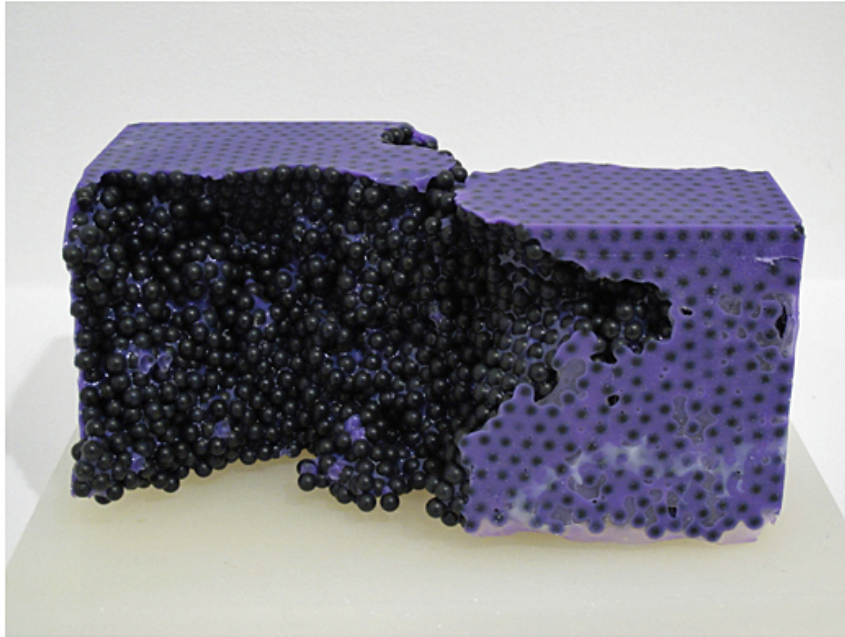


Jesse Greenberg's Sensual Materialism at Derek Eller Gallery



Jesse Greenberg, Ball Brick Purple, 2013. Image courtesy of Derek Eller Gallery

For his first solo exhibition in New York, Jesse Greenberg reveals himself as a sensual materialist who balances freely between the two seemingly incongruous worlds of the natural and synthetic. The works range in scale from midsized to small sculptures and reliefs, and are arranged in a way that is comfortable, intimate, and results in an installation that is not too sparse or crowded.

Warm, transparent, hues of honey and coral, alongside lush ultramarines, powder blues, deep purples, blacks, and cool whites, result in a palette of harmonious tranquility. The colors are subdued and muted aside from a rebellious burst of monochromatic hot pink emanating from a hanging wall sculpture nestled in the corner.

Greenberg's approach to abstraction is not a transcendental experience, instead it's very earth bound, celebrating corporeality. Seduced by materials, Greenberg reveals an expansive knowledge of his favored medium from piece to piece, manipulating urethane resin and pigment. Although there is an underlying structure and plan throughout all the work, whether it's the molds used in the process or the hard-edged, geometry of the welding, Greenberg still allows the powers of chance and accident to come into play. This brings to mind the process artists of the sixties, and specifically Lynda Benglis.

Two pieces stand out because of their larger scale and their prominent placement on the first wall walking into the gallery. They seem bodily, in that the fleshy, transparent resin adheres to the welded skeletal forms. The one to the left has a simple, black, tumescent welded bar running through its middle. A chalky, mid-hued blue and black color scheme creates a mood of somber elegance. The sculpture hanging next to it is equally long, but slightly narrower. The more intricate rectangular, orange metallic under structure, along with its sunnier, amber colored resin, together create a nuanced contrast to its companion.

Three brick sculptures, each on their own pedestal are neatly placed in a diagonal line, in front of the two wall sculptures. Each of the bricks is not completely formed, and the inchoate quality imbues each brick with a tenuous sense of instability. If bricks are the building blocks of civilization and architecture, then Greenberg's bricks are the remnants of time, and entropy, from a place in which ideals of progress and advancement are irrelevant or no longer exist.

Five smaller tablets hang in a straight line to the left. Their translucent surfaces ooze, percolate, foam, drip, and quiver with climactic enthusiasm. Reminiscent of both mucous as well as bacterial cultures, the finishes become simultaneously enticing and repugnant. All of these works provoke and tease the viewer with their contradicting mixture of decoration and repulsion. Shredded, torn, and embedded with bb pellets, both the forms and materials evoke violence. The ferocity along with the fetishized, sultry surfaces are reminiscent of the sadomasochism of Alexander McQueen. In the end, Greenberg achieves his own chilling and perilously engaging vision of sinister beauty.