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Boston
Ovid’s Girls

Part II

12 Artists from the USA and Germany on the theme of metamorphosis

Curated by Anette Schwarz

Kunstverein Tiergarten, Galerie Nord, Berlin (www.kunstverein-tiergarten.de) April 4 - May 5, 2014
MEWO Kunsthalle Memmingen (www.mewo-kunsthalle.de) September 20 - November 9, 2014
Ovid’s Girls
Boston


Curated by Anette Schwarz
Ovid’s Girls
12 artists from the USA and Germany on the theme of metamorphosis

All things are always changing / But nothing dies.
The spirit comes and goes / Is housed wherever it wills, shifts residence /
From beasts to men, from men to beasts, but always /
It keeps on living. As the pliant wax / Is stamped with new designs,
and is no longer /
What once it was, but changes from, and still /
Is pliant wax, so do I teach that spirit /
is evermore the same, though passing always /To ever-changing bodies.

(Ovid, Metamorphosen XV, 165 - 172)

Contemporary sculpture enters a world of symphony characterized by overlaps and undercurrents revealing hybrid forms.

The exhibition Ovid’s Girls shows for the first time artworks from the American artists Rosalyn Driscoll, Laura Evans, Michelle Lougee, Julia Shepley, Hannah Verlin and Leslie Wilcox and their German colleagues Ulli Böhmelmann, Alexandra Deutsch, Anke Elsergerhard, Flora Hitzing, Marina Schreiber and Frauke Wilken that is deeply affected by the character of metamorphosis.

Transformation - as the major theme in this exhibition - is creating a dialogue between 12 artistic positions revealing different insights into the coexistence of material and form.

With their objects the artists conquer the exhibition space of the Boston Sculptors Gallery. They establish a world that is populated by intrinsic figures and unknown organisms.

The objects stretch out over the wall, hang down from the ceiling, move into the space or are posing on a pedestal. The visitor is going to encounter different situations by wandering through the exhibition. The materials used and the generated forms of the artwork ensure a memorable experience.

Everyday items like plastic bags, chicken wire or small electronic elements mutate into organisms and display structures that have transcended the origin of the material. Some forms arouse associations of creatures from the deep sea or display a dark swirl that have already devoured the unknown.

Corresponding to this scenario small biomorphic figures with white skin of plaster held by a skeleton of mashed wire bind together. Compressed paper seems like cell structures indicating a source for further forms of life. Fabrics traverse through variously transformed sections of an object, becoming bundles preventing the seemingly pulsating forms from bursting out. In contrast, we discover a tentacular sculpture made of cloth frizzles already in motion. Silicon plays an important part as a support for structures and inspires associations of “sweetness” and a source of life, spreading out in all directions.

The individual approach to the language of forms and the choice of materials draw out the characteristics of the immanent workflow process. As biomorphic formations the installations and sculptures document a state of being, anticipating an impending transformation.

Independent from the mythological understanding of metamorphosis, processes are made visible that show easiness as well as a powerful energetic and sometimes pugnacious struggle.

The viewer is embraced by the atmosphere of suspension and is invited to join the dialogue of transformation and mutability.
Ulli Böhmelmann chooses as her basic material wood cellulose. The major characteristics for this material are light in weight combined with an extreme inner firmness/stability. A honeycombed structure, either existing in an interconnection with itself or coated by a skin made of geo-membrane, appears as a microscopic cell structure transformed into the third dimension. Each cell has an individual size and like an organism of bubbles they spread over the wall with a dynamic that does not follow any system or direction. Her work might be seen as a reference to the origin of life. Whether as a resource in plants or cell structures, Böhmelmann transmutes this energy carrying material into a biomorphic object. Her objects that embody the aspect of metamorphosis generate associations of the circle of life, of evolution and connected processes.

Alexandra Deutsch catches the attention of the visitor with an installation hanging from the ceiling. The Raíces Negras which can be translated into “black roots” approach with their tentacles like threads and bulges of textile the venue of the exhibition site. The bouffant oval shape functions like a center and shelter for the strings that spread out and follow gravity. Vegetable and capsular forms touch the ground and draw their circles. The physical appearance of the object reminds one of the story of Daphne, which describes the transformation of the fugitive Daphne, chased by Apollo with the words “thin bark closed over her breast, her hair turned into leaves, her arms into branches, her feet so swift a moment ago stuck fast in slow-growing roots, her face was lost in the canopy. Only her shining beauty was left.” (Ovid, Metamorphosis 1, 452 – 567). By operating with the stylistic device of performance, Deutsch also keeps the option of opening a further level of interpretation.

The subject of the physical dimension is assimilated in a complex way in the sculptures and installations presented by Rosalyn Driscoll. The material chosen by the artist becomes an icon for life itself – rawhide. Already marked by traces of age, Driscoll converts this organic material into abstract objects that stand out due to their lightness, transparency and dynamic, not to mention at the same time signs of vulnerability. Driscoll’s works concentrate changeability by exposing the inscribed influence of time. Furrows/hollows and folding as well as flat regions expanding under pressure, they remind us of landscapes marked by nature. In interaction with her sculpture the element of light stresses the translucency of the material and underscores the floating character. The title Incarnation can be seen as an inevitable consequence. Embodied in flesh, life becomes visible and interactive. Skin is the major organ of most living creatures and in connection with mankind seen as an indicator of age. In religious terms we find numerous interpretations, though we can only assume, what might become once we leave our protective skin-shell.
Kitchenuques International by Anke Eilegerhard seem to come along quite decorative at first sight. Everyday items are transformed into objects that fascinate us by the structure of the applied surface. Like the topping of a cake, Eilergerhard applies transparent silicon and so achieves a covering of bottles containing washing and cleaning liquid. What we usually find stored under the sink or in the back of some shelves is dragged into public right in front of our eyes. These refashioned items have lost their original designation. No longer usable and freed from their labels they have transformed to abstract objects focused on form and color. Their bodies are wrapped in ropes of shining silicon and their heads carry little crowns. The Kitchenqueens could be seen as symbols for the winners of international beauty contests, all representing the same ideal of beauty. The consequence is the total loss of individuality. In her works the beautiful becomes questionable. Silicon as a material used in plastic surgery is one thing that enters our mind.

Laura Evans fascinates us with an installation that invites us to change our perspective. Dozens of little creatures have come together on floor level. We look down on them and experience a crowd of white forms that are hollow inside, their skeleton is made of chicken wire and the bodies are covered with a thin layer of plaster. Each element is different and has its own characteristics. Some stand up, some lean forward or on to each other and some lay down. With “Colony” Evans has created a microcosm of society that seems to be in search of orientation. Chicken wire and plaster are materials for everyday items that have their determination in keeping things together or preventing external influence and unwanted infiltration. But their bodies are fragile empty hulls, disorientated and vulnerable. How to find your way, what to aim for, where to go, which step to take, which direction to choose – these questions determine our whole life and to find answers we need to find our position in society with the help of our family and friends. And sometimes we need to change our perspectives by taking our time to find an-

Flora Hitzing has transformed the element water into an object made of black plastic foil. Her Wave attracts our attention by a dynamic that transports power and force. Like the deep dark unknown the material seems to swirl like a sticky membrane reminding us of magma. The destructive component is omnipresent, at the same time the desire to touch it arouses, to prove, what has been already analyzed by our intellect: the energetic form is of course firm. Hitzing molds the plastic with her hands by using hot air so the material gains a consistency that enables the artist to shape it. The black substance in parts thickens or stretches out and melts in some areas. The dynamic derives from the perfect interaction between form and material. The impact given by the material stands in contrasting position to the light texture, which is achieved by the
Michelle Lougee chooses for her objects an everyday item – the plastic shopping bag. For Dinoflagellate hundreds of bags were put together in a special technique that can be described as a combination of knitting and weaving. A gigantic organism developed and impresses us with all its little details, showing a cell like surface that protects the inside like a shell though at the same time functions as a life-generating tool. With this transformation of everyday items Lougee interferes with the general impression of the raw material she chose. Thin rustling plastic bags are our companion usually for a very short time. The Dinoflagellate becomes a host for a material that is normally thrown away after use. The understanding of recycling is enriched by this metamorphosis. The dealing with resources is a major topic in Lougee’s work. The Dinoflagellate symbolizes sustainability and makes us reflect on our attitude towards natural resources.

The wall installation by Marina Schreiber establishes an attractive living space for the filigree / delicate looking objects. Like biomorphic abstract creatures, they fan out, surging for a position that once found might be left in the next minute. One wouldn’t be surprised if they suddenly detached from the wall, movements that seems to be already indicated by the shadows on the wall that underline their inherent dynamic. Marina Schreiber uses for her objects discarded electronic resistors, which she puts together in multiple steps. One can imagine that this process takes a long time, symbolizing the growth of life. Each cell is created individually by attaching colorful pearls and sequins. The title Polytloare Microfauna implies the character of transformation with reference to the biological world of Flora and Fauna. The title Mantelzelle describes an imaginary inside of the objects that is mantled by the cell like structure carrying all the necessary information of a DNA to make it become alive. Metamorphosis in the works of Marina Schreiber can be interpreted as classical in respect to Ovid’s understanding freed from mythological sources and transferred into our
time. Like under a microscope all the details of these fascinating organisms are made visible for us by being turned into a microcosm.

Julia Shepley responds in her work to a familiar topic – home. With *Tethering Home* she focuses on the central point of our life. The mobile is the perfect medium for expressing this topic, since it carries the characteristics of metamorphosis within itself. Always in movement it changes its appearance, creates new areas of activity and allows us to look through and behind the transparent forms of architectural origin stating and remembering that nothing will stay the way it seems. Shepley chooses mainly light geometrical forms made of fiber cloth and foil, which she keeps in balance by adjusting a construction of synthetic boning and thread. The mobile reveals the interior that is sewn onto the plane surfaces, inviting us to step closer. A system we know and trust is made visible, a homey atmosphere that symbolizes a society, whose determination is permanent change and transformation. This is embedded in a system that ideally shows transparency and respects the freedom of the individual. The shadows on the wall evoke associations of futuristic architectural models, lacking stability therefore might be seen as a hint, suggesting that we should not take the fundamental value of a home as something for granted.

Hannah Verlin is represented in this show with an object made of natural fibre. Hanging from the ceiling the braided twine finds its way according to gravity and spreads out in singular developing strings. Typical for Verlin’s work is the use of everyday material. In this case she went for sisal twine usually used for packing and tying rough work or parcels. This old-fashioned rope is not heavily processed and became the source for an installation the artist did for a show in Cusco, Peru. With its descriptive title *Entangled* we follow five 24 feet long branches that fall down on both sides of a
metal ring connected to the ceiling. Braided in the traditional way women wear their hair, they untangle about ankle level and stretch out from there into all directions. The raw botanical material with its natural color refers to the landscape and symbolizes the natural world. At the same time Verlin draws a connection to the historical aspect in Peru at the time of the conquest. As a symbol for being under the control of the invaders people were forced to cut their hair. An action determined by violence and brutality, which is expressed by the red wax pointing out this irreversible action. Though in the individual ways that are opened up by the entangled strings at the bottom of the object can be understood as a power that cannot be controlled or reigned, the perspective of a positive development is stressed thereby and can be seen as a general conclusion of hope.

With her sculptures and objects made of industrial metal mesh fabrics Leslie Wilcox creates a world on the borderline between abstract and figurative works, whose torso like appearance shows a certain fragility and vulnerability. The structure given by fine meshes evokes a semi-translucency. Like a thin carapace the fabric covers and mantels the inside nearly invisible body made of the same material and creates a center of energy, whose power is projected by the form of the object. Like a second skin the layers of metal mesh are wrapped around the inside cocooned figure, protecting it from outer influences. The issuing of evolution, of becoming and decay play a central role in Wilcox’s work. The visualizing of inter-stages is increased by the factor of light playing the role of dramaturgy, which opens up astonishing angles of vision. The impact of light in correspondence with the transparent material supports the aspect of transformation in an ideal way.

The Daydreamer of Frauke Wilken is hanging from the ceiling and gives the impression of a calm, resting in itself creature embedded and surrounded by its own skin. As an over dimen-
sioned cocoon it seems to carry a twisted figure that has taken the position of a resting embryo. The skin of the body stands under extreme tension held together by clearly visible seams. The title refers to the phenomenon of a temporary state of being – daydreaming – and announces herewith the aspect of transformation. The object withholds an inner energy that carries the characteristics of the uncontrollable as well as the unpredictable. At the same time the resting object appears vulnerable, like being caught in an inner struggle not knowing for sure whether it will come to a positive conclusion. With its skin-like color the artist achieves an identification of us as a viewer projecting our inner struggles onto this work of art. The surface of the textile is to be seen as a contrast to the voluminous object itself. The pinkish baby-like color promises a smooth and positive resource of life that can be seen in contrast to what is kept inside. The biomorphic language of forms as a carrier of flowing movements implies the option of transformation. The tension between the outer and inner is typical for the sculptures of Frauke Wilken. The inner struggle set in direct connection with the surroundings reminds us of the portraits of the Irish painter Francis Bacon. The questioning of our own position within society and in relation to our own understanding becomes inevitably conscious.

Anette Schwarz
Curator
(top left to bottom right) Fundstück XIX (Wanderer), 2009/10, fleece, hot glue, and wood cellulose; Fundstück XVII, 2010, fleece, hot glue, and wood cellulose; Carcasse Knospe 2, 2012/13, fleece, hot glue; Das Innere zu bewahren I, 2003, fleece hot glue; Das Innere zu bewahren III, detail; (opposite page) Carcasse (water reflections), 2014, fleece, hot glue with works by Marina Schrieber in view

Ulli Böhmelmann
www.ulli-boehmelmann.de

1970 Born in Mainz, Germany
Lives and works in Cologne, Germany

1993-98 University of the Arts, Bremen, Germany

Exhibitions & site-specific installations: Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, Russia, and Japan

Artist Residencies: Germany, Japan, France, and Russia
[left to right] Raíces negras, detail; Raíces rojas, detail; Raíces rojas, 2010, textile, plastic, steel wire; Schwebende Form, 2007, organza, velvet, steel wire; Installation, 2013, various papers, pigments, cloth, wire; Kikiru, 2012, paper, pigment, cloth; o.T., 2013, paper, pigment, cloth; (opposite page) Raíces negras, 2011, textile, plastic, & steel wire

Alexandra Deutsch
www.alexandra-deutsch.de

1968  Born in Karlsruhe, Germany
Lives and works in Wiesbaden, Germany

1988-95  Studied Fine Art at the Johannes-Gutenberg University, Mainz, Germany

1992  Visiting scholar at the E’cole des Beaux Arts, Dijon, France

Exhibitions in Germany and abroad
Artist Residencies & Grants (a selection): Partapur, India; Casa Tres Patios, Medellín, Columbia; Arequipa, Peru; Luxemburg; Belém, Brasil
Rosalyn Driscoll  
www.rosalyndriscoll.com

1945 Born in Hartford, CT  
Lives and works in Easthampton, MA  

Studied Fine Art at Smith College & Silvermine College of Art

National & international exhibitions  
Awards from the New England Foundation for the Arts; the Massachusetts Cultural Council; the Dartington Hall Trust; and the Wurlitzer Foundation of New Mexico  
Member of Sensory Sites, an international artist collective in London, Great Britian

(left to right) Narcissus, 2013, rawhide, photo foil; Paradox, 2011, rawhide; Narcissus, detail; Memories of bones, 2010, rawhide, alabaster; Icarus, 2011 rawhide, copper wire; (opposite page) Incarnation, 2014, rawhide, steel, & leather
Anke Eilergerhard
www.eilergerhard.de

1963 Born in Wuppertal, Germany
Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

1994 Diploma in Communication Design,
Bergische University of Wuppertal, Germany

Exhibitions in Germany & abroad (a selection): Context, Art Miami, Galerie Schmalfuss (USA); Heitsch Gallery, Munich; Flattmannhalle Herne, Ruhr Kunst Museen; Kunstsammlungen Böttcherstraße, Bremen; Kunsthalle Vogelmann, Heilbronn; Staatliche Kunsthalle Karlsruhe; Badisches Landesmuseum; Frauenmuseum Berlin; Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf; Gedok Galerie, Stuttgart

(left to right) Judith, 2013, pigment, silicon, mixed media; Judith, detail; QUELLNYMPHE, 2013, pigment, silicon, mixed media; Installation view; (opposite page) Kitchenqueen international, 2008–12, silicone, plastics, original cleaning liquid
Laura Evans
www.lauraevansart.com

1952 Born in Philadelphia, PA
Lives and works in Boston, MA

1974 BA Hampshire College, Amherst, MA
1981 MFA Boston University, Boston MA
2006 Member of the Boston Sculptors Gallery, Boston, MA

Exhibitions in New England, New York, Chicago, Cleveland, and Miami
Public collections include: Biogen Idec, Boston Medical Center, Boston Public Library, Fidelity Investments, Wellington

(left to right) Seven Sticks, 2011, wood, plaster binding; Orientation, 2012, wire mesh, acrylic; Orientation, detail; Bones, 2011-13 modeling clay; (opposite page) Colony, 2011-14 Chicken wire, plaster wrap, joint compound, acrylic,
Flora Hitzing
www.florahitzing.de

1978 Born in Kiel, Germany
Lives and works in Düsseldorf, Germany

2000-2001 Traveling Scholarship of the Carl-Duisberg Society, Kyoto, Japan
2002-2006 Muthesius Academy of Art, Kiel, Germany
2006-2009 Academy of Fine Art, Düsseldorf, Germany
2009 MFA with Prof. Tony Cragg, Akademiebrief

Exhibitions in Germany & abroad
Artists Residencies

(left to right) absoluter Ort 3, detail; absoluter Ort 3, 2011, plastic; Nachtstück 3, 2013, plaster, graphite; Ton 4, REM, 2012, printing pigment on art paper; Gips, REM, 2013, printing pigment on art paper; Fundament 2, 2012, plaster, wood; (opposite page) Welle, plastic
Michelle Lougee
www.mlougee.com

1967  Born in Arlington, MA, Lives and works in Cambridge, MA

1986-1989  BFA, Boston University, Boston, MA
1992-1994  MFA at Boston University, Boston, MA

Teaches sculpture and ceramics at Lesley University and the Danforth Art Museum.

Exhibition at many New England museums including the Peabody Essex Museum, Chesterwood, and the Art Complex Museum

left to right) **Plume**, 2011, crotcheted plastic bags, wire mesh; **Polycumber**, 2011 crotcheted plastic bags; **Nectoplas**, 2011, crotcheted plastic bags; (opposite page) **Swing/Sway**, 2014, crocheted plastic shopping bags and **Dinoflagellate**, 2011, crocheted plastic shopping bags with works by Flora Hitzing in background
Marina Schreiber
www.marinaschreiber.com

1958 Born in Hannover, Germany
Lives and works in Brandenburg, Germany

1987 Diploma in Sculpture from the College of Hanover and the Academy of the Arts, Berlin, Germany

Exhibitions in Germany and abroad
Award from the Villa Serpentar, Academy of Fine Art, Berlin in Olevano Romano, Italy (1990); Brita - Art Prize, Taunusstein Scholarship of the Käthe Dorsch Foundation in Berlin (1996); Scholarship from the Foundation Kulturfond in the Künstlerhaus Lukas in Ahrenshoop (2001)
(above) Tethering Home #3-#7, 2014, sailcloth, thread, fiberglass rod; (opposite page) Tethering Home #8, #10, & #1, 2014, interfacing fiber sheets, transparency sheets, stitching ink, boning

Julia Shepley
www.juliashepley.com

1956  Born in Boston, MA
Works in Somerville, MA

1980  BFA from Boston University, Boston, MA

Museum and gallery exhibitions in New England, Ohio, New York, Arizona, and South Africa (The Sculpture Center in Ohio, the Danforth Museum, The DeCordova Museum, and the ICA in ME
Public collections include: The Rose Art Museum, The Decordova Museum, The Boston Public Library, Simmons College, Fidelity investments, Bank of Boston
Hannah Verlin  
www.hannahverlin.com

1983  Born in Cheltenham, PA,  
Works in Somerville, MA

2005  BFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (Boston, MA) & Tufts University (Medford, MA)

Exhibitions nationally and internationally; Blanche E. Colman Award (2014); Scholar in Residence, New Bedford Whaling Museum (2013); Saint Botolf Club Foundation Emerging Artist Award (2012); Massachusetts Cultural Council Award (2011)

(above) Fruits of My Fingers, 2014, 576 pieces of edible paper with a thumbprint of the artist in red food coloring on each piece, viewers were invited to eat the paper; (opposite page) Entangled, 2014, sisal twine, red wax
Leslie Wilcox
www.LeslieWilcox.com

1950  Born in Cleveland, Ohio
      Lives and works in Boston, MA

Studied Art at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts,
Boston, MA;  Bachelors from Kent State University, OH

Exhibitions in galleries and museums
Private and public collections: Fidelity Investments, Fed-
eral Reserve Bank, Dedordova Museum, Boston Public
Library, Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts, and Brandeis and
Harvard Universities

(left to right) Uprising IV, 2007, lacquer, woven wire; Curvet, 2007, lacquer, woven wire; Bellows, 2009, lac-
quer, woven wire; Curvet, detail; (opposite page) Tuvular, 2007, lacquer, screen and Yoka, 2007 Lacquer, screen
Frauke Wilken
www.frauke-wilken.de

1965  Born in Göttingen, Germany
Lives and works in Cologne, Germany

1986-92  Diploma and Masters Degree  at the
Academy of Fine Arts, Braunschweig, Germany

1989-90  Studies at the Faculty de Belles Arts in
Barcelona, Spain

2008-2011  Lectureship at  the FH Düsseldorf, Germany

Exhibitions in Germany and abroad
Awards: Sympo-Fibres International, Saint- Hyacinthe,
Montreal/CA; Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York/USA;
Stiftung Kunstfonds Katalogförderung

Ovid’s Girls
Part I:
Installation Photographs

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www.mewo-kunsthalle.de

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Bill Kipp (Boston Sculptors Gallery)
Albert Coers (Kunstverein Tiergarten)
Bernard Hiepe (Kunstverein Tiergarten)
Jürgen Franke, Ralf Bauer, Yan Schönefeld (Ulli Böhmelmann)
Marc Wietstock, Corine Vermeulen, Alexandra Deutsch (Alexandra Deutsch)
David Stansbury (Roslyn Driscoll)
Werner Gerhard (Anke Eilergerhard)
Stewart Clements (Laura Evans)
Flora Hitzing (Flora Hitzing)
Keith Carangelo (Michelle Lougee)
Clements/Howcroft, Julia Shepley (Julia Shepley)
Michael Hischer (Marina Schreiber)
Andrew Pickering, Alex Fok (Hannah Verlin)
Willa Heider (Leslie Wilcox)
Frauke Wilken, Claus Toedt (Frauke Wilken)