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# undercurrent

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## **HABBY OSK /*Connectivity***

**01.29–03.07 /2021**

Undercurrent is excited to launch our 2021 program with *Connectivity*, a solo exhibition by New York-based Icelandic artist Habby Osk. Grounded in sculpture, her work is an ideal segue from the imbalances of last year finding us a new foothold with the start of a new one. *Connectivity* will run from January 29 until March 7.

Osk's post-minimalist work subtly evokes the current precarious political and unstable social situation both in this country and across the world. Introspectively, it calls attention to the ecological dangers of our planet's existence. Growing up in Iceland, Osk experienced nature's magnificent and severe beauty, in the presence of the powerful manifestations of natural phenomena such as sporadic weather, earthquakes, and other underground geological activity. Iceland's relative proximity to the North Pole more acutely displays Earth's cyclic relationship with the Sun, as the amount of sunlight throughout the seasons varies more than in most other parts of the world. For the last two decades, Osk echoed her connection to location and its gravitas beyond GPS coordinates. The forces of nature and civilization collide; they impact our lives.

Osk's sculptural compositions use gravity as an invisible force. Her chosen medium provides content and meaning which goes beyond merely dictating the shape, size, choice of materials, and appearance of the work. The gravity philosophically anchors the sculptures. The connection between gravity and time provides the artist with the possibility of a theatrical ruse, a suspended element, the moment of hope and expectation, impermanence, surprise, inevitable collapse and destruction—all of these simultaneously.

At Undercurrent, Habby Osk presents eight works. In the entryway, *Fracture* spreads six pink-toned chromogenic prints documenting the process of a cement ball slowly crushing a blood-colored gelatin cube. The work appears less like a piece of art and more like the frame-by-frame documentation of a science experiment. Following it is *Interconnection*, a nine-foot-tall wall piece with three wax and hydrocal rectangular blocks hanging from a cylinder-shaped support. The semi-heavy blocks balancing each other are tethered by a bright yellow rope. Similar in spirit to *Interconnection* are three wall sculptures from Osk's *Anchor* series: *Anchor X*, *Anchor VII*, and *Anchor I*.

Part of a group of ten works, these precarious compositions are finely balanced cement casts on independent shelves. Inspired by DNA sequencing, Osk appropriates basic geometric shapes including a sphere, cube, rectangle, cylinder, triangle, and a line. A physical line is drawn between these shapes and their shelf using an ultramarine, violet-colored polypropylene cord. The line connects shapes, balances the composition, and creates tension.

The *Anchor* works, like most of the other artist's sculptures, are always under stress. Each piece has the characteristic of a mechanical balancing point, a fulcrum, in contrast to an optical point, as in painting or traditional sculpture. If we look through a mathematical lens, we can interpret the point symbolically, representing either zero or infinity. *Suspend*, the largest piece in the show, is a free-standing, V-shaped composition made from two boards—one black, another bright blue. These boards are fastened by a yellow string and balanced by approximately 100 pounds of cement cast into a sphere. The brightly colored lines of cord parallel a colorfield painting and a clarity associated with hard-edge painting. The last two sculptures, *Clasp I* and *Clasp II*, are cast wax cubes and rectangles, shackled together by aluminum suspension springs, such as those most commonly used for self-closing heavy doors. Directly placed on the gallery floor, these relatively small works serve an important function in the show by creating spatial complexity between spectra: large and small, chromatic and achromatic, weight and balance. With so much gravity and tension loaded within each individual work, their totality creates a continuum, complementing one another and providing an experience of open space within the gallery.

Habby Osk teeters between the aesthetics of poetry and industrial machines, dear to minimalist sculpture, as almost romantically she creates a serenity centered on the axle of nature. Each work stands as a singular, independent work yet when seen as a whole, they create an ecosystem reliant on their inherent paradigm within Earth's gravity well and the importance of our environmental balance.

Julius Ludavicius /Co-director



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