

ARTFORUM

London

“Matter & Memory”

ALISON JACQUES GALLERY

16 - 18 Berners Street

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Though the exhibition takes its title from a text by Henri Bergson, in the gallery one is also apt to think of E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web*. The show brings together work by seven artists of disparate origins, among them Czechoslovakia, the United States, Brazil, and Germany. In White's story, the usually unobserved web transforms into a floating sign of a mysterious, laboring consciousness. In “Matter & Memory,” humble materials such as twine, plaster, and paper, through various transformations, become articulate, witty, or deceptive witnesses of human experience. Spiders seem to have been at work: British artist Helen Barff fished twenty-eight hand-size objects from the River Thames and covered them in a gossamer bone-colored felt for part of her ongoing series, “Untitled (RTS),” 2004–14. Here, fragments of London's urban detritus become formally seductive as they are forced into a soft-wool masked amnesia by Barff's busy hands.

Matter can't always be trusted. In Czech artist Maria Bartuszová's *Untitled*, 1985, a white mass hanging from the ceiling on a length of twine bulges through a twine web like fresh mozzarella, and seems to seep despite the fact that it is made of plaster. Rather than a triumphal feat of sculptural trompe l'oeil, Bartuszová's globular dangling cocoon reminds us that objects themselves can be articulate enough to dissemble. The cleverest conceit is carried out by German artist Charlotte Posenenske's “Vierkantrohre Serie D” (Square Tubes Series D), 1967–2014, modular galvanized-steel ducts that can be combined and positioned any way as desired. Attached to the floor or ceiling like functional ducts, they escape notice, a cross between Minimalist sculpture and a camouflaged predator.

The artists in this show belong to roughly two generations: one born in the 1930s and the other in the 1970s. “Memory” can be as big as the geological time alluded to in Brazilian neo-concretist Erika Verzutti's *Jupiter*, 2013, a slab of bronze posing as a fossil, or it can be as circumscribed as one artist's debt to her elders.



Maria Bartuszová, *Untitled*, 1985, plaster, 13 3/4 x 10 x 10”.

— *Julia Langbein*