

PRESS RELEASE***Raw Nerves*****3 November 2022 – 14 January 2023**

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An object is said to be precarious if it has no definitive status, an uncertain future or final destiny: it is held in abeyance, waiting, surrounded by irresolution. It occupies a transitory territory.

— Nicholas Bourriaud, 2009

The language of precarity envelopes nearly every aspect of our daily lives. Instability, risk, contagion and collapse – these are the terms in which we navigate the world today. In place of rigidly repressive forms, claims to freedom, productivity and self-actualisation are marshalled to excuse a politically induced condition of uncertainty. Its presence anxiously affects not only the safety of our livelihoods and relationships but the integrity and welfare of our material bodies and cognitive states. Under this system, we feel as much—or perhaps even more than we know: that failing social and economic networks support some more than others, unequally exposing us to the indelible scars of austerity, insecurity and violence. It is a brutal and ever shifting landscape of indeterminacy and constraint, in which the art of survival relies on a turbulent coalition of newfound commons, hidden enclaves and accelerating drives to escape.

This age of precarity, arrested by feelings of disorientation, hyperactivity and panic, signals the acute intermingling of bodily and affective experience with our surrounding social and political environment. It is raw, visceral and sparse. Nerves are stretched, pinched and severed: we are exhausted by zombie governments that fail to address the alarming drumroll of imminent political crises; inundated by digitally-saturated worlds that short-circuit meaningful experience for instant and transitory pleasure; foreclosed by a rapidly diminishing aperture for alternative or optimistic futures. In the unknowable landscape of precarious life, the silhouette of our emotional architecture is increasingly dissonant and harsh. From this circumstance we must find new ways to articulate the tenuous position we find ourselves in, and perhaps in doing so will discover new tolerances for conditions of ambiguity, contradiction and darkness.

Raw Nerves brings together new and acclaimed voices in sculpture to present the visual and psychological impacts of this precarious order – all the while offering moments of intimacy, personal reflection and liberation. Speaking to the urgency of our moment, the exhibition scrutinises the economy of form and materiality, from the legacies of minimalism to post-industrial production, through to contemporary formulations between sculpture and cultural discourses of identity, mythology and posthumanism. Speculation and fantasy come together with brute and compelling emotional realism, foregrounding stories that evoke the rawness of the world we live in now - interrogating the fragility of the human condition and the carceral structures that inhibit our world, tirelessly searching for new and alternative ways of being.