



Brendan Fernandes' recent body of work explores the body as a site of coded identity and transformation, using sculpture, performance, and choreography to navigate themes of human connection and modern romance. In his latest series, *Duet*, performers interact with curtains and oversized soft forms resembling stone to explore how bodies relate to one another and their surroundings. These materials, both concealing and revealing, echo experiences of simultaneous visibility and erasure. Fernandes positions the body as an instrument that negotiates thresholds between the intimate and the public, the ephemeral and the material.

Central to the installation are Fernandes' *Soft Touch* sculptures, digitally printed cotton forms modeled after the late Scott Burton's iconic stone benches. Created in collaboration with the Fabric Workshop and Museum, these soft sculptures mimic the polished surfaces and functional design of Burton's sculptural seating works but subvert their rigidity with tactile softness. Rather than functioning solely as static art objects or utilitarian furniture, these sculptures are meant to be inhabited, leaned into, draped over; activated by the performers' bodies and movements.

The *Soft Touch* works act as mediating objects between performance and sculpture, recalling the artist Scott Burton's practice of blending form and use. Yet Fernandes pushes further by inserting layers of affect and lived experience into these forms. The use of digitally printed surfaces adds a conceptual tension between surface and substance. Fernandes is also imbuing these soft forms with sensuality, rejecting the notion of rigidity and lithic feel. Through this, the sculptural works purport their own identity as representations of intimacy.

Screen-printed on cotton muslin, the curtains feature tan and blush-colored fingerprints left on a phone screen. For the artist, these smudges are suggestive of texting or swiping left or right in dating apps: a digital form of cruising. This subtle imprint of touch points to the ways desire is mediated through surfaces and gestures. Just as cruising once relied on furtive glances and physical proximity, Fernandes' use of ephemeral traces highlights how intimacy has changed in our modern context. These curtains are an integral part of the *Duet* series, as well as the installation exhibited at Susan Inglett Gallery.



Fernandes foregrounds these dynamics of tension through subtle body language and compositional restraint, choreographing deliberate moments of touch, support, and stillness. The performers' interactions with the sculptural works of art become metaphors for connection: moments that oscillate between tenderness and resistance. By staging these moments within an installation that invites observation, Fernandes invites viewers to consider how bodies have historically navigated space, safety, and desire. The sculptural forms are not just backdrops but active platforms of display.

Fernandes constructs a fluid, performative environment that blurs the boundaries between object and action. His use of soft sculpture creates a generative dialogue across generations of queer practice. The result is a deeply layered installation where materials, bodies, and gestures converge to offer a powerful meditation on presence, memory, and transformation.

- Tyler Hirshon