



Alice Channer

BY COLINE MILLIARD PHOTOGRAPHS BY THIERRY BAL

"MY POSITION AS AN ARTIST is trying to work through commodification," says Alice Channer. "Fashion and the things I wear are the most intimate examples of that." Her delicate sculptures appropriate and displace the codes of clothing design: Marble is polished into heavy bangles that stand at the base of elastic totems; large sheets of hanging paper evoke both empty canvases and formal kimonos; and her pleated-fabric pieces conjure a bodily presence. Channer's studio is located in a two-story building in the London borough of Hackney. Her London gallery, the Approach, will present a solo show of her work from March 17 through April 17.

STACK OF ELASTICS

"I started to collect elastics because I'm fascinated by stretchiness as a property of objects. I want the works that I make to be sort of stretchy—by which I mean that I want them to move and to change dimensions. The other really exciting thing about these elastics is their colors. I'm interested in the way a certain color becomes very current and fashionable and then it disappears. That purple, for example, is an in-between color—it's very contingent. And I've experienced it first through clothing and shopping."



ANIMAL PRINT FABRICS

"A lot of works for the show at the Approach use these prints. They are all amphibians, and this is important. Amphibians are this strange category of animal, in between the water and the land, and a lot of my work is quite in between things. There is also something about these prints that worked well in some of the drawings I was making. They look very technological."



CIGARETTE PANTS

Cigarette Pants (Red) and Cigarette Pants (Cream), both 2010, cast and powder-coated aluminium, oak dowel. "These are made with two pairs of trousers. They are called cigarette pants and are very narrow, which appeals to me. I like things that are in a condensed form, and I'm also very interested in cigarettes and their materiality. These are aluminium casts taken from the top and the ankles of two pairs of cigarette pants. I would describe the work as an attempt to push two pairs of legs into the wall."



HANGING SCULPTURE

Tight Skin, 2010, digital print on heavy satin. "I always set out to make a 3-D object and end up doing something that is either flat or composed of flat surfaces. When you look at this form from the narrow end, it almost disappears. As you move around it, it stretches. It's as if the work expands and contracts. For his last collection, called Plato's Atlantis, Alexander McQueen made these fantastic—and utterly idealized—digitally printed clothes. I was fascinated by the technique because it brings technology incredibly close to the body, and I wanted to utilize it but not in an idealized way."



TABLE OF PLEATS

"Recently I've been trying to find fabrics that are high tech but not retro. The one on the left is actually a lamé that has metal woven into it. It's weird when metal, which is something really hard, is turned into something really soft. The pleating makes the fabric fleshy. It gives it volume and body."



MANNEQUIN LEG

"For a new series of works, I started trying to stretch fabric around my bent leg or my bent arm and then harden it. Because I was using resin, it was very uncomfortable and there was something too direct about the process. So I bought this leg of a shop dummy, which is also a very commodified representation—the body as a plinth to sell things. I couldn't afford the whole mannequin, so I was given a cheap leg."