Unfortunately this level of engagement is denied other artists showing film within the exhibition. For an institution specialising in this medium, there is an unexpectedly high level of sound bleed between works. This becomes apparent in viewing Jessey Tsang's *Breathe in / Breathe out*, another new commission and the second film projected in the show. The haunting piano accompaniment to two dancers performing – moving, meditating – within a wooded landscape is shattered variously by drumbeats from Zina Saro-Wiwa's film of couples kissing in the previous room, and hammered anvils from Magdy's work in the next. While this somewhat unsettles the contemplative mood, the problem is worse in Magdy's installation where Tsang's piano soundtrack can be more literally described as haunting, hanging around when it really ought to be gone. Additionally peppered with drumbeats and occasional jazz singing from the previous installations, the largely ambient soundtrack of Magdy's film is lost. Although this audio clash evokes the whirl of the funfair, it is a shame for an artist like Magdy, who has previously noted that 'sound is essential in my work'.

However, the show excels in the visuals. The moving-image works are impeccably projected, crisp, large and vivid, making use of the new expansive gallery space which, although a similar square-footage as Cornerhouse, is all on one level instead of split over three. The show, and organisation, should also be lauded for supporting the creation of significant artworks through the many commissions, clearly produced to a high quality. It would be worth visiting the show to see these alone. ∎

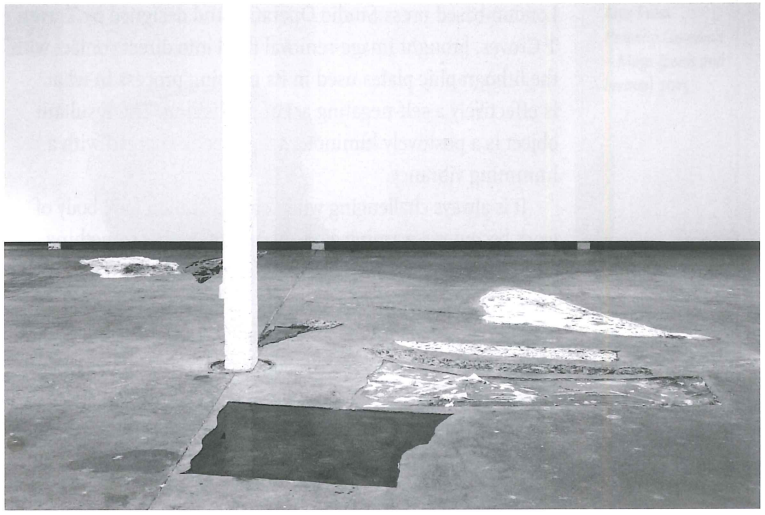
ELEANOR CLAYTON is a writer and curator based in Manchester.

Samara Scott: Silks

Eastside Projects Birmingham 16 May to 11 July

Cut into the worn concrete floor of this former cabinetmaker's workshop is an archipelago of roughly hewn shallow recesses, filled to brimming with a fecund array of domestic perishables. Grouped together under a title that suggests a lateral act of softening or luxurious unfurling, these 'silks' present a network of purposely conceived new works for Eastside Projects by the London-based artist Samara Scott. The result is a stunning series of iridescent puddles that shimmer, sprout or conceal their contents engrossingly, creating a post-industrial pond-scape for quiet contemplation. Scott is evidently a connoisseur of the iconic paraphernalia of insipid 'lifestyle' consumerism, incorporating Himalayan rock salt, seaweed, crab-eye beans and the now generationally ubiquitous Vita Coco natural coconut water into her repertoire; all hollow promises of vitality and holistic equilibrium retained intact.

Substantiated by quotidian chemical detergents, homeware and fashion accessories (I glimpsed air-fresheners, fabric softeners, feather boas, scented candles, make-up sponges etc), these materials attempt to form a constellatory portraiture, a crystalline image of contemporary consumption that focuses on the raw matter constituting, nourishing or assisting in the maintenance of our bodies in an era of pronounced biopolitical production. It is a tidy conceit, and it is used to unfold a



'Silks' installation view

sculptural dramaturgy reminiscent of the poured floor pieces of Lynda Benglis (Interview *AM384*), querying the way that gendered subjectivities might be materially forged.

In contrast to Scott's previous show 'Harvest', hosted by The Sunday Painter in January 2014, these new works are not bathed in the warm neon glow of pink-purple light, but allowed to generate their own radiances. *Satin City*, all 2015, is a gelatinous fissure that modulates colour like a piece of garish molten confectionery, while *Clubbable Genes* presents a matte pool of coagulated baby-blue conditioner studded with opalescent jellies. *Rash Grin* sinks white denim through a pool of black liquid, suggesting a Balenciaga boutique run through a petrochemical juicing process.

These pooled accumulations of detritus become oversized petri-dishes, laboratories of fecundity in which the active properties of each combined ingredient are allowed to blossom – through crystallisation, rot or evaporation – into miasmatic topographies, zen-like enclosures, appropriate cultivations for an era of Pacific garbage patches, smouldering landfill sites, coastal dead zones and pharmaceutically afflicted organisms. The effects are startling, but it pays to navigate the peripheries of these puddles with a keen eye for detail while asking solemnly what forms of complicity this manner of work enacts, where its criticality might reside and, perhaps most importantly, what such a dispiritingly comfortable display of expenditure might betray about our neoliberal complacencies – and the limitations of such ambivalent and seemingly fatalist gestures.

It is difficult not to be swayed by the sumptuousness of this work; its chosen media are calibrated to make a brazen appeal to the senses. This often left me feeling unsure as to whether Scott is taking a position on some of the urgent matters her sculptures suggest, or merely performing a gleeful, complicitous and ultimately benign exacerbation of material excess, sheltered from criticism by its mute entanglement within the actant matrices of a 'vibrant materiality'.

This isn't to suggest that the work is incapable of producing brilliantly reflective collaborations. Caspar Heinemann's *Narcissus (Hi Saturation)*, a text produced in response to Scott's residency at Almanac Inn, Turin, is a profoundly erudite, demanding and excellently pitched reconfiguration of Greek myth that reads Scott's output as an opportunity to think beyond bounded notions of gender – a welcome supplement to 'Silks'. Scott's own book, *Drunk Complexions*, just published by