

JULY 13 - OCTOBER 6, 2024

Harrison Pearce
Graceful Degradation



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I

The Disruption

Is there a poetic cadence to the sounds of an MRI machine?

You look up, yet down, your body.

The vibrations and halts and grinding... like metal playing in the next room.

An auditory and emotional intrusion; a profound disruption.

Pearce's work encapsulates this state of instability, and the unsettling nature of interruptions.

The genesis of his practice is rooted in a profound disruption that prompted deeper investigation into the nature of perception. Drawing from his encounters with brain anomalies and the ensuing medical procedures, Pearce explores the indeterminacy and ambiguity inherent in understanding of our bodies. Works grapple with the emotional space within medical and technical language, and the unsettling yet universal experience of confronting the unknown in a clinical setting.

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The paintings here are demonstrations of uncertain scenes. Familiar yet uncanny. Smoke billows from screens, and axles turn in organic forms.

Wrought in paint, machines tear and pierce,

and pull and crease.

They bubble and billow through flexing forms. A taffy puller, sewing machine or dystopian cake mixer. They are 'Soft Serve' and 'Swell'.

Pearce interrogates a sustained dualism. Blending organic forms with mechanised components, he challenges a separation. Known and unknown. The mind and body. The sensuality of silicone with the precise automation of pneumatics. The exhibition title itself encapsulates this oxymoronic structure. „Graceful Degradation“ (an engineering term) juxtaposes „graceful“— evoking lifting and lightness — with „degradation“—implying falling and failing. This dichotomy is central to his presented experience. As Pearce paints with airbrush and builds with air, he shines a light on both the deep black voids, and that which resists the fall into nothingness.

Many titles here communicate these double and deeper meanings, such as 'Yield' (to give in and to provide). 'Maladapted,' comments on our status as beings maladapted to reality.

Here, you look up, and down the rising, spiralling building here at the diptych overhead.

It pulls your attention, as its fight ensues. Both pincer and pierced.

Both sides, stark in contrast yet joined in mission, drag you left and right.

II

The Sound

The noises: a mechanical sentence of dots and dashes. A clanging morse code arranging the water in your body. Unstable yet sophisticated.

Rhythmic pulses and jarring sounds embody both the intrusion of technology into the body and a confrontation with the unfamiliar.

A break and a rhythm.

An act of distorted arrangement.

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There is powerful music in this orchestrated display, expertly created through an on-site, live, original composition developed by Liam Byrne in 'Maladapted' and Steven Atkinson in both 'Manifold' and 'Yield'.

Here, the sounds of the viol da gamba, an instrument rich in history, have been transformed to trigger percussive elements, creating a complex, generative, and responsive immersion.

Stratified by the building's staircase, this slowed-down, textural sound – at one time akin to a growling motorbike or whirring drive – shifts the renaissance string instrument into a machine-like foreboding. Clicks and whirrs agitate the sculptures. They force them to yield under pressure. They force them to transform.

This is a space where the boundaries between organic and engineered dissolve, inviting a reconsideration of our relationship with the machines that increasingly shape our lives while presenting a poignant exploration of the limits of language, the nature of consciousness, and the enduring quest for understanding.

Within the context of industrialisation and post-romanticism, Pearce's works examine how humankind has historically sought to control nature through experimentation and intervention, striving for truth – for knowledge. Pearce's work transcends traditional boundaries, inviting us to explore the profound and often disquieting intersections of

mind,

body,

and machines.

His work suggests that contemporary society is experiencing a rupture, where boundaries and certainties are dissolving. This dissolution is reflected in the blurring between borders, genders, and the self, amidst the broader epistemological chaos of the modern world around us.

III

The Unknown

With an MRI comes some waiting.

Pearce's art embodies the idea: „What is it like not to know?“

This question becomes an aesthetic experience, as he embraces the ambiguity that comes with medical and technological interventions: how technologies influence our understanding of reality, diving into the philosophical implications of medical imaging.

MRI images are not like that of an X-Ray. They are computational. They must be deciphered and translated according to a predetermined 'ideal' of an ideal body. Sophisticated images appear definitive but are imbued with ambiguity. They prompt questions about what they truly represent.

Making the invisible visible, both scans and Pearce's work question the reliability of visual perception and the role of existing knowledge in decoding abstract forms.

Here, light and form suggest surfaces - clangy,

jelly,

rubber surfaces.

Is what you are looking at a function, or a fault? Does 'The Certainty of...' present the smoke plume of a breakdown, or a purposeful, bubbling production?

Decoding these scans mirrors the artist's journey through medical uncertainty, capturing the tension between clarity and ambiguity.

Pearce's works delve into the ,epiphenomenology of experience,' transforming physical descriptions of the body into visual and kinetic forms. These pieces explore the gap between physical reality and conscious experience, highlighting the strangeness of certainty and the pervasive recurrence of uncertainty.

An understanding to live with indeterminacy as an acceptable state.

Mollie Barnes



Harrison Pearce

The Certainty of...

2024

oil and acrylic on canvas

280 x 200 cm

110 1/4 x 78 3/4 in

Harrison Pearce

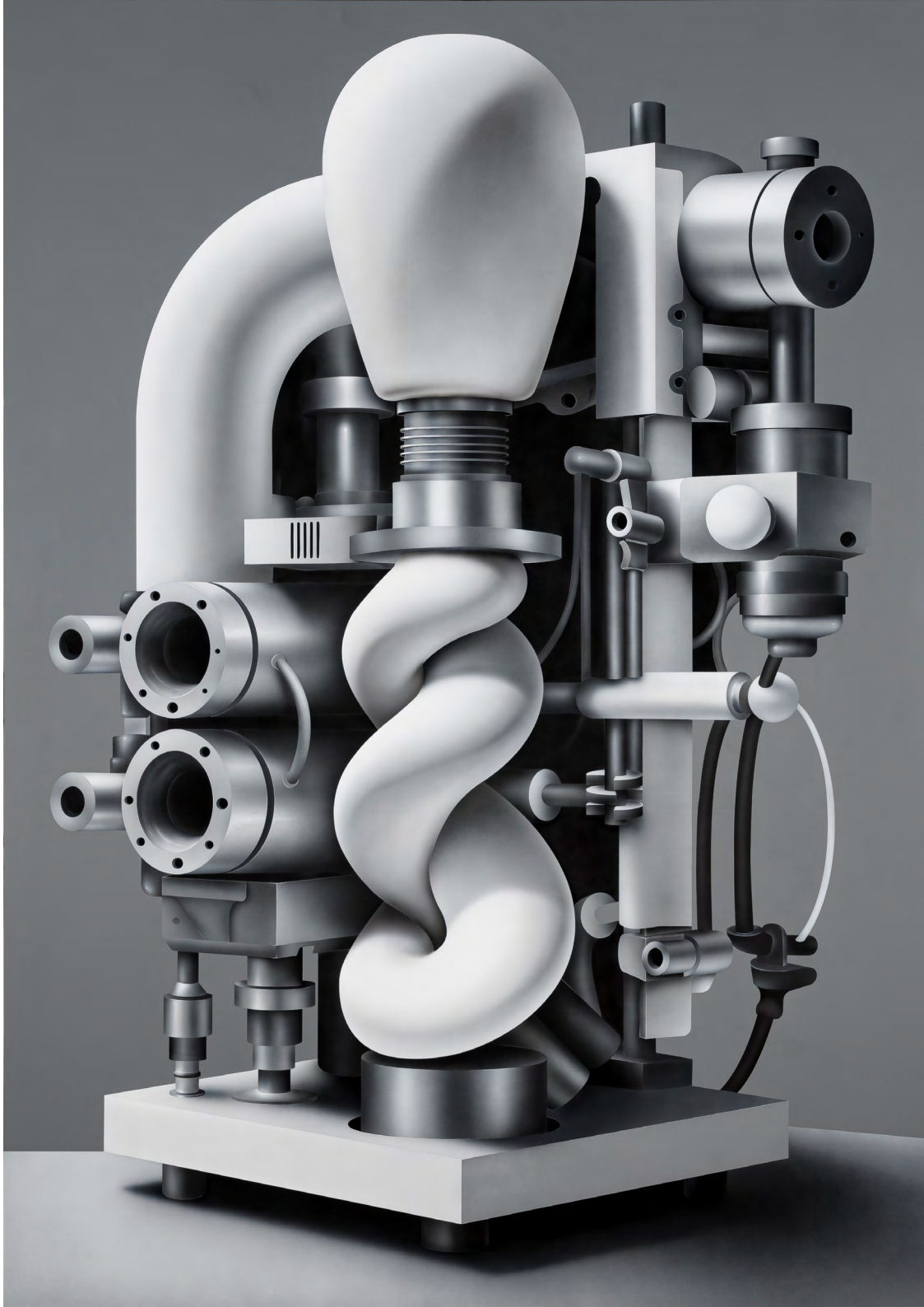
The Measure of...

2024

oil and acrylic on canvas

280 x 200 cm

110 1/4 x 78 3/4 in



Artist

Harrison Pearce

Solo Exhibitions

2024

Graceful Degradation

GNYP Gallery, Antwerp (Belgium)

2023

Auto Soma

MOU PROJECTS, Hong Kong

2022

HOST

Carl Kostyál, London (UK)

2021

Absolute Pressure

RIBOT Gallery, Milan (Italy)

2019

Maladapted

Baert Gallery, Los Angeles (USA)

2017

Interview (prototype)

Residency Show Dulwich College, London (UK)

2016

Intuition Loop

Unit 1 Gallery, London (UK)

Group Exhibitions

2024

The 15th Gwangju Biennale

Gwangju Biennale Foundation

Gwangju (South Korea)

Body Objects

Room 57 Gallery, New York (USA)

2023

Everyone Is A Complete Disappointment

New Galerie, Paris (France)

2021

Stockholm Sessions

Carl Kostyál, Stockholm (Sweden)

2020

*Friends and Friends of Friends, Schloss Museum, Linz
(Austria)*

2019

Bursary Award Show II

Grizedale Forest, Lake District, Cumbria, UK

2018

Bursary Award Show

Royal Society of Sculptors, London (UK)

YCT Instagram Show

The Lightbox Museum, Woking (UK)



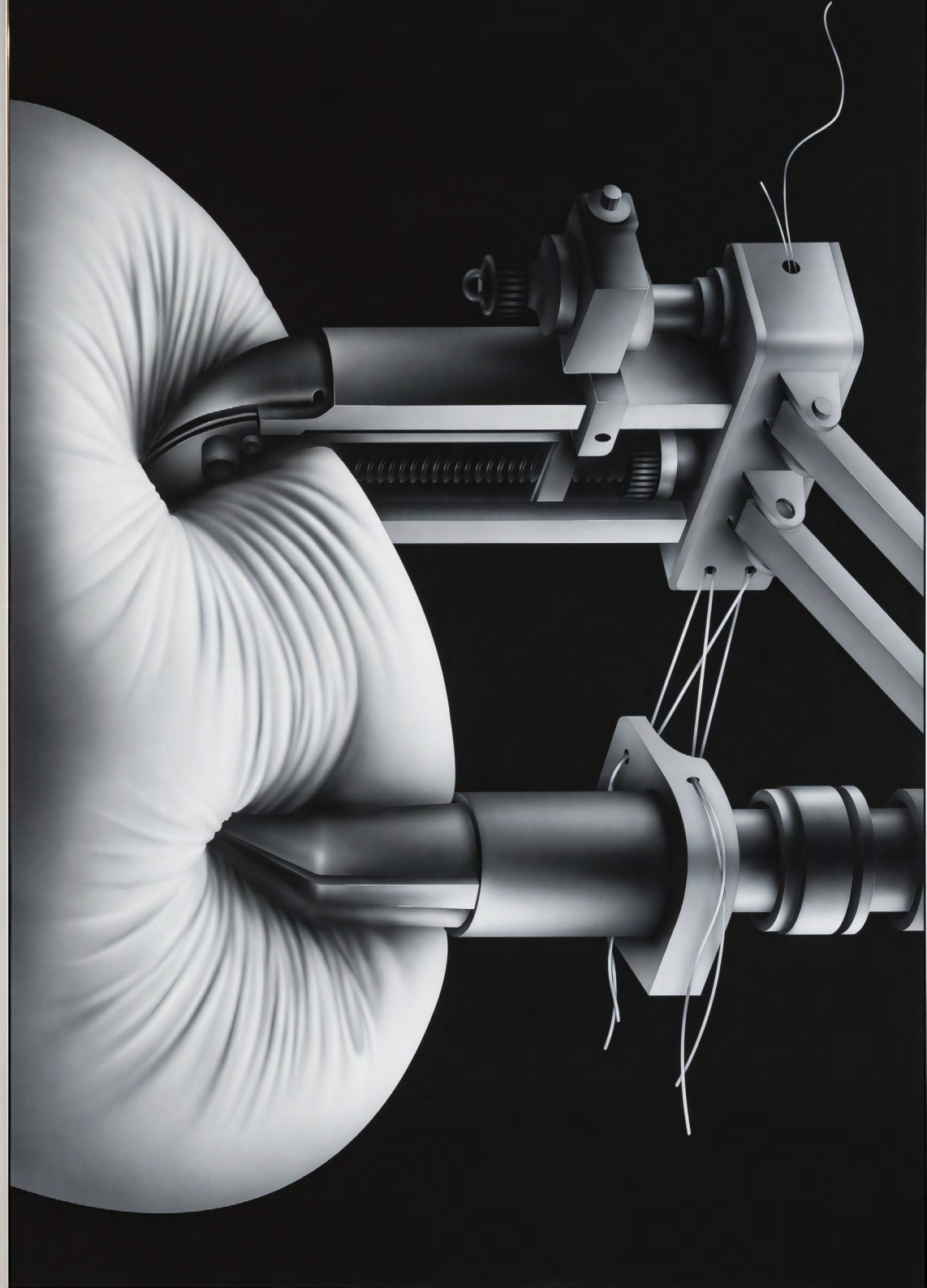
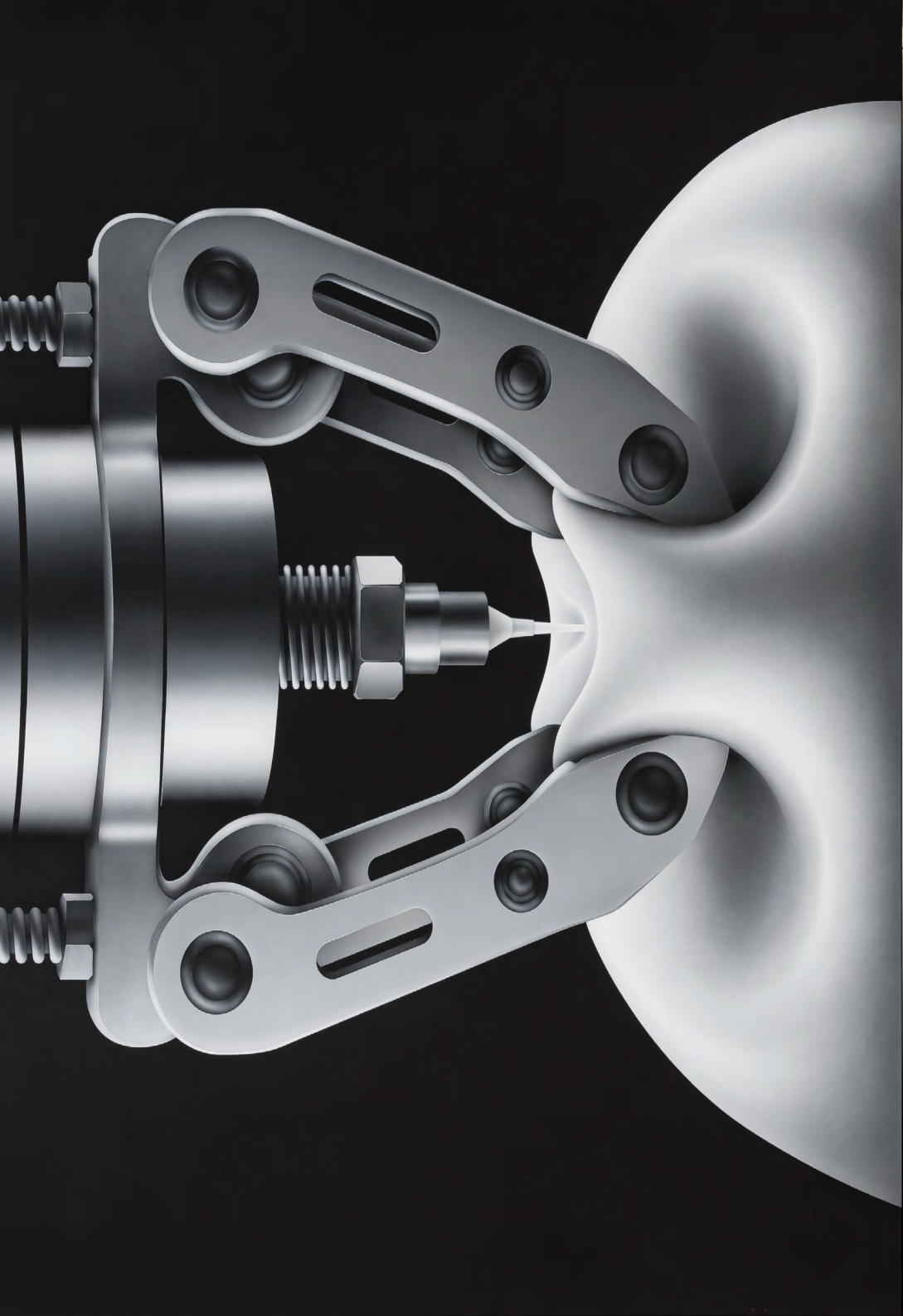
Installation shot of Harrison Pearce's exhibition *Graceful Degradation* at GNYP Gallery Antwerp in 2024

Harrison Pearce
Resonator
2024

oil and acrylic on canvas

100 x 90 cm
39 3/8 x 35 3/8 in





Harrison Pearce

In his work, the London based artist Harrison Pearce (b. 1986, UK) examines the mind-body duality, which has been an enduring problem of modern philosophy of mind. The minimal, sleek, industrially shaped sculptures in Pearce's kinetic installations and thereto corresponding paintings explore an interplay between mechanical elements and organic forms that navigate the boundary between humanity and artificiality.

Harrison Pearce holds a BA in Fine Art from Winchester School of Art, an MA in philosophy from the University of London and an MFA from City & Guilds of London Art School. Recent solo exhibitions include Mou Projects in Hong Kong, Carl Kostyál in London and Baert Gallery in Los Angeles. His work will be exhibited at the Gwangju Biennale 2024 curated by Nicolas Bourriaud.

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