



Sophie Hirsch  
**AUTOKORREKT**  
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I have a few questions.

*What does textural intimacy look like?*

Isn't it more than just two textures coming up against one another? There has to be some give and take... like opposite textures colliding, undermining and amplifying each other. Bumpy matte casts of pomegranate guts being squeezed out of a tall thin container with a finish-fetishy surface. All of it black.

*What about a masculine materiality—what would that look like?*

My initial impulse is to call these works masculine because their solidity and their hard, dark surfaces, the way they impose upon the space they are in—leaning out from the wall or weighing heavily into the floor—points to what's traditionally coded as masculinity. Obviously they're not masculine (whatever that means)—they're just tough as shit.

*Will I see you again?*

Often Hirsch's materials seem to have been previously discarded—unwanted factory rejects, the detritus of industrial production.

*But what if post-industrial society is still industrially produced?*

Synthetic materials are softened by organic forms and imperfect supports. Works made of bent PVC pipes and thin, translucent polycarbonate sheets are balanced precariously and fastened to the wall with small, taut rubber straps. Another wall work looks like an open coffin—slick sheets of black acrylic arranged at angles, filled with bunched up bubble wrap coated in silicone. I'm thinking about the sort of gruesome trajectories of a commodity and the whole industrial framework built up around it, that these things explode, recede, collapse, and overpower all at once, that even now a commodity usually has to be packaged and shipped from one place to another, and that this means bubble wrap is both a flow of capital and the thing it flows through. I think this makes sense, since so many of Hirsch's materials were first intended as packaging.

*What about the fire?*

It's true, last summer Hirsch's father's plastics factory burned down. They didn't produce plastics there but extruded them into forms used for packaging things like car parts. It's true that Hirsch had been collecting malformed and damaged pieces from the factory for years, and true that the smaller, square black wall works, for instance, are silicone casts of packaging pieces produced by the factory and bent, warped and melted by the fire. And a large, lumpy matte black sculpture, which looks like it's melting into the floor, literally was: the piece was cast from a melted pile of finished plastic pallets, one of the few things not completely flattened by the fire. But I want to be clear: this show is not about the factory fire, or only in the sense that Hirsch's process and fire share a certain penchant for degrading materials and making them susceptible to environmental and accidental damage. Also: several works which predate the factory fire now appear inspired by it.

*Are you trying to hurt me?*

A black PVC pipe hung high on one wall bends under the weight of a massive sheet of silicone-coated bubble wrap draped over it. The sheet itself folds and tears, gradually coming apart. When you cut a hole in silicone, Hirsch tells me, the material eventually rips. Her works often exert a sort of violence toward materials: they are constituted as much through destructive mechanisms—ripping, tearing, pulling, burning—as in constructive processes like casting and layering. But it's a sort of affectionate violence, enacted repetitively, even obsessively, in meticulous gestures as well as by the forces of accident and time. And anyway, it's not one-sided: you can push, but the material will always push back.

—Dana Kopel

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