ALMINE RECH

When Forms Come Alive

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Franz West is part of *When Forms Come Alive*, at Hayward Gallery, London, UK

The Hayward Gallery presents *When Forms Come Alive*, a playful and lively exhibition highlighting the ways in which artists have been inspired by movement, flux and organic growth, from a dancer's gesture to the breaking of a wave, from a flow of molten metal to the interlacing of a spider's web.

Spanning over 60 years of contemporary art, this unique survey exhibition includes a range of energetic sculptural forms that seem to ooze, undulate, blossom, erupt and sprawl in the gallery space, inspiring fluid and shifting realms of experience, surprising viewers at every turn. *When Forms Come Alive* brings together works that engage in a dynamic and urgent exploration of physical experience in contrast to a world in which everyday encounters are increasingly digitised.

The exhibition features the works of 21 international artists, namely Ruth Asawa, Nairy Baghramian, Phyllida Barlow, Lynda Benglis, Michel Blazy, Paloma Bosquê, Olaf Brzeski, Choi Jeonghwa, Tara Donovan, DRIFT, Eva Fàbregas, Holly Hendry, EJ Hill, Marguerite Humeau, Jean-Luc Moulène, Senga Nengudi, Ernesto Neto, Martin Puryear, Matthew Ronay, Teresa Solar Abboud and Franz West.

Ralph Rugoff, Director of the Hayward Gallery, says: "Dynamic, exuberant and playful, the works in this show take visitors on an adventure into a world of fascinating forms. Whilst they avoid directly representing the human body, most of these artworks evince a compelling corporeality - they remind us that there is a comedy, as well as a politics, of form."

Embodying a playful rebuke to rigid geometries, the sculptures in *When Forms Come Alive* evoke the pleasures of spontaneous gesture and movement, the poetics of gravity, and the experience of sensation itself. In addition, the works engage viewers in ambiguous encounters with uncanny forms that cannot be easily identified or labelled. For example, Jean-Luc Moulène's knot-like constructions explore paradoxical volumes defined by surfaces that have neither inside nor outside, whilst Teresa Solar Abboud's brightly coloured sculptures, at once naturalistic and surreal, embody an intractable, dynamic otherness. Alongside Tara Donovan's intricate installation that brings to mind a sprawling, otherworldly molecular constellation, these artworks defiantly proclaim that nothing in the world stays the same, that everything is moving, seething, changing and transforming. These works, and the exhibition as a whole, illuminates how sculpture, by embracing its potential as our most restless medium, can be an indispensable vehicle for rediscovering and recovering lost dimensions of physical experience.

The exhibition opens with sculptures from the 1960s and 1970s by postminimalist and process-oriented artists, including Lynda Benglis and Senga Nengudi, showcasing how form is inseparable from a sense of transience and transformation – an aesthetic developed in pointed contrast to the sleek monolithic structures created by many male artists of the time. Later works from artists such as Phyllida Barlow and Nairy Baghramian pick up on this anti monumental character, presenting deliberately awkward forms that evoke fleeting states of being, or relationships in flux.

Works from artists Franz West, Olaf Brzeski and Matthew Ronay utilise forms to conjure the abject, comedic and absurd. The unexpected bulges and curves in these sculptures might evoke associations to living organisms from one viewpoint, but when seen from another angle, they suggest geological formations or melting ice cream. Meanwhile, with its neon, rollercoaster-like structure, EJ Hill's large-scale sculpture triggers memories of radical motion and visceral highs, to which the artist links the politics of Black joy and the historical exclusion of African-Americans from amusement parks in areas of the USA.

Organic life is a key departure point for many of the artists in the show. Inspired by her observations of natural forms, Ruth Asawa's wire sculptures made in the 1950s and 1960s nest spherical forms inside hourglass shapes, suspended from the gallery ceiling to enable their subtle motion. Made from silk, DRIFT's kinetic Shylights mimic the folding and unfolding of flowers that close at night, whilst Marguerite Humeau's multimedia sculptures echo the gills of mushrooms and honeycomb-like structures to conjure scenarios of organic metamorphosis and adaptation.

The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated, hardback catalogue that explores the artists and their work in detail. The book includes essays by Hayward Gallery Director Ralph Rugoff and art historian Natalie Rudd which expand on the key themes of the show, citing the artists' work within the context of postminimalism, and exploring formal and material innovation in sculpture across the past half century. Texts on each artist by a range of writers accompanies a broad-ranging selection of images.

When Forms Come Alive: Sixty Years ofRestless Sculpture is curated by Ralph Rugoff with Assistant Curator Katie Guggenheim and Curatorial Assistant Anusha Mistry.