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## Dora Budor

NEW GALERIE



**View of "Dora Budor,"**  
2015. From left: *The Host, or You*, 2014; *Mental Parasite Retreat 1*, 2014; *The Architect, Slowly Crawling*, 2014.

Creepy as a scene from a sci-fi blockbuster, Dora Budor's exhibition "The Architect's Plan, His Contagion and Sensitive Corridors" invaded the gallery with swaths of synthetic skin, severed cyborg prostheses, and images of smoldering, wreckage-filled landscapes. In fact, it's all "screen-used" stuff you might have seen at the movies. Budor reclaims the materiality of silicone scars, cyborg body parts, and other substances specifically designed for digital capture, manipulation, and consumption. Removed from their original contexts, these artifacts of imaginary worlds appear significantly less convincing than they do at the multiplex, but no less menacing. The threat she describes is neither space invaders nor robot time-travelers, but the disintegrating boundary between the virtual and the actual. In doing so, she reconfigures what feels real in a culture increasingly obsessed with artificial experiences.

The most straightforward example of fantasy clawing its way into reality could be found in a group of postapocalyptic landscapes. Digitally collaging sketches by Industrial Light & Magic (George Lucas's visual-effects company) of a scene from *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* (2003) with found images of actual car crashes, Budor seals the resulting fantasy/reality composites under a thick layer of clear resin. Like glass in front of a framed painting, this glossy varnish physically and metaphorically separates the viewer from the image. In these works, however, the barrier is breached. A slender protuberance identified in the checklist as a "screen-used melted cyborg finger prop" reaches past the rubble, out of the picture plane, through a once viscid, now hardened membrane, and into real space.

Appearing to colonize the gallery walls from the inside out, four wall-mounted sculptures—*The Architect, Loss at the Surface*; *The Architect, Slowly Crawling*; *The Architect, Infected at the Bone*; and *The Architect, Offsite Injection* (all works 2014)—conjured another alarming rupture into real space. Supported by a network of pipes and conduits, TV-size stainless-steel armatures displayed large rectangular sheets of pale-pink silicone decorated with production-quality SFX transfer scars designed for the 2014 fantasy film *300: Rise of an Empire*. Turning the walls inside out to expose an alarmingly corporeal matrix, Budor uses materials intended to represent skin on-screen and, perversely, creates screens of skin.

More fleshy silicone appeared in *Mental Parasite Retreat 1* and *Mental Parasite Retreat 2*, state-of-the-art cinema armchairs whose original cushions the artist has replaced with replica casts made of "Dragon Skin." Soft and tacky, this material is used by special-effects-makeup artists to create zombies, werewolves, aliens, and other popular on-screen ghouls. By bringing behind-the-scenes movie magic into the audience's domain, Budor challenges the passivity of the viewer comfortable and untouchable in his double-cup-holder throne. Out of the back of each seat a chest plate worn by Bruce Willis in *Surrogates* (2009) breaks through the fleshy upholstery and appears to breathe, thanks to interior animatronics. The movie-chair-come-alive recalls a vibrating-seat gimmick used by theaters screening *The Tingler*, a 1959 horror film about a human parasite that feeds on fear. Though that stunt seems quaint compared to today's 3-D and IMAX experiences, Percepto, as the tingling-seat technology was called, contextualizes Budor's work within a long history of Hollywood's attempts to encroach on reality.