

**OLGA BALEMA
JOHN MCCRACKEN
STELLA ZHONG
OCTOBER 18 - MARCH 1, 2025
OPENING OCTOBER 18, 5-7PM**

The Power Station is pleased to present a three-person exhibition featuring work by Olga Balema (b.1984), John McCracken (1934–2011) and Stella Zhong (b.1993). The exhibition pulls together the varied strains of connective tissue between each artist by focusing on their deployment of sculptural form and distinct use of material and space—specifically where their work pushes into thresholds of inversion, transparency and nonmaterial. There are pathways to be drawn here that contend powerfully with the architectural volume, density and lightness of the exhibition site and with notions of sculpture itself.

Olga Balema's work has been characterized as procedural and intuitive. Her use of materials, process and intervention often yield valent associations about the artwork and its local environment. A volume made from a sheet of clear polycarbonate can reduce, like a drawing or boundary, to a discrete contour, pushing sculpture into something almost two-dimensional. Her chameleon-like objects are ghostly, prosaic and acute. Forms that touch on minimalist trajectories without participating in their ideological import. Instead, Balema's work holds material in moments of active suspension and revelation to remind us of its state, impermanence and transgression as it flips to its opposite. Volume as threshold or gesture. Material as room or information.

In John McCracken's sculptures, this translates to his use of color and surface. McCracken viewed color as a tangible material meant to permeate the surface of his sculptures so that one could “feel... color through and through.” He applied liquid resin—conceptualizing color as a fluid—onto precisely cut plywood volumes, which would then cure into solid form. “From liquid to solid and then back to liquid again, in the visual sense,” he said. He meticulously sanded and buffed the layers, resulting in a highly reflective surface that edges into dematerialization—a pivot at odds with the stark gestalt of its sharply defined shape.

Stella Zhong's idiosyncratic forms follow a similar thread in production. They are hand built structures that are obscure and non-referential. Their cool smoothness has been described as “natant” or timeless, where the natural confronts the unnatural, where “forms curl out [from] water.” The open face interior of CHIP2023 - Splits, 2023 requires the viewer to position flat on their back to access the underside of a sculptural “chip” carrying an embedded video element. The silent metaphysical imagery destabilizes perception while implying an abstract transformation. As with Balema's work, there is a gesture to minimalism—but not as a utopian project. Instead Zhong's sculptures point entropically outward to another time or a space without things, like a starless sky or a dark room. No outlines, but fully real.

Collectively, the work on site doesn't comment on the idioms of sculpture as much as it participates in its calculus. The fact we can't fully know the thing animating these objects is because their reality is itself incomplete and open, pointing to an underlying process, a form of becoming or reality's own self-unveiling. There are pathways to be drawn here. They lead us elsewhere.

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OLGA BALEMA was born in Lviv, Ukraine, in 1984. Balema received an MFA in New Genres from the University of California, Los Angeles, and participated in residencies at the Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, Amsterdam, and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Madison, Maine. Solo presentations of her work have been held at, among others, at Camden Art Centre, London; Kunstverein Nürnberg, Nuremberg, Germany; and Swiss Institute, New York. The artist has participated in national and international group exhibitions at venues including Haus der Kunst, Munich; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland; and Moderna Museet, Stockholm. Her work was also featured in the New Museum Triennial, New York (2015); Baltic Triennial, Vilnius, Lithuania (2018); and Whitney Biennial, New York (2019). Balema is represented by Bridget Donahue, New York and Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles, Croy Nielsen, Vienna, Fons Welters, Amsterdam and Trautwein Herleth, Berlin .

JOHN MCCRACKEN (1934–2011) was an American artist who emerged in the 1960s and his work is associated with a distinctly west coast aesthetic. McCracken's early work was included in groundbreaking exhibitions such as Primary Structures at the Jewish Museum, New York (1966), and American Sculpture of the Sixties at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1967). In 1986, the major survey Heroic Stance: The Sculpture of John McCracken 1965–1986 was organized by P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, New York, and traveled to the Newport Harbor Art Museum (now the Orange County Museum of Art), Newport Beach, California; Fine Arts Gallery, University of California, Irvine; and the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas. In 2011, his work was the subject of a large-scale retrospective at Castello di Rivoli, Turin. Other significant solo shows include those hosted by the Hochschule für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna (1995); Kunsthalle Basel (1995); Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent (2004); Inverleith House, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (2009); and the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, England (2012).

Work by the artist is held in prominent international collections, including the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto; Art Institute of Chicago; Castello di Rivoli, Turin; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal; Musée d'art moderne et contemporain (MAMCO), Geneva; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Harbor, California; Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. The John McCracken Estate is represented by David Zwirner.

STELLA ZHONG (b. 1993, Shenzhen, China) lives and works in New York, NY. She holds a BFA in Glass from Rhode Island School of Design and an MFA from Yale University. Zhong has had solo exhibitions at Antenna Space, Shanghai; ROH, Jakarta, ID; The Intermission, Pireas, GR; Chapter NY, New York; Fanta-MLN, Milan; Adams and Ollman, Portland, OR; and Guan Shan Yue Art Museum, Shenzhen; among others. Zhong has exhibited internationally at Sculpture Center, Queens, NY; The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT; Galerie Marguo, Paris; in lieu, Los Angeles; Peana, Mexico City; YveYANG, New York; Mana Contemporary, Jersey City; HUA International, Beijing; M 2 3, New York; and more. Her work has been reviewed on ArtAsiaPacific, Mousse Magazine, Texte zur Kunst, The New York Times, Art in America, among others. Zhong is represented by Chapter NY.

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