

Art in America

Exhibitions: Martha Friedman

Written by [editors](#)

February 23, 2017



A lithe male dancer deftly maneuvers a thick cluster of rubber ropes that suspend him from the ceiling of an artist's studio. He uses the restraints to elevate himself, then drop toward the floor, where a grid of metal hooks presents an ominous risk to his bare feet and legs. *Tangle* (2017), a video of this dance of control and submission is projected on a sheet of thick rubber that hangs from a metal brace. The sheet's left flap folds over, creating a crease in the projection that intensifies the visceral immediacy of the work. Martha Friedman's concern with the body and its exploration of hard and soft artificial substances has an obvious precedent in the work of Matthew Barney. But Friedman is less concerned with occult symbolism than a direct encounter with materials, the eroticism of the surfaces and openings of rubber and metal. Beyond the entrance, where the video plays, hangs "Loose Ends" (2017), a series of black-and-white photographs of metal rings with real cast rubber nodules nailed to the paper surfaces, as if emerging from the images. *Two Person Operating System* (2016) is a sculpture elaborating the same motif of orifices and tubes that occupies the center of the small gallery. It figures in a dance performance by Susan Marshall & Company on March 4 from 2 to 6 p.m. —*Brian Droitcour*

Pictured: View of Martha Friedman's exhibition "Dancing Around Things," 2017, at Andrea Rosen. Photo Pierre Le Hors.