

*MemoryFlesh* is an exhibition of new works in print, sculpture and film by Ben Skea.

Skea's practice focuses on his long standing interest in the cyclical, transformative nature of experience, memory and matter. Found internet images are initially manipulated with masking fluid, glue, paint and collage elements. Then, whilst still 'active', these photo / fluid layers are digitally photographed, reprinted and mounted on board throughout the space. The resulting digital prints are then juxtaposed with 'real' elements (emulsion, glass, mirror, stone, powder) to generate experiments with surface and artifice. *MemoryFlesh* explores states of disintegration where figures are composed with equal parts energy and discipline. Chaotic and fractured, these mixed media works are often a synthesis of oppositions, deliberately disordered in an attempt to make them more explicit. The artwork also hints at the parallels the artist sees, between human memory and computer memory. Many of the works are named by altering and reassembling versions of 'real' words and phrases as in *Re-U-Man* and *Re-sol-vent*. This seemingly arbitrary mash-up approach hints at the glitches, gaps and lost fragments we fill with self-generated information. Utilizing both traditional and digital art disciplines, Skea hopes to capture moments of near destruction - incomplete and reordered states that evoke a visceral response.

*CrossFade* (2013, digital print, MDF, wheels, emulsion) and *Re-sol-vent* (2013, digital print, MDF, wheels, emulsion) hover over the gallery floor like enlarged tablets on wheels creating an illusionary space underneath where the 'real' paint seems to seep through. These flat yet three dimensional displays evoke a sense of falling through into an impossible space. *Search Strings* (2013, digital print, MDF, graphite) is nailed flush against the corner of the gallery - creating a tense space where only thin pencil lines, hand drawn on the surface, extend out from the digital print as if growing over the wall. *Fluid Gaze* (2013, digital print, MDF, mirrored card) similarly attempts to catch the viewer unaware by reflecting their distorted image back at them - a printed image of a man lying motionless is mounted directly below the reflective slice of paper - he appears to be in a state of decay. *Past Tension* (2013, digital print, aluminium pegs) is suspended out from the wall as if hanging out to dry. Neither life-sized nor soaked with fluid, this illusionary figure on paper has almost faded away leaving only a stained imprint of his existence... and a few paint drops on the floor beneath.

*Headcage 1-4* (2013, mixed media, digital print, wooden frame) and *Hard-wired 1-5* (2013, mixed media sculpture, black glass, MDF) explore human form, movement and spatiality - constantly hovering between representation and abstraction. The artist is investigating the paradoxical concept that objects can be both attractive yet repulsive at the same time. Materials are often combined 'incorrectly' (pastel with glue, masking fluid with sponge, varnish with tracing paper) yet displayed in a formal and traditional manner. The artist is looking for a residual fragment of an object that holds a dual power - often familiar yet uncomfortably sinister.

*Sleep Vessel* (2013, digital film, 2'43") attempts to explore and understand the three core processes of memory (encoding, storage and retrieval) by way of hand-drawn animation. Abstracted constructs, reassembled from 'automatic drawings' created before and after sleep, take form as separate parts - evolving from one state to another. Organic line vessels become glowing containers for fluid movement - transformative shapes and cyclic actions reinforcing themes of stored impulses, muscle memory and lucid dreaming. Through the use of repetition, the viewer is forced to remain inside the loop - slowly becoming aware of what has passed and what is anticipated whilst experiencing a constant state of now. The loop is finally broken when the process of retrieval begins - rapid stop motion drawings are juxtaposed with photography and mixed media collage representing the human form as it wakes from sleep.