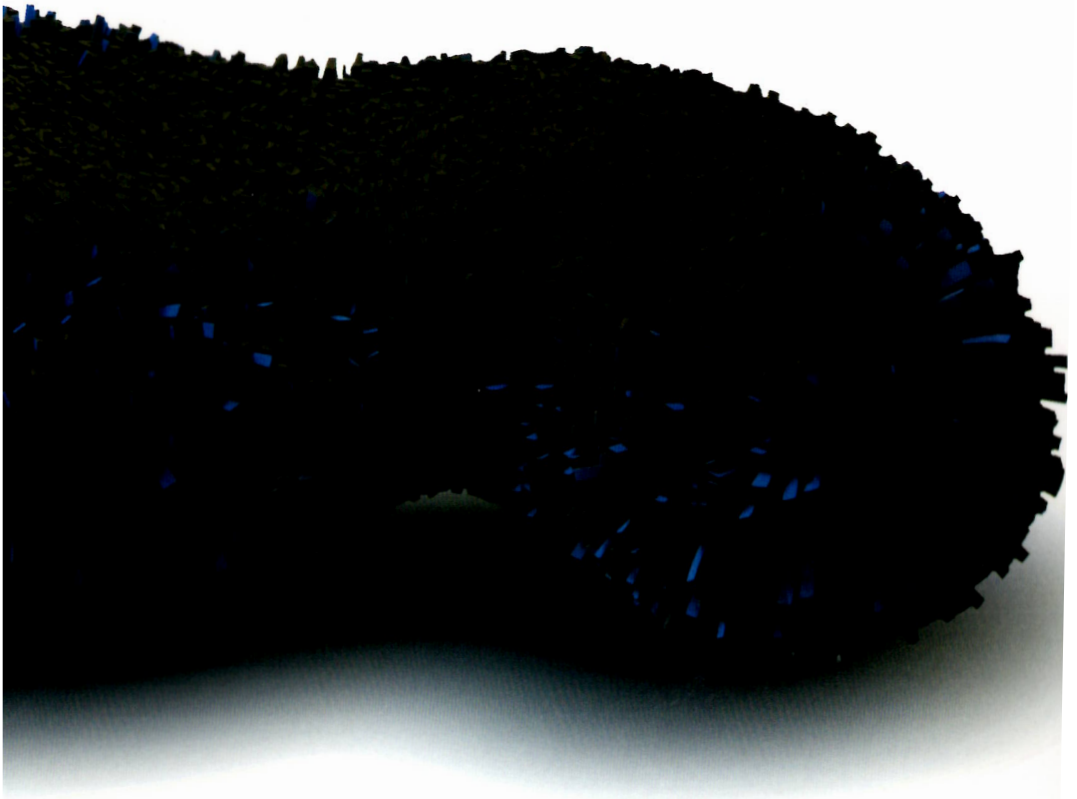


sullivan+strumpf
FINE ART

SEBASTIAN DI MAURO
ARCHIMEDES' BATH

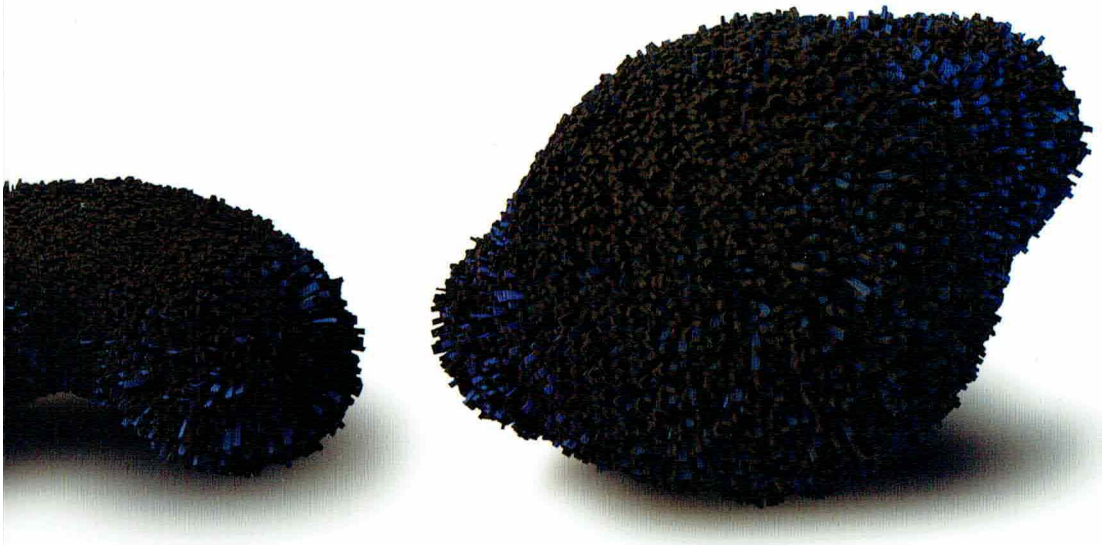
Preview
Tuesday 29 May 6–8pm

29 MAY – 17 JUNE 2007

'Eureka!' exclaimed the Greek mathematician, philosopher and inventor Archimedes when he discovered that a body immersed in water loses weight equal to the weight of water it displaces; consider the humble experience of jumping into a generously filled bathtub. A simple yet deeply profound discovery, Archimedes' scientific epiphany could be likened to the artistic moment when an idea is first formed or indeed, transformed from an idea into the articulation of that idea; the art object.

This process of transformation, of change from one state to another, either literal or metaphorical, is always central to Sebastian Di Mauro's larger artistic project. The sculptures featured in *Archimedes' Bath* are an extension of a recent body of work that continues the artist's interest in utilising non-traditional sculptural materials to elaborate on the alchemical and transformative possibilities of materials and art more generally. Influenced in part by the 1970s arte povera artists, Di Mauro's sculptural and installation based artistic investigations have often included materials as diverse as olive oil, salt, Astroturf, steel wool and carpet underlay, non-conventional mediums chosen for their larger culturally loaded qualities.

Di Mauro has previously observed, "I am very interested in materials and the important role they play in the art making process; materials bring with them a history and dialogue and I like to use specific materials for these reasons. I try to have respect for the materials I use by not altering them greatly; instead, I let them speak for themselves. I use everyday materials



because I strive to portray possibilities of the metaphysical in the ordinary domestic environment."

To create these new sculptures Di Mauro has used Neoprene. A man made material most commonly used to manufacture wetsuits for deep sea diving or surfing, Neoprene was invented as a skin to provide warmth and protection to better enable humans to explore the vast oceans, to transform from land animals into sleek water nymphs.

Shredded, woven and reformed, Di Mauro transforms the synthetic fibres into other-worldly anthropomorphic shapes that could be either fantastical creatures from the ocean depths – strange Aegean anemones from the pages of Homer's *Ulysses* for example – or tiny sea organisms viewed beneath a microscope and writ large by the artist. Like so many carefully recovered specimens they appear almost to quiver with life; the spongy Neoprene lends them an almost visceral inky wetness. These are sculptures that engage the familiar to imagine the improbable.

Alison Kubler
Curator (Public Programs)
Queensland University of Technology Art Museum, Brisbane

from left:
Glow 2007, 70 x 70 x 61cm
Rise 2006, 48 x 90 x 52cm
Harvest 2007, 50 x 113 x 72cm
Surrender 2007, 67 x 102 x 77cm
all neoprene, fibreglass, plastic mesh

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Tuesday–Friday 10am–6pm
Saturday 11am–5pm
Sunday 2–5pm, or by appointment

The artist would like to thank Thomas Justice for his assistance in fabricating the work

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