

WEATHER PROOF

Liliane Puthod

work wear blues

4/23 - 6/1

curated by Michael Hill

Liliane Puthod's sculptural practice moves between a range of production sites and workplaces, from the factory plant, mechanic's garage, retail store, and artist's studio. By engaging with specialists from various disciplines, her work reflects on labour, its effects on the body, and assumptions about value that connect or undermine the handmade versus the machine-made. In *work wear blues*, Puthod creates a 'break room' for objects belonging to different economies, including several borrowed and found components from tradespeople in the north and northwest sides of Chicago. Puthod's instinctive and anecdotal 'on the ground' research within the fabric of the city has resulted in a group of works formed by on-site production and narratives of encounter.

The large variety of vacant and in-use storefront displays and window signage throughout Chicago are reflected in Puthod's series of suspended Flex-o-glaze panels. Their poetic slogans—AUTO, BODY, REPAIR—are drawn from the seemingly endless array of car garages local to Weatherproof, with phrases that simultaneously connect the human and machine. While looking for scrap car parts, Puthod met mechanic/gardener Frank Cortes at Oil Plus Repair, a family-owned garage located few minutes from the gallery. His emissions workshop is an oasis of fig trees, grape vine cuttings, and begonias thriving among exhausts, car lifts, and spare tyres. Following several friendly conversations, Cortes agreed to loan of one of his cherished plants to the exhibition with a list of care instructions. Puthod's exploration of local trades provided another unexpected connection with family-run neon fabricators, Lightwriters Neon Inc.. Based in Chicago since 1977, Lightwriters founder Jacob Fishman has been making neon signs and graphics for businesses and artists for over fifty years. Puthod visited Fishman's home workshop and the Ravenswood workshop of his daughter, current Lightwriters Director Zoelle Nagib, with a proposal to revive unused, stored, or spare neon parts. Lightwriters kindly loaned a set of components from an existing artwork made by Fishman, which are reconfigured into a new wall-based installation by Puthod.

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For *work wear blues*, Puthod recovers a collection of typical French workers uniforms belonging to her father, complete with wear and tear from his manual labour as a gardener over many years. This process of re-use and reanimation is a *clin d'oeil*/wink to Puthod's recent multi-country project, *Beep Beep* (2024), which involved the repair of her father's 1960s Renault 4 (R4) car with the help of local mechanics in her hometown in south-eastern France. Puthod drove the restored 'time machine' cross-country to Ireland, accompanied by Irish musician and writer Ingrid Lyons. *Beep Beep* connected the cultural history of the R4 as the everyman's "blue jeans" car, with its role as a service vehicle in mid-century Ireland. The careful patching and repair of the workers jackets during their lifetime of use reflects the consideration of materiality and hand processes shared by Puthod's practice. The blue workwear is formed into a cluster of intertwined bodies, forming a single 'working' unit, now off-shift. Each item of clothing is pulled taut and folded in a state of collapsing or relaxing that is both melancholic and uplifting. The figures are adorned with pocket-sized bronze and aluminium sculptures, small personal possessions, and found ephemera gathered and made in Chicago, Ireland and France. The mesh of bodies, illuminated by Fishman's series of neon hands, is representative of the skills and processes of fabricators and preparators, acknowledging the importance of skilled labour in the making of commodities and their circulation.

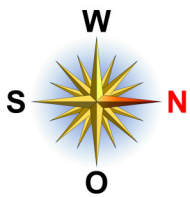
The perseverance of Chicago's vernacular aesthetic diversity is manifested in the abundance of painted building facades, neon and light-box signage, and hand-written posters in grocery stores and laundries. Puthod's work represents the conflict in the decline and celebration of graphic forms with her comical drawing process, which both enlivens and deconstructs the function of these increasingly scarce forms. Puthod's work reflects on the day to day use and value of objects, materials and decoration. Her attitude towards commodity celebrates complexity and contradiction over that which has become the convention. Through this approach, Puthod considers what should be preserved or contained by emphasising discussions around the role of manual labour in maintaining an ecology and economy of repair, reuse, rest, and restoration.

- Michael Hill

Public Reception: Weds. April 23rd, 6-10pm

Gallery Contact: Milo Christie,

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Liliane Puthod was born in Annemasse, France; lives and works Dublin, Ireland. Her recent projects and exhibitions include *Beep Beep*, Temple Bar Gallery + Studios off-site at Dublin Port (2024); *We Can Can Can*, Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin (2023); *Lunch Break* (permanent public sculpture) Skerries Art Trail (2023); *Night Shift*, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2022); *Dissolving Histories: An Unreliable Presence*, Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast (2020); *Display, Link and Cure*, The Complex, Dublin (2019); *How Long After Best Before*, Pallas Projects, Dublin (2019); *Everything Must Go*, PS2, Belfast (2019).

Michael Hill is Programme Curator at Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, Dublin, Ireland, and one half of the curatorial team that represented Ireland at the 59th Venice Biennale 2022. He is an invited participant of the Curatorial Exchange at EXPO Chicago 2025.

This exhibition is part of a citywide series of exhibitions and public events that debut the work of artists Liliane Puthod, Aine Mac Giolla Bhríde and Amanda Rice to Chicago audiences, presented by Ireland's Askeaton Contemporary Arts. Developed by curators Michael Hill, Noelle Collins and Mark O'Gorman, alongside artist Devin T. Mays, the programme is supported by exhibition partners Weatherproof, Good Weather, 4th Ward Project Space, and by Culture Ireland, Consulate General of Ireland, EXPO Chicago, Independent Curators International, and The Complex, Dublin. In linking artist-led activities between Ireland and the American Midwest, Askeaton Contemporary Arts acknowledge the openness and welcome for Irish artists and curators from a new generation of independent art spaces, each upholding a decades-long tradition in Chicago of ambitious ingenuity and egalitarian attitude to the shaping and sharing of culture.

- 1 Liliane Puthod
AUTO BODY REPAIR, 2025
Flex-o-glaze panels, chains, ink, paper, tape, stickers
dimensions variable (four parts)
- 2 Liliane Puthod
beep beep scrap, 2024-2025
Aluminium cast, keyrings, keys
dimensions variable
- 3 Liliane Puthod
we sat on them during informal breaks, 2025
Magnets, calendar, scratch cards, stickers, foam, grease, plant on loan from Frank Cortes, Oil Plus Auto Repair
dimensions variable
- 4 Liliane Puthod
work wear blues, with integral sleeve, 2025
Work wear uniforms, bronze cast, aluminium cast, rivets, keyrings, nails, cables, neon on loan from Jacob Fishman and Zoelle Nagib, Lightwriters Neon Inc.
dimensions variable



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