



## New York Round-up

### Queer Thoughts • Bodega • Ludlow 38

In **Lydia Ourahmane's** exhibition at Bodega, there is a single braid of hair that carries a different, more loaded weight – *1 decade of hair*, apparently cut from the artist in the gallery a few days before the show opened, rests neatly bound on the floor. The floor has been mopped with betadine, an iodine-based solution used to prepare the surface of the skin before surgery and it preps the gallery space for the artist's own cuts and insertions. It is a hardened stain that licks up and colours the bottom of the walls yellow. Also on the floor are four repeated cross-sections of Ourahmane's abdomen, from hip to bust, cast in bronze and covered in sealed lead, blending into the dark gloss coating of the antiseptic solution. Abstracted, the forms appear alien (think of the featureless black entity in the 2013 film *Under The Skin*) but also relatable and intimate. Each one has its specific weight noted in the material list, imparting each segment with a sense of its own individual existence.

The title piece *low relief* looks like a negative cast of a mottled piece of flesh, encased by coagulated blood-like wax and backed by brass. It stands upright on the gallery's front window, viewable from all angles with a nearby thermometer marking the temperature of the room to note its 90°-fahrenheit melting point, signalling its status as always on the verge of becoming something else.

Ourahmane attaches a glossary to the show as a press release, pointing to the exhibition as a kind of text to be interpreted. Apart from physical materials and attributes, it defines verbs: binding, hovering, translating, replacing, cutting. 'Hovering' is one entry that could describe Ourahmane's presence. Her practice is often research-driven, but this show scans as personal, more like a 'low relief' self-portrait. The move inward feels confident – if it's a text, it's a poetic one. ■

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**Lydia Ourahmane**  
*'low relief'* 2019  
 installation view