

Repro

Ingrid Jacobsen, Dagmar Moldovanu, Anna Rettl, Adam Varab

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Repro brings together work by four artists who each incorporate print and reproduction technologies into their practice. Thinking about the interaction between operator and machine, the exhibition explores ways in which adjustment, gesture or other influence from the human body can introduce irregularities into mechanical processes. Looking at the potential for such imperfections to be both generative and expressive, rather than problems to be resolved, the exhibition more broadly considers the new possibilities that emerge when irregular bodily movement comes into contact with precise mechanical calibration.

Darkroom procedure is often regulated by a close control of variables relating to light, temperature, timing and chemical concentration. **Ingrid Jacobsen** (b. 1996; SE) deliberately disrupts these protocols in her approach to photographic printmaking. Blacking out the windows of her studio to create a DIY darkroom, the artist suspends sheets of irregularly sized hand-cut photo paper from the wall with magnets and exposes them upright with an enlarger. Negatives are often layered together to create complex multiple exposures. In *Untitled (obscura)* an empty cafeteria-like room is bisected by a yellow image of the base of a glass bottle, framed as if the viewer is looking into a lens. The word camera as we know it, derives from the latin word camera meaning chamber or room. Taking the darkened room as subject and method, in this work Jacobsen literalises a camera obscura - depicting an unclear room as if it is being projected before us through a hole in the wall. At other times Jacobsen rephotographs digital images – like an asparagus captured by a flatbed scanner – blending digital and analogue textures in the process. Jacobsen develops her prints in chemical baths made from hardware store PVC piping. The photo chemistry pools inside these drums, giving the prints blotches or marks that look like sparks or flares. Scratches and additional physical traces often result from cutting and handling the large sheets of paper in complete darkness. The irregular temperature of the developing fluid also creates distorted colour fields that differ substantially from the original tones projected onto the paper. The result is a replacement of the enlarger's tendency towards faithful reproduction with an abstract painterly language, one that divorces photography from documentary and instead gives rise to ambiguous figuration and bold affect within hazy ambient environments.

Dagmar Moldovanu's (b. 1986; RO) photographic series of spurts from public water fountains embraces digital photography's ability to capture in seductive detail the sort of frozen image it is impossible to experience with the naked eye. Taking their titles from the female names given to the faucets (Venus) and shower heads (Eliza) of the Danish plumbing manufacturer Damixa, these peaking arcs of liquid have a covertly sensual quality that seems at odds with the depersonalised stainless material of public sanitary infrastructure. Originating out of sight and out of focus from a mysterious aperture in the fountainhead, the jet of water exits the frame of the photograph before we see it colliding with the surface of the fountain. Moldovanu's photograph focuses on the continuous stream, but encourages us to view it in the context of thirst. Thus it also becomes an image of scarcity, bringing together ideas of fluidity and liquidity at a time when water is increasingly framed as a finite asset and not an abundant resource. Almost breaking the fourth wall of image-making, the water veers dangerously close to the sensitive digital machine it has been captured with. If to consume something is to break it down, water threatens to consume the camera just as the camera digests water as an image. Moldovanu's photography harnesses proximity in another way too, approaching the actual sensory experience of drinking from such a fountain - coming close enough that you can almost feel the sensation of the image in the teeth and in the throat. Drawing a parallel between the shutter release and the push button of the fountain, the work juxtaposes the rigid, programmatic function of the digital camera, with the spontaneous and fluid unpredictability of water in motion.

Like a fountain that recycles water in an infinite loop, a similar logic of reiteration is at play in **Anna Rettl's** (b. 1992; AT) paintings. Frequently quoting art historical compositions, by exposing herself to many examples of an artist's work, Rettl is able to digest the aesthetics, reproduce them and assimilate them into her own paintings. In the work *Satz 2* (2026) ["sentence 2" in German] Rettl has used a commercial flatbed UV-printer to render a digitised garden environment within the painting. Printed in rasterised dots that mimic the serigraphy of artists like Roy Lichtenstein or Sigmar Polke, this simplified outdoor environment was designed in collaboration with the artist's sister, an architect, by referring to the layout of the artist Max Liebermann's garden. Inspired by Monet's garden at Giverny, Max Liebermann created his own garden and used it as the subject of many paintings. Rettl enters into this tradition by realising her own printed digital garden, where she depicts two figures standing closely adjacent to one another. The landscape orientation of the image upends gravitational expectations with the figures jutting outwards to the left instead of standing upright. Whilst Rettl has worked closely from photographs of Ani Bigum Kampe, who modelled for this work, the figures' recognisable faces multiply and warp as they split apart, melt and stretch into one – this time referencing the distorted nude photographs of André Kertész. Layers of references, homage and reproduction accumulate to produce an uncanny contemporary anatomy – one that is built up like a palimpsest of shifting historical paradigms and that is both clearly articulated but also dislocated from a specific cultural context. These are bodies that bridge multiple milieus, informed by changing social and technological contexts, just as they are literally rendered with media from different artistic ages – tempera, watercolour, coloured pencil and UV-print.

A similar attention to anatomy, and particularly to how body parts can be abstracted or fragmented to create new modes of signification, plays an important role in **Adam Varab's** (b. 1993; DK/US) practice. Varab grew up around cel animation and found his way to woodworking through a study of Czech doll-making. At a time when animation feels omnipresent and our experience of screen-mediated reality increasingly ephemeral, Varab's work insists on an emphatically physical approach to digital acceleration, grounded in immutable materials like wood and bronze. Whilst his sculptural work does not literally move, it uses negative space and absence, in contrast to dense presence, to evoke a sense of suspended lineage. Movement would be impossible without its joints; with *Neck* (2024), Varab suspends an isolated neck – one that has been skewed within modelling software, 3D-printed and cast – within a functional shelving unit. Marquetry, an applied craft in carpentry, creates the illusion of two eyes within the surface of the wood. The effect is uncanny and compelling as the brain jumps to recognise a cartoonish face. In *Harris Lines* (2026), two fragile pieces of stained linden wood extend vertically from polished bronze mounts, projecting a similarly uncomfortable visual familiarity – as if we are looking at a wooden femur and tibia, either side of an invisible knee joint. There is a certain bodily intimacy to Varab's works. Referencing the marks that bones produce when placed under external stress, it is as if Varab is looking at the interaction between sculpture and the animate as a way to explore the ways in which bodies reproduce and are rendered. His work feels both, personal and escapist, as they recognise the real material limitations of the body just as they simultaneously imagine ways in which bodies are mediated and might be actively reshaped.

Between different positions in the exhibition, there is a persistent sense that when traces of the body enter into processes of mechanical reproduction, they open new possibilities for understanding. These new possibilities could relate to the relationship between agency and automation, deviation and control, or design as it interacts with influences from the surrounding environment. By framing reproduction as a site of transformation rather than repetition, the exhibition suggests an alternative perspective on the process of copying – one that inverts the promise of sameness and instead looks at the inevitability of significant and unexpected consequences.