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“You Will Be Re-materialized Through Your Secrets”

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Utter the words *the secret* in Los Angeles, and everybody thinks they know what you’re talking about—you know, that self-help book that tells you that if you think the word *rutabaga*, rutabagas will manifest in front of you and so on. Is the secret disclosed in this sly, taciturn collection of artworks—titled “You Will Be Re-materialized Through Your Secrets” and curated by Michael Clifton—really all that different from *The Secret*? On the surface, the secret alluded to in the exhibition title seems closer to Lacan’s notion of *agalma*—the elusive *objet petit a*, the precious nugget of gold contained in the crummiest of boxes. Desire itself is perfectly pictured in this concept of the secret thing that is in, but not of, every object of our yearning. What seems like the centerpiece of the show is a small work by Valeska Soares that might serve as the official dictionary illustration of *agalma*. *Sugar Blues*, 2004–2007, offers us a handful of buttercup-size wrinkles of paper, stained with the remnants of already-eaten chocolate, sitting pretty atop a perilously stacked tower of old-timey candy boxes. (Did someone else beat you to the punch—or did you forget you already got what you wanted?) Nearby, in two dainty works, each titled *For to*, 2007, Soares creates an even more lasting impression of the ineffable quality of desire’s quarry: a series of dedication pages from countless books. (“To the memory of Walter Reuther, whose entire life was dedicated to achieving a more desirable ordering of priorities for America.”) Other pieces in “You Will Be Re-materialized . . .” evoke the gossamer there-but-not-there quality of Soares’s objects—like Gedi Sibony’s mostly peeled-away skinscapes that suggest long-gone patterns one could never reconstruct. Sibony’s *Mediterranean*, 2003, in particular—a crosshatched crime scene made entirely of half-gone shreds of packing tape—makes murmurs of many hidden histories. But Soares seems to have the code to the secret: both the elusive, undefinable one and the cheesy one that makes wishes come true.



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