Elizabeth Willing Kernel

Limn 2019
High Definition video 16.05 min
Camera: Ben Wickes

Limn captures a performance filmed over two hours, concluding at the limits of my endurance. The central focus of the video is two timber logs found in bushland local to my home. The timber was specifically chosen for its size, and its complex surface texture including borer marks, termite holes, and lumpy knots in the surface. Into the surface of these logs I have carved negative impressions of various shortbread forms; small excavations that add to the natural termite and wood border marks on the surface of the wood. Through this act of carving, these objects become cumbersome, absurd moulds for shortbread dough.

The shortbread dough is the mediator of this relationship between limbs. Shortbread dough is intended to be crumbly, fatty, fragile, yet also to retain the delicate impressions forced upon it. *Limn* combines the timber mould with the body *as a mould*; a hard object for creating identical copies conjoined with the softer corporeal object. These two organic forms come together in an attempt to validate the shortbread tool, providing a platform for the possible creation of biscuits. The performance is not recorded in successful 'casts' from the timber, but an exhaustion of possibilities, of angles from which to sandwich the fatty dough between my limbs.

Sifted white flour is used as a release between body and mould, progressively building up around the space, it captures and exaggerates the marks of the performance. The white flour bleaches the already white body. As the video progresses, the space around the performance becomes scattered with the debris of the repeated actions, footprints in the flour, scattered crumbs of dough, remnants of successful impressions like fossils or archaeological artefacts. The gallery floor becomes the studio, and the kitchen.

Kernel 2019
Forton sculpture and kitchen/studio table
Edition of 14

An off-site performance was held in my kitchen where I invited 20-30 friends for a housewarming party. Cobs of corn were boiling on the stove, and an enormous 30kg block of butter was sitting on the bench. As guests were offered a cob they were invited to season it with butter, rolling it along the surface of the butter, melting and shaping the malleable material as they performed the action. Knife and spoon marks are also engraved into the butter, a testament to the varied and personalised approaches to eating food, and the curiosity (or suspicion) of the diners. The guests performed this action without my instruction, so each guest approached it differently, forming, and re-forming it through their unique participation. The next day the butter was captured and replicated through a mould making process, a type of performance documentation. It exists before you as a copy, 14 editions for 14 participants.

Supporting the sculpture, a table acts as a plinth for *Kernel*, it is reminiscent of a dining table for a small family, and yet it is also marked, scratched, and has drawings and measurements on its surface. This table has existed as a surface in both my dining room and studio at various times. It is in some sense the material embodiment of the spaces traversed by my practice: a crossover between the kitchen and studio.