

DAVID DOUARD

Text by Tim Gentles
Art in America
2 June 2014

It's no secret that beneath the sleek, digital surfaces of present-day life lies a dark, all-too-material underbelly. The excess and waste of today's technology as well as the chaotic overflow of information formed the basis of "juicy o'f the nest," Paris-based artist David Douard's first show at a U.S. institution.

On view with three other solo exhibitions, the show occupied a large, yellow-walled enclosure at the back of the Sculpture Center's large main space and presented video, sculpture and audio works (all 2014) arranged into installations that at times bled into one another. With the sculpture *INE'O'] MY. SWALLO*, Douard fashioned metal grating, typically used for computer ventilation systems, into a straw-lined cage, loosely wrapping bands of steel around the structure. Plastic tubing circulated fetid, off-color water between two Plexiglas basins—one inside the cage, the other appended to its side. Repurposing industrial scraps into a makeshift incubator that nurtures the organic processes of bacterial growth and decay in the scummy water, Douard undermined the technologically advanced ends to which such materials are usually deployed.

Hanging from a nearby beam overhead was the two-part *NESS COMP – ASSION* (2014). A disturbing, humanoid figure possessed an elongated head and queasily bent torso made of plaster with limbs of steel rods. Across from it was a construction of chicken wire, cardboard, plastic and wood—halfway between a birdcage and a tree house. Rotating without pause at an alarming clip, the structure contributed a hostile-feeling kineticism to the show, while establishing a physical equivalent of the disordered, unruly seas of data we increasingly find ourselves navigating.

Multiple sound, video and textual components, often seemingly incomplete, added to the sensory

overload. Two screens mounted next to *INE'O'] MY. SWALLO* showed a roughly animated loop depicting water spilling messily into the mouth of a disembodied head. Fragmentary, ambient beats played from a speaker in the corner of the room, as well as through headphones scattered on top of a black leather couch. Elsewhere, pages of text in the same opaque, code-like language of the show's title were attached to the exhibition's walls. Assembled, according to the gallery, from "various sources," these sonic and textual elements recycle fragments of media, and there is a sense that meaning begins to unravel in the face of an excess of information.

With so many disparate elements, "juicy o'f the nest." felt unfocused and overwhelming at times. One could see this as a conscious strategy, however, with Douard creating an environment pulsing with moments of both entropy and synthesis. The artist enacts a kind of violent return of the material, not dissimilar to Jon Rafman's ash-covered gaming den in his recent exhibition at Zach Feuer. But where Rafman melancholically exposes the gulf between high-definition video game worlds and the lived reality of those who play them, Douard allows for no such distinction, collapsing the material and immaterial effects of our networked lifestyles.

<https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/aia-reviews/david-douard-61739/>