

November 11, 2021 – February 18, 2022

# Soft Allergy Cameron Clayborn



**DEPS Artist Profile**

# Soft Allergy

Cameron Clayborn, Judith Brotman, and Claire Ashley  
Curated by Meg Duguid

*Soft Allergy* is born out of the collaboration of individual practices. In a series of call-and-response installations, where edges are present yet hard to determine, the artists in this show have pushed and pulled, upending and uplifting each other's practices. Meeting every three weeks over Zoom since 2020, the artists developed the show virtually and by trading material and works in the mail along with toiling in their studios.

Not only does the exhibition consist of singular objects from the artists' individual practices that are placed in relationship to one another, but each artist has worked on, embellished, painted, sewed into, and/or incorporated spoken work, audio, or video inside of another's object. These actions spur a number of comfortable and uncomfortable relationships that are optimistically dark, bringing out issues of gender, race, and material. The works in the show exude the formal, material, and conceptual struggles of their co-creation—they are generative and intuitive, and so the show is always in a state of being created.

Excitingly, during the run of *Soft Allergy*, a satellite exhibition, *Tender Irritant*, viewable from the windows will take place at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago Galleries located at 33 E. Washington St. Produced in the same manner as *Soft Allergy*, the work in *Tender Irritant* acts as a phantom appendage functioning as both companion exhibition and vigorous reaction simultaneously.

Glass Curtain Gallery – Columbia College Chicago  
1104 S Wabash Ave, 1st Floor, Chicago, IL 60605  
Monday – Wednesday, Friday, 9am – 5pm  
Thursday: 9am – 7pm

*Tender Irritant*  
December 20, 2021 – January 12, 2022  
SAIC Galleries  
33 E Washington St, Chicago, IL 60602  
[www.saic.edu/exhibitions](http://www.saic.edu/exhibitions)

# Cameron Clayborn

**Cameron Clayborn** was born in 1992 and was raised in Memphis, TN. He lives and works in New Haven, CT. Clayborn's practice addresses the relationship vulnerability has to power. Their work is materially rooted, and combines elements of Postminimalism, craft, performance, and spirituality.

He has exhibited nationally and international with solo exhibitions and venues including Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, Germany (forthcoming), Art Basel Statements with Simone Subal Gallery in Basel, Switzerland where Clayborn was awarded the Baloise Art Prize, Simone Subal Gallery in New York and Boyfriends in Chicago. He has shown in group exhibitions at venues including Bradley Ertaskiran in Montréal, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart in Stuttgart, Germany, Casemore Kirkeby in San Francisco, FIAC with Simone Subal Gallery in Paris, Mildred's Lane in Beach Lake, PA, Magenta Plains in New York, and Heaven Gallery in Chicago among others.

**Website** [camclay.com](http://camclay.com)

**Instagram** [@cameroncharlesclayborn](https://www.instagram.com/cameroncharlesclayborn)



*Static In The Gelatinous (Ode to FEAR.)* (detail), 2019-2021  
video Installation  
5 minutes and 30 seconds

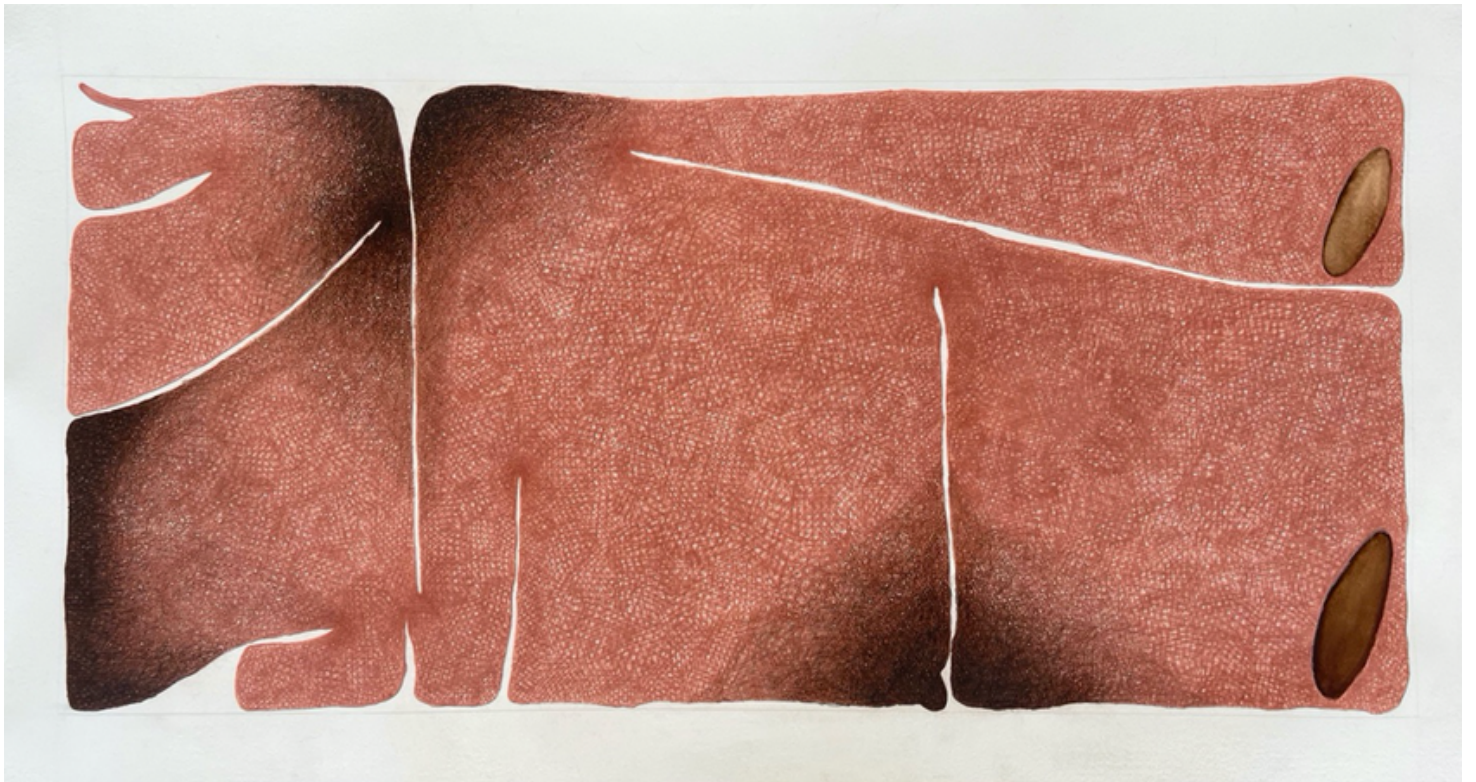


*homegrown #1, 2021*

hair beads, insulation, stucco ceiling paint, and wire rope  
95" x 43" x 3"

image courtesy of Simone Subal Gallery

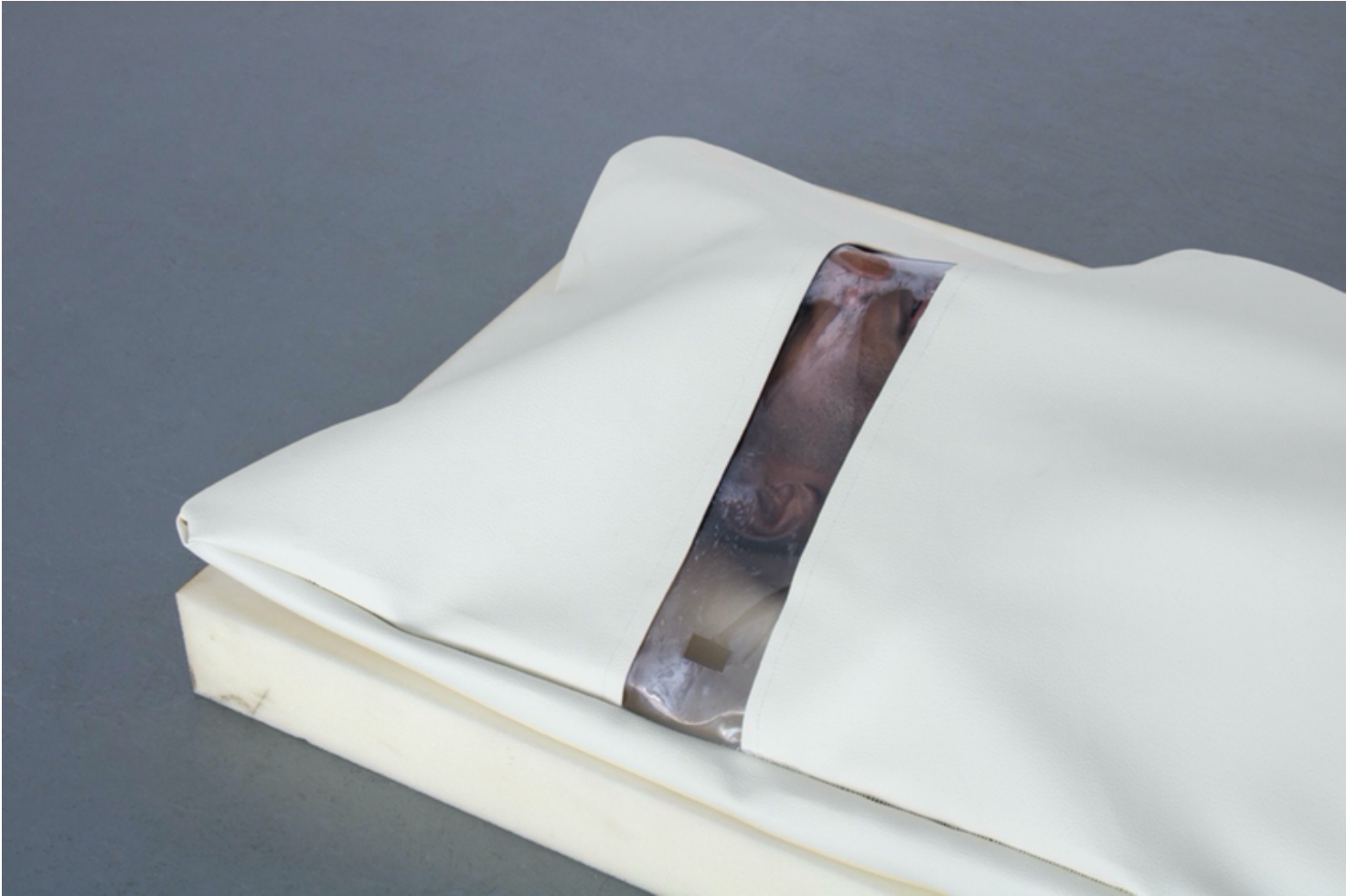
photo by Studio Shapiro



*a father (exposed to light) #3, 2021*  
colored pencil and watercolor on paper  
20" x 38"



*roompiercer (with tool)*, 2021  
aluminum and steel  
4.5" x 3.5" x 4"



*Bodebag* (detail), 2016-ongoing  
satin, zipper, participants





*Soft Allergy* installation view, Glass Curtain Gallery  
photo by Jonathan Castillo



*Soft Allergy* installation view, Glass Curtain Gallery  
photo by Jonathan Castillo



*Soft Allergy* installation view, Glass Curtain Gallery



*Untitled*, 2021  
photo by Jonathan Castillo



*cushioncontainerbag (thigh), 2017-2021*  
photo by Jonathan Castillo



*Untitled*, 2021  
photo by Jonathan Castillo

# Interview with Cameron Clayborn

## Conducted by Kaylee Fowler

**Kaylee Fowler:** What role has collaboration taken in your practice?

**Cameron Clayborn:** Collaboration hasn't been a part of what I do. I would say this was the first time I truly collaborated on something.

**KF:** For this exhibition, you and the other artists involved meet over Zoom every three weeks since 2020 to develop the show virtually. How has collaborating over Zoom been different from collaborations in the past? Did you approach the work differently than how you might in your own practice due to the unusual circumstances?

**CC:** Honestly no, it didn't alter my approach, but it did alter the speed I typically make things. It took a bit of time to receive materials, so there was a lot of waiting; waiting to receive things, then sit with the things I got, then working from there.

**KF:** Your work is rooted in materials, and often explores the relationship vulnerability has to power. What do you think is the connection, if any, between the materials you chose for a piece and how that piece is perceived within these frameworks of vulnerability and power?

**CC:** I can't say there is a definite connection between the materials I choose and vulnerability/power.

**KF:** There is a lot of play with scale in the works of *Soft Allergy*; I think of a video piece of yours that is projected slightly larger than life on the wall. What are some of the different impacts and effects that scale can have on a piece that interests you, and how has working on this exhibition virtually for the past year effected your conception of scale in a piece?

**CC:** I feel like scale was determined, and for me, realized at the time of install. In the studio, I was working quite small. I perhaps, for better or worse, didn't consider how they would ultimately shrink once in the gallery, especially alongside Claire's larger than life inflatables. At first it bothered me, but now I see that it wouldn't have emerged any other way. I usually make small works, things that can be easily handled. Yet, when it came to the projection, where my body is virtually in the room with you, it's best that I be bigger than my actual my body, that's a moment where scale gives power to the vulnerable situation shown in the work.

**KF:** How has your perspective on and practice of performance changed during the pandemic, and what adjustments do you think you will maintain in your practice as restrictions to in-person events begin to lift?

**CC:** Prior to the pandemic, I was working exclusively on performances. They involved a lot of breathing into home-made inflatables and then deflating them. Needless to say, I couldn't continue showing those works in front of a live audience. I eventually went into making videos for a while, but slowly lost interest. I am just now beginning to work on performances again and hopefully will sharing one in the coming months.

**KF:** What were some of the unique challenges you faced in this exhibition, and is there anything you learned from the *Soft Allergy* installation that you will take into the rest of your practice?

**CC:** I learned many many many things from this exhibition. The main challenge was the pandemic, which for the process of creating an exhibition, is like making something in pitch black darkness. It was hard at times to sustain the morale, but what I learned, which

# Interview continued

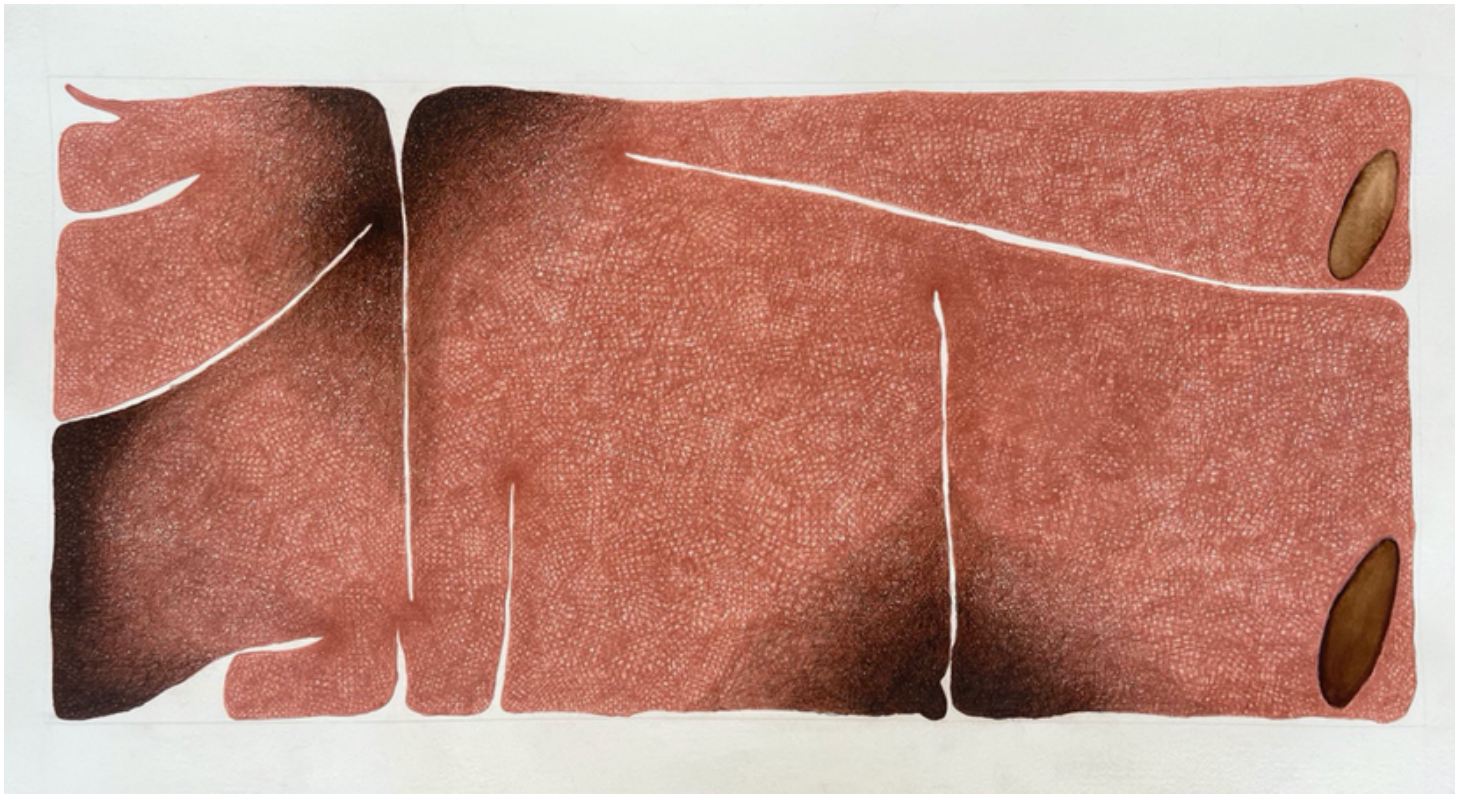
I will cherish for the rest of my artist waking life, is how to be there for another artist, supporting one another, and creating with another – that it's actually possible.

**KF:** What do you hope viewers of *Soft Allergy* will take away from this exhibition, whether about collaboration or your individual practice?

**CC:** I hope viewers see in *Soft Allergy* that everything is pretty damn messy, everything is messy! Perhaps it always was and will always be that way – so don't resist the messiness, accept it and work from there.







## The DEPS Artist Profile Series

**The DEPS Artist Profile Series**, presented by Columbia College Chicago's Department of Exhibitions, Performance, and Student Spaces (DEPS), is a virtual publication on select artists involved with the DEPS Galleries and the Columbia College Chicago community. Our goal with this series is to connect artist and viewer on a deeper level, and to highlight the amazing works and thoughts of our featured artists through interviews, artist biographies, and catalogs of work. Art has always been a way to connect with others, no matter where one may physically be. We hope by presenting the creativity and insights of the people involved in the DEPS Artist Profile Series that viewers may have one more way to stay in touch with and support the arts community.

The DEPS Artist Profile Series is managed by Fine Arts major and DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Kaylee Fowler. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Learn more at <https://students.colum.edu/deps/glass-curtain-gallery/exhibitions/2021-22/soft-allergy>.

Contact information: Mark Porter, [mporter@colum.edu](mailto:mporter@colum.edu) / 312.369.6643  
Glass Curtain Gallery: 1104 S. Wabash Ave, 1st Floor, Chicago, IL 60605  
Hours: Monday- Wednesday, Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Thursday, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

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