

Kate Casanova
Gut Feeling

May 14 - July 9, 2022

YI GALLERY

254 36th Street, B634, Brooklyn, NY 11232





Viscous Euphoria, 2022
Paper clay, gypsum, foam, wire, acrylic paint
7.5 x 6 x 5 in
19.1 x 15.2 x 12.7 cm

Kate Casanova: *Gut Feeling*
Pamela Meadows

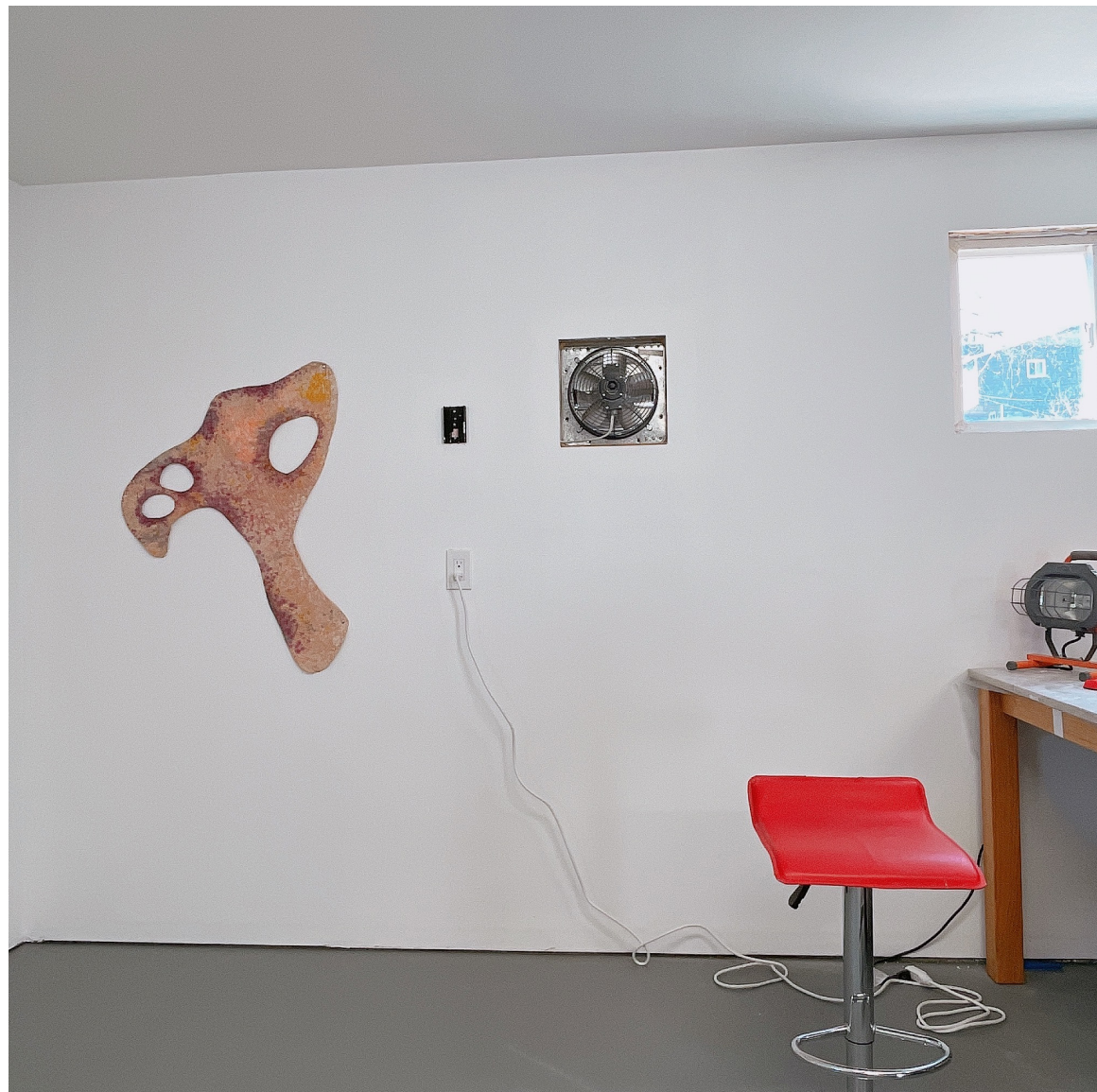
Kate Casanova's latest collection of hyper-tactile sculptures seep and ooze a foreign, yet strangely familiar, sensibility at every crevice, coil and pore. The artist's practice is entrenched in exploring the depths of what a human and non-human body can be. Her works are pluralistic and in process, shapeshifting into new forms that defy categorization and refuse to be fixed or defined. *Gut Feeling* continues Casanova's exploration of abstract, biomorphic forms that challenge binaries and notions of hybridity. Her large and small-scale sculptures embrace the boundlessness of being just one thing, toeing the line between human/non-human, hard/soft and organic/synthetic.

Growing up in northern Minnesota near the Canadian border, Casanova developed a deep connection to nature and the natural world. Time outside was a precious opportunity to observe her non-human neighbors or "companion species" as the artist fondly refers to them. Her experiences engaging with the complexities of the natural world began to inform her visual language and shape questions about form and the in-betweenness of bodily knowledge. Casanova applied this pursuit of feeding curiosity and discovery in her approach to exploring materiality of the post-human. This term is used across multiple fields of study and is of particular interest to Casanova, as it relates to the non-hierarchical ordering of species.

Gut Feeling showcases a wide array of materials, ranging from paper clay, gypsum, vintage fur and acrylic paint (among others). This exhibition introduces a more stripped-back, elemental aesthetic to Casanova's practice. She makes a subtle departure from pairing raw materials with thrifed, ornate objects, such as braided leather and chain. She maintains, however, a fearless play with and pushes against the possibilities and limitations of materials. It's an act of true collaborative discovery between the artist's body and the materials, as they work in tandem to uncover potential and reveal possibilities.

Casanova leans (sometimes literally) into what something can be, rather than what it simply is. *Spotted Flush*, for example, chronicles the moment her forearm pushes down and creates an indent into the gypsum. As the material hugs and surrounds her forearm, the impression creates a cavernous crevice that marks the meeting of the artist's physical body with raw material. Casanova then paints the cavity a purplish, speckled hue to distinguish this section from the outer, fleshy form, drawing the viewer in to further inspect and explore every nook and cranny.

From a macro perspective, a cavern or natural void consumes the scale of the human body and surrounds it with rock formations or other natural growths. In medical terminology, a cavity can reference micro spaces within a body that contain vital organs, fluid-filled growths and masses. Casanova shines in her ability to create hybrid spaces such as these, which simultaneously reference the natural world and bodily systems. Unlike the sublime spectacle or grandeur of natural caves, which draw viewership and prompt outward reflection, *Spotted Flush* draws viewers inward as they consider internal spaces that, although sensed, can only be imagined. Casanova's practice embraces this murky distinction between inside and outside and dismantles assumed hierarchies of scale.



Casanova's studio, 2022.



In progress works on the floor of Casanova's studio.

Barely There, *Spotted Blush* and *Cochlear Crush* follow suit in their intimate, handheld proportions that emphasize fissures and porous surfaces. Without being overtly obvious, glass beads, vintage fur and hand-dyed fabric adorn each object. Casanova thoughtfully introduces these materials onto the gypsum as if they are inherently attached or in the process of sprouting new growth. These subtle interventions create depth and dimension to each work, while shaping a mysterious narrative of what these objects are, where they came from and where they are going.

Collectively, the biomorphic forms on view explore a narrative punctuated by color. Casanova's use of neon is unexpected, given her interest in natural and biomorphic forms. The brilliant, glowing color palette that appears throughout *Gut Feeling* augments the artist's plunge into hybridity and polarizing aesthetics to prompt further exploration from the viewer. While neon pigments carry connotations of something unnatural or artificial, here they work to accentuate or highlight the presence of a biological other. For example, bioluminescent mushrooms containing luciferins, a light-emitting compound found in fireflies and underwater creatures, illuminate the fungi and radiate saturated shades of green, pink and orange. Casanova also takes inspiration from these fluorescent markers and how they light up non-human spaces.



As the viewer moves past the more intimately sized sculptures, like *Barely There* and *Spotted Blush*, the works begin to scale outward. The viewer is now positioned at more of an external vantage point rather than internal. Casanova bridges this shift from macro to micro by mimicking similar abstract shapes throughout each piece. Works, such as a *Slippery Swim* and *Porous Membrane; Inside Out*, feature hand-dyed fabric with stitched, coil-like shapes and holes with vintage fur squeezing through the permeable surface. Pops of neon green and golden fur excrete through openings, bursting to expand out into space. Nearby swirls of sewn thread move in repetitive circles, the way bacteria move, known as “random walking,” swirling and tumbling to reorient themselves. The stitched coils and cutouts imitate forms found in works like *All the Feels* and *Underbelly Prickles*. Each repeating shape quietly reinforces formal connections throughout the show, reminding us of the interconnectedness and non-hierarchical ordering of each body.

Gut Feeling also considers architecture - in this case, the gallery itself - as a kind of body or structure that contains fugitive membranes, coils and fur extruding through pore-like holes. Works, like *Warm on the Inside* and *Viscous Euphoria*, allude to disembodied intestines and appear to independently move throughout space. As a result, Yi Gallery becomes a kind of host or simulated body that holds these works, much like a membrane or a skin. This connection between materiality and the structure of a building becomes a metaphor for the body as architecture. This concept calls to mind earlier works in Casanova’s practice that utilize building matter, such as cinder blocks, dryer ducts and electrical conduits, to reference the blurry co-mingling between organic and synthetic, natural and artificial.

Casanova’s latest works create a stimulating haptic experience that awakens questions and observations about the slippery definitions related to the body. Her biomorphic forms delight as they poke and prod assumptions about bodily norms. United by color and form, but driven by monumental questions that investigate how we experience and interpret a body, Casanova creates a memorable, complex experience. To put it simply, *Gut Feeling* packs a punch.

Pamela Meadows is a Denver-based contemporary arts curator with a focus in site-specific/ conscious art. Currently, she is the Curator at the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art (BMoCA).



KATE CASANOVA
GUT FEELING

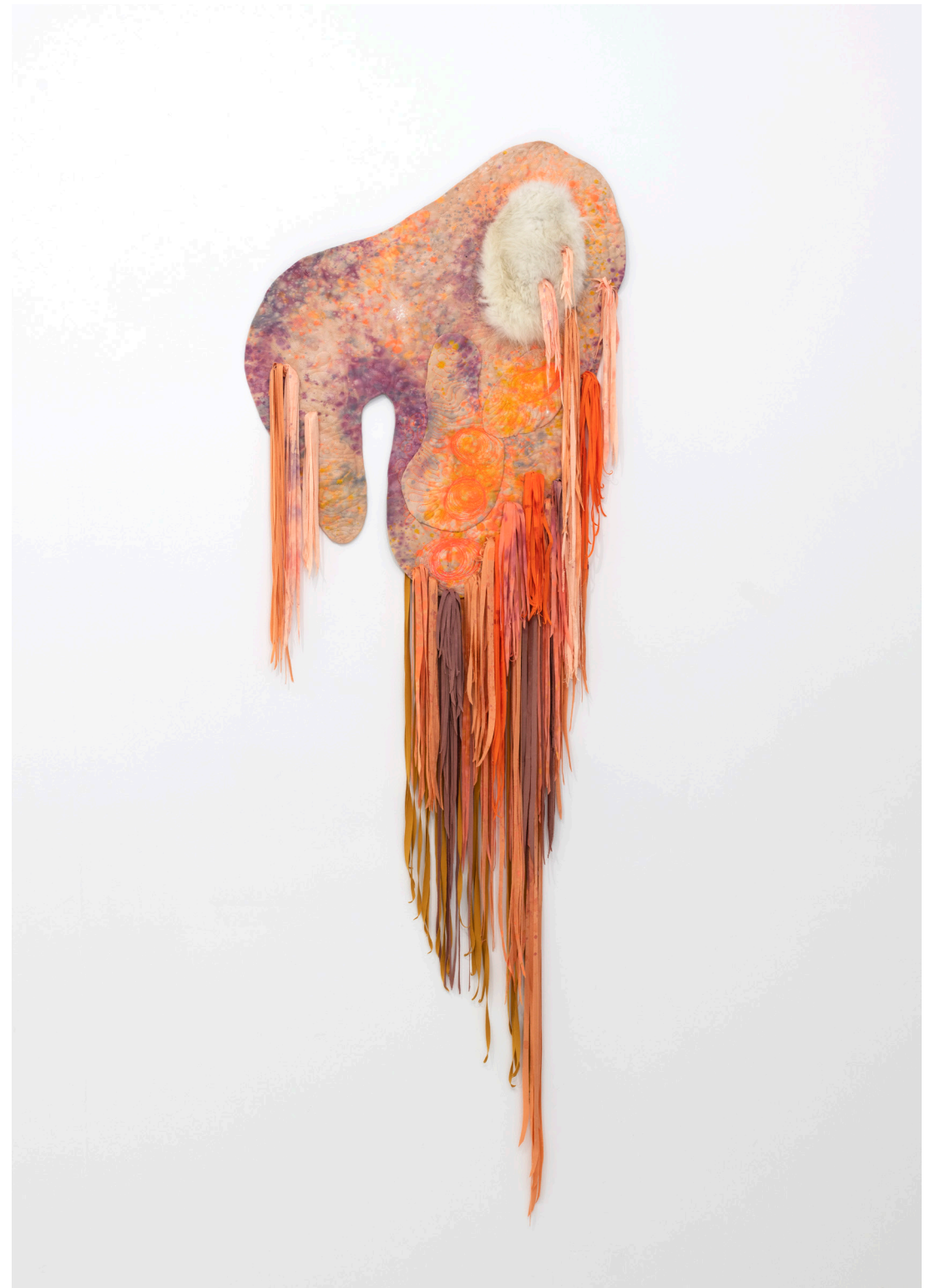






Nodular Recline, 2022
 Polymer modified gypsum, paper clay, glass beads, vintage fur,
 steel, acrylic paint
 6 x 7.5 x 4.5 in
 15.2 x 19.1 x 11.4 cm





Spongy Sentiment, 2022
Hand-dyed fabric, vintage fur, thread
63 x 23 x 2 in
160 x 58.4 x 5.1 cm



All The Feels, 2022
Paper clay, gypsum, acrylic paint
9 x 34 x 19 in
22.9 x 86.4 x 48.3 cm



I'm All In My Gut Feelings, 2022
 Hand-dyed fabric, vintage fur, thread, wood, paper clay, plaster, acrylic paint
 56 x 40 x 14 in
 142.2 x 101.6 x 35.6 cm





Underbelly Prickles, 2022
Hydrocal, foam, wire, paper clay, gypsum, acrylic paint
7.5 x 6 x 4.5 in
19.1 x 15.2 x 11.4 cm



Warm On The Inside, 2022
Paper clay, gypsum, foam, wire, acrylic paint
4 x 9.5 x 5 in
10.2 x 24.1 x 12.7 cm



Barely There, 2022
 Polymer modified gypsum, vintage fur, paper clay, acrylic paint
 4.5 x 4.5 x 6 in
 11.4 x 11.4 x 15.2 cm



Cochlear Crush, 2022
 Polymer modified gypsum, vintage fur, paper clay, glass beads, acrylic paint
 7 x 8.5 x 8 in
 17.8 x 21.6 x 20.3 cm



Spotted Blush, 2022
 Polymer modified gypsum, paper clay, glass beads, acrylic paint
 3.5 x 6 x 3.5 in
 8.9 x 15.2 x 8.9 cm



Spotted Flush, 2022
 Polymer modified gypsum, hand-dyed fabric, paper clay, glass beads, acrylic paint
 6 x 9 x 17 in
 15.2 x 22.9 x 43.2 cm



Solarplex Vibration, 2022
 Polymer modified gypsum, hand-dyed fabric, paper clay, acrylic paint
 4.5 x 4.5 x 17 in
 11.4 x 11.4 x 43.2 cm



Synapse Fizz, 2022
 Hydrocal, fabric, paper clay, acrylic paint
 3.5 x 5.5 x 20 in
 8.9 x 14 x 50.8 cm



Porous Membrane; Inside Out, 2022
Hand-dyed fabric, faux fur, vintage fur, synthetic hair, thread
64 x 34 x 7 in
162.6 x 86.4 x 17.8 cm



Slippery Swim, 2022
Hand-dyed fabric, vintage fur, thread
62 x 24 x 3 in
157.5 x 61 x 7.6 cm





Kate Casanova, standing in front of *I'm All In My Gut Feelings*, 2022

Kate Casanova is an interdisciplinary artist who explores the posthuman through sculpture and video. Casanova has exhibited nationally and internationally at venues such as the Barbican Centre (London), the Black Cube Nomadic Museum (Denver) and the Weisman Art Museum (Minneapolis). She received an MFA from the University of Minnesota in 2013 and a BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art & Design in 2008. She is an Assistant Professor of Sculpture at the University of Denver.



I'm All In My Gut Feelings, work in progress.



Spotted Flush and Arlo.



Casanova's childhood photos.





Casanova's studio, 2022

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7.5 x 6 x 5 in
19.1 x 15.2 x 12.7 cm
(KC0008)

5, 23. *Spotted Blush*, 2022
Polymer modified gypsum, paper clay, glass beads, acrylic paint
3.5 x 6 x 3.5 in
8.9 x 15.2 x 8.9 cm
(KC0010)

6, 24. *Spotted Flush*, 2022
Polymer modified gypsum, hand-dyed fabric, paper clay, glass beads, acrylic paint
6 x 9 x 17 in
15.2 x 22.9 x 43.2 cm
(KC0011)

9, 21. *Barely There*, 2022
Polymer modified gypsum, vintage fur, paper clay, acrylic paint
4.5 x 4.5 x 6 in
11.4 x 11.4 x 15.2 cm
(KC0003)

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7 x 8.5 x 8 in
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11, 12. *Nodular Recline*, 2022
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6 x 7.5 x 4.5 in
15.2 x 19.1 x 11.4 cm
(KC0016)

12, 19. *Underbelly Prickles*, 2022
Hydrocal, foam, wire, paper clay, gypsum, acrylic paint
7.5 x 6 x 4.5 in
19.1 x 15.2 x 11.4 cm
(KC0015)

13, 14. *Spongy Sentiment*, 2022
Hand-dyed fabric, vintage fur, thread
63 x 23 x 2 in
160 x 58.4 x 5.1 cm
(KC0004)

13, 15, 16. *All The Feels*, 2022
Paper clay, gypsum, acrylic paint
9 x 34 x 19 in
22.9 x 86.4 x 48.3 cm
(KC0002)

17, 18. *I'm All In My Gut Feelings*, 2022
Hand-dyed fabric, vintage fur, thread, wood, paper clay, plaster, acrylic paint
56 x 40 x 14 in
142.2 x 101.6 x 35.6 cm
(KC0013)

20. *Warm On The Inside*, 2022
Paper clay, gypsum, foam, wire, acrylic paint
4 x 9.5 x 5 in
10.2 x 24.1 x 12.7 cm
(KC0012)

25. *Solarplex Vibration*, 2022
Polymer modified gypsum, hand-dyed fabric, paper clay, acrylic paint
4.5 x 4.5 x 17 in
11.4 x 11.4 x 43.2 cm
(KC0009)

26. *Synapse Fizz*, 2022
Hydrocal, fabric, paper clay, acrylic paint
3.5 x 5.5 x 20 in
8.9 x 14 x 50.8 cm
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Hand-dyed fabric, faux fur, vintage fur, synthetic hair, thread
64 x 34 x 7 in
162.6 x 86.4 x 17.8 cm
(KC0006)

29, 30, 35. *Slippery Swim*, 2022
Hand-dyed fabric, vintage fur, thread
62 x 24 x 3 in
157.5 x 61 x 7.6 cm
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