



## *resistSTANCES*

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Gerry Craig

[The] concept of the body as an *activated site* is also another way in which feminism resurfaces in [Livingstone's] work, as the female body continues to be the site of political battlegrounds waged by religion, government, and medicine. Her sculptures generated from the 1996 prints were attempts, she says, to understand how the body is at once the object, or actualizer of power, and simultaneously that which resists power. In [the] 1997 installation titled *resistSTANCES*, her work demonstrates a shift from her previous hollow forms to weighted and filled felt forms that respond to gravity and its resistance. The saclike forms, filled with liquid resin or rubber, create an erotically charged gymnasium of suspended forms. The rubber straps and hardware reference sex, pleasure and pain, as well as the expansive possibilities of the body as the site for ecstasy, healing, and the accumulated weight of life experience. In *Milked* (1997) and *Filtered* (2002), Livingstone makes the most direct reference to gender. She suggests that the power to nourish is not the inherited biology and obligation of a woman, but the distillation of human need filtered through a connected mind, body, and spirit.

These weighted sacs also gather the momentum and erotic charge found in the earlier sculptures, although they strip the veil of a distanced abstraction in which the previous work was shrouded to more directly push the boundary of the scatological. At the same

time, the fragile connection of rubber straps, hooks, and springs with the weighted forms elicit empathy for the sensuous relief to be found in the tentative and expansive possibilities of the body. This evolution of density and intensity seems an apt response to the way the body absorbs lived experience. It also reflects the confluence of systems in the present technological age that causes the body to be in a simultaneous state of chaos, manipulation, mediation, hybridization and de-evolution.

Gerry Craig, *"The Tyranny of Matter," Portfolio Collection, Volume 10: Joan Livingstone* (Winchester, England: 2002), p. 24.