

## There's Something Deep Beneath You

When I turn out the light  
he's afraid of what might be,  
(this is an adult);

It's silly but--  
What *might* be?  
The unknown has never been so humiliating.

There's something deep beneath you  
in the bowels of the earth;  
through mines and boulevards alike.

It's cold, solid, hollow and wet--  
I could fit in there.  
Guess what it is?

It's black and hard with a spine, ribs, and maw,  
It slithers through homes unnoticed,  
Sometimes horizontally, sometimes up and down.

It has a body--a half-life?  
but can't die;  
"Expires" is the proper word.

The European Central Bank has this coal-colored snake,  
smells like Chanel covered in clay.  
When it expires; melted hair.

Could you imagine being a billion-dollar building?  
Precarious rebar arms all day,  
Impassive, immortal stainless steel.

Even tellers and security glass will phoenix,  
turn to ash then earth,  
build themselves again



-Karen Archey

Alice Channer: *Half-life*  
May 10 – June 21, 2015

Lisa Cooley is very pleased to present *Half-life*, Alice Channer's second solo exhibition with the gallery. In *Half-life*, fast and slow, object and subject, ancient and contemporary, horizontal and vertical, vertebrate and invertebrate both coalesce and separate to form a new, more singular body of work, including floor sculptures and framed digital prints on crepe de chine silk.

The works in *Half-life* propose alternative physical states and forms of embodiment. All of the works in the exhibition appear to be solid, but are made of unstable matter and parts that remain separate from each other; they have and could still pass through radical changes in state. Channer often begins by stretching an object or material so that it blurs, distorts, and changes scale. In *Granite* and *Concrete*, images of molten lava are massively stretched beyond the height of the gallery ceiling and sliced horizontally, flattened into the gallery walls. Marble rocks assume the form of bubbles and float up from the floor. In *Synthetics* and *Organics*, human bones are impossibly and awkwardly curved to assume the proportions of pre-historic animals. Even wet, heavy clay is forced into long flat slabs, rolled with lengths of tough, thick, ribbed plastic industrial drainage pipe from horizontal subterranean construction projects, pleated and treated like a flat, sheeted industrial material. The moment when a mass of organic underground clay encounters human infrastructure is solidified and brought above ground.

These processes involve radical and not entirely frictionless changes in state—between solid and liquid, animate and inanimate, horizontal and vertical, gravitational and anti-gravitational. These movements open up an in-between place, a *Half-life*, achieved by a kind of material binary, a movement between and across various states of matter.

The works are made up of flat layers of materials and objects that are placed horizontally to each other, but rarely touch. They propose a type of embodiment that is dis-embodied as much as embodied, object as much as subject. If they were bodies, these objects would be bodies as shells, empty and hollow. Their layered surfaces are manufactured by human and non-human bodies and minds, with heavy clay, cold metal, loose fabric, and solid stone. As objects/subjects they half-inhabit strangely and subtly altered in-between physical states. They are horizontal, flat, shell-like, stretched, pleated, curved, stuttering, expanding, and contracting. These weird qualities both awkwardly and elegantly suggest mutations and adaptations, particular and alternative other ways of being. Channer describes the process of horizontal authorship of the works as an authoring “by many different beings, only one of which is me.”

Living amidst these changes in state, and being both able and unable to adapt to them, are fundamental to what it means to be human in the twenty-first century, as such extreme fluxes in state—in scale, time, materials, geology, economics, biology, politics, and society—become more and more characteristic of our age. *Half-life* materially articulates what this experience might feel like.

Alice Channer lives and works in London. Solo exhibitions include *Rockfall* at the Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colorado (2015); *Synthetic Fibres* at the Approach, London, United Kingdom (2014); *Soft Shell* at Kunstverein Freiburg, Germany (2013); *Invertebrates* at Hepworth Wakefield, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom (2013); *Cold Blood* at Lisa Cooley, New York (2012); *Out Of Body* at South London Gallery, London, United Kingdom (2012); *Body Conscious* (2011) and *Worn-work* (2009) at The Approach, London, United Kingdom; and *Inhale, Exhale* (2010) at the Mackintosh Gallery, Glasgow School of Art, as part of the Glasgow International, Glasgow, United Kingdom. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions, including at Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany; Kestnergesellschaft, Hanover, Germany; Künstlerhaus Halle für Kunst & Medien, Graz, Austria; Whitechapel Gallery, London, United Kingdom; Raven Row, London, United Kingdom; Tate Britain, London, United Kingdom; Stuart Shave Modern Art, London, United Kingdom; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York; Lisson, London, United Kingdom; Hayward Gallery Touring, United Kingdom. Channer completed a BA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths College, and an MA in Sculpture at the Royal College of Art, both in London, United Kingdom. Her work is included in the Arts Council Collection, the Tate Permanent Collection, and the Zabludowicz Collection. Channer participated in the 55th Venice Biennale International Art Exhibition, *Il Palazzo Enciclopedico/The Encyclopedic Palace*. Channer's solo exhibition *Rockfall* is concurrently on view at the Aspen Art Museum until May 31, 2015. The exhibition will then travel in July to City Hall Park, New York, for an exhibition organized by the Public Art Fund.