

Samples

Roberto Bocci

2003 - 2008

www.robortobocci.com

INTRODUCTION

Roberto Bocci is a photographer, new media artist, sculptor, and visionary who combines the cutting edge of electronic media with the most fundamental traditions of western art. His work expands on our preconceived definition of realism, expressionism, surrealism, and abstraction, yet all within the tightly structured control of the artist. In the *Samples* project, Bocci explores portraiture with the use of both traditional and unorthodox materials. Unlike the Constructivist who attempts to find a rational scientific basis for understanding human activities or the Deconstructionist who attempts to disseminate or manipulate the visual culture, Bocci attempts to self-consciously portray the human form in a segmented sequence and to reinterpret the obvious components of the whole within a universal and timeless vision.

Bocci's technique embraces and overlaps various processes beginning with a hands-on molding of the physical form. He then captures fragments within the form separately and photographs parts of the whole. Finally, he prints the final form in a sea of luminous color that brings the work into an independent element of expression. The process, structure and context in which the images are produced cannot be discerned from looking at the final work. Yet each step is vital to the relation of one image to the other and to the exhibit as a whole.

One can see the work of a sculptor in the relationship of the artist to the model in Bocci's work. Just as the

Samples mold making





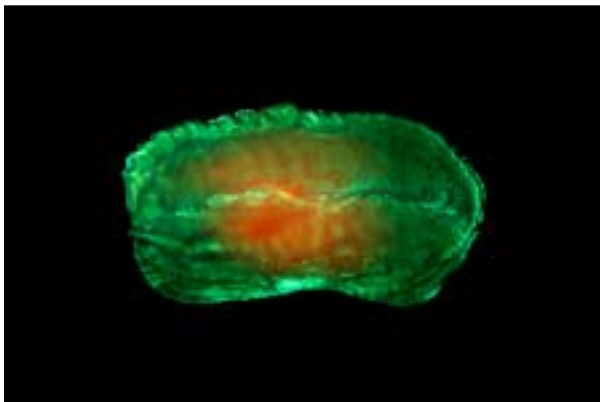
Samples mold

sculptor creates a form from a human model by subtly shaping and moving the concave and convex forms of the face in a clay mold later to be cast in bronze Bocci also works from a model, but he works directly on the model's face to gently mold the structure of the face with small strips of gauze soaked in plaster of Paris, softly patting and smoothing each strip onto the face of the model. The masks that are created by hardened plaster can later be cast with a semi-fluid silicone substance poured into the cavities of the mask to create imprints of the concave parts of the whole; the lips, the nose, or the eyes.

Once the silicone imprints are complete, Bocci becomes the photographer. As a photographer, he faces the criticism that suggests photographs must record, document, or literally define nature within our environment. It is the crisis that photographers have faced since the medium first invaded the art world, accused

of mechanizing art to its destruction. In the *Samples* project, he photographs the imprints against a black background with color laser beams reflecting both the surface of the forms and the transparency of the material creating an exotic prism of iridescent color. He captures the darkness of space and the ephemeral essence of the human body with the light. The resulting image drives the effective composition, considering all elements of form, color, space, and organization. The triumph of photography as an art form lies in the hands of artists like Bocci, whose esthetic vision pushes the medium to its farthest limits.

Perhaps, the most traditional and at once contemporary component of Bocci's work is an iconography focusing on human physiognomy. Within the history of art, the human form has always been one of the most important, challenging and sought after forms in nature. Artists have been interested in this subject from the earliest attempts to record or to visualize the world and its elements. With his vision, Bocci can be seen as



Jenny 01, archival pigmented print



Samples silicone imprint

a modernist who embraces tradition with a fresh new interpretation. He poses a new theory about the way we perceive ourselves and the way the human form is interpreted as artistic subject.

It is in this context we can re-examine the parts of the whole, beginning with the original plaster mask molded from the human face. Deconstructing the parts of the face further symbolizes the act of putting on a mask to hide one's identity. It is a process of first fragmenting and then reconstructing different parts of the body together bringing a unique quality to each component.

Bocci chooses the structure and the organization of form and light, seen as producing hybrid forms that ultimately will include and merge rather than exclude and splinter. The result is an image that captures the essence of the human face, but not in the traditional sense of portraiture. Bocci is reconstructing the human form, dissecting and reexamining each part of the whole to establish a unique syntax of a composite image.

Barbara J. Stephanic, Ph.D.

Samples 2003

Off White Walls Gallery, Corcoran Museum,
School of Art & Design, Washington, DC.
Washington DC, 2003.



Michelle and Jenny, Silicone imprints in light boxes and archival pigmented prints



Michelle, silicone imprints in light box and archival pigmented print



Michelle's eye, silicone imprint in light box, 6 x 8 x 2"



Michelle 00, archival pigmented print, 8 x 10"



Michelle's nose, Silicone imprint in light box, 8 x 6 x 2"



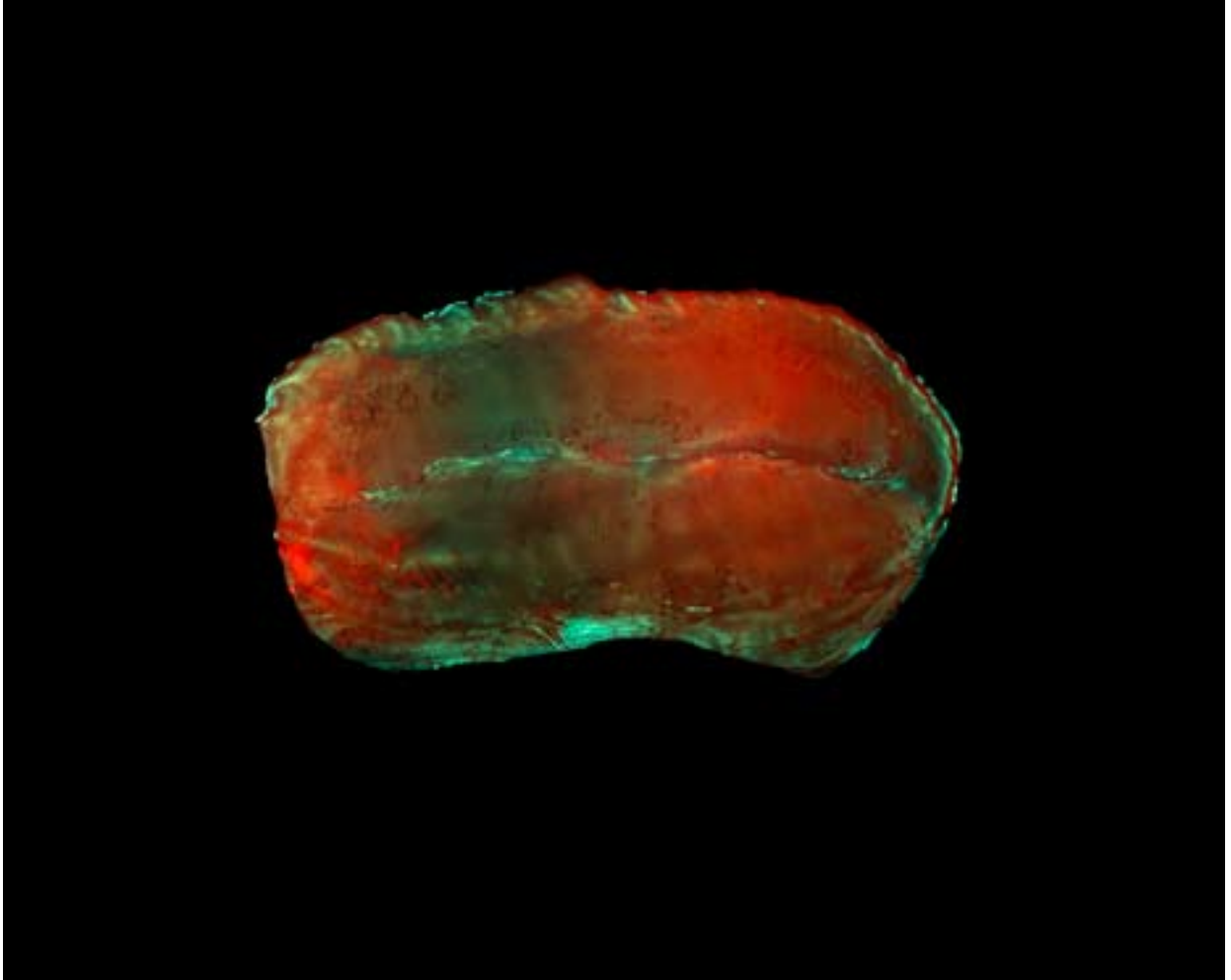
Michelle 04, archival pigmented print, 10 x 8"



Jenny's lips, silicone imprint in light box, 6 x 8 x 2"



Jenny 08, archival pigmented print, 13 x 16"



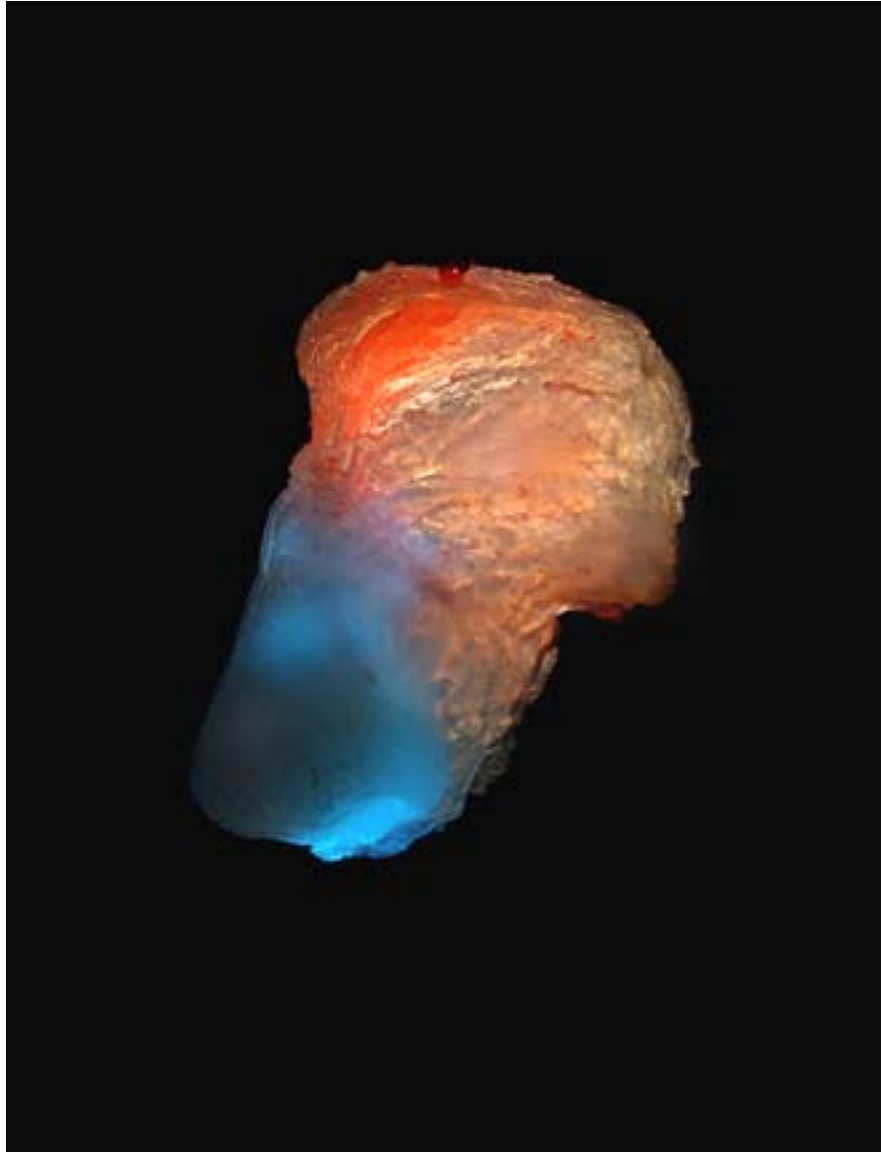
Jenny 00, archival pigmented print, 13 x 16"



Jenny 01, archival pigmented print, 13 x 16"



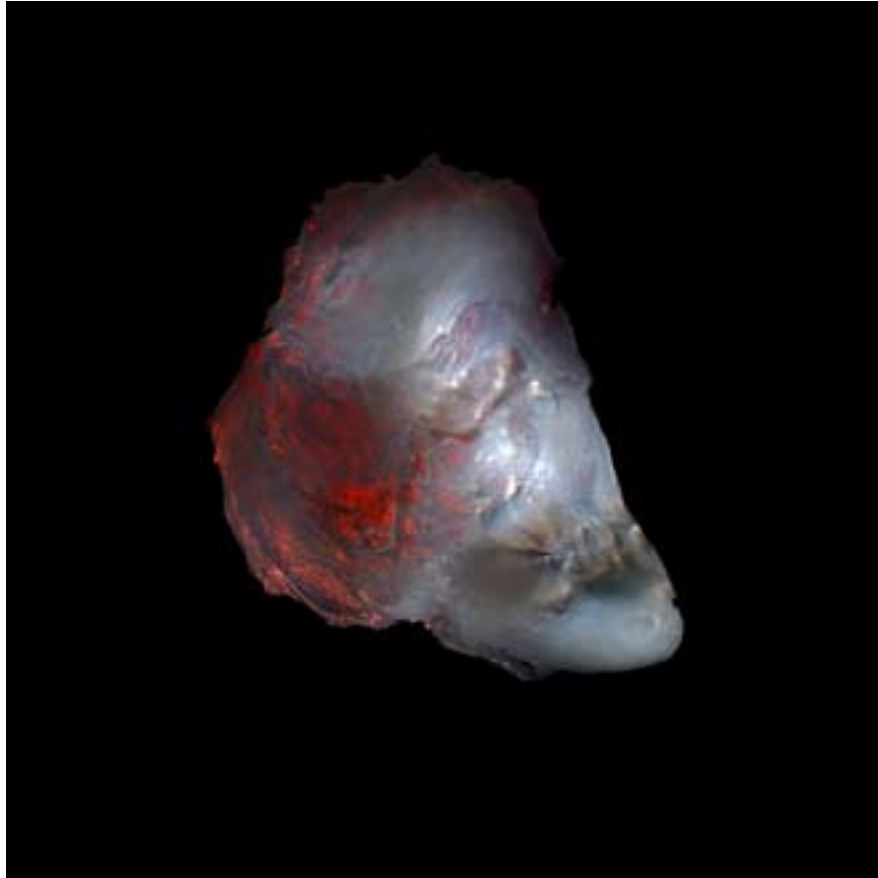
Jenny 03-04-05, archival pigmented prints, 10 x 8"



Jenny 04, archival pigmented prints, 10 x 8"



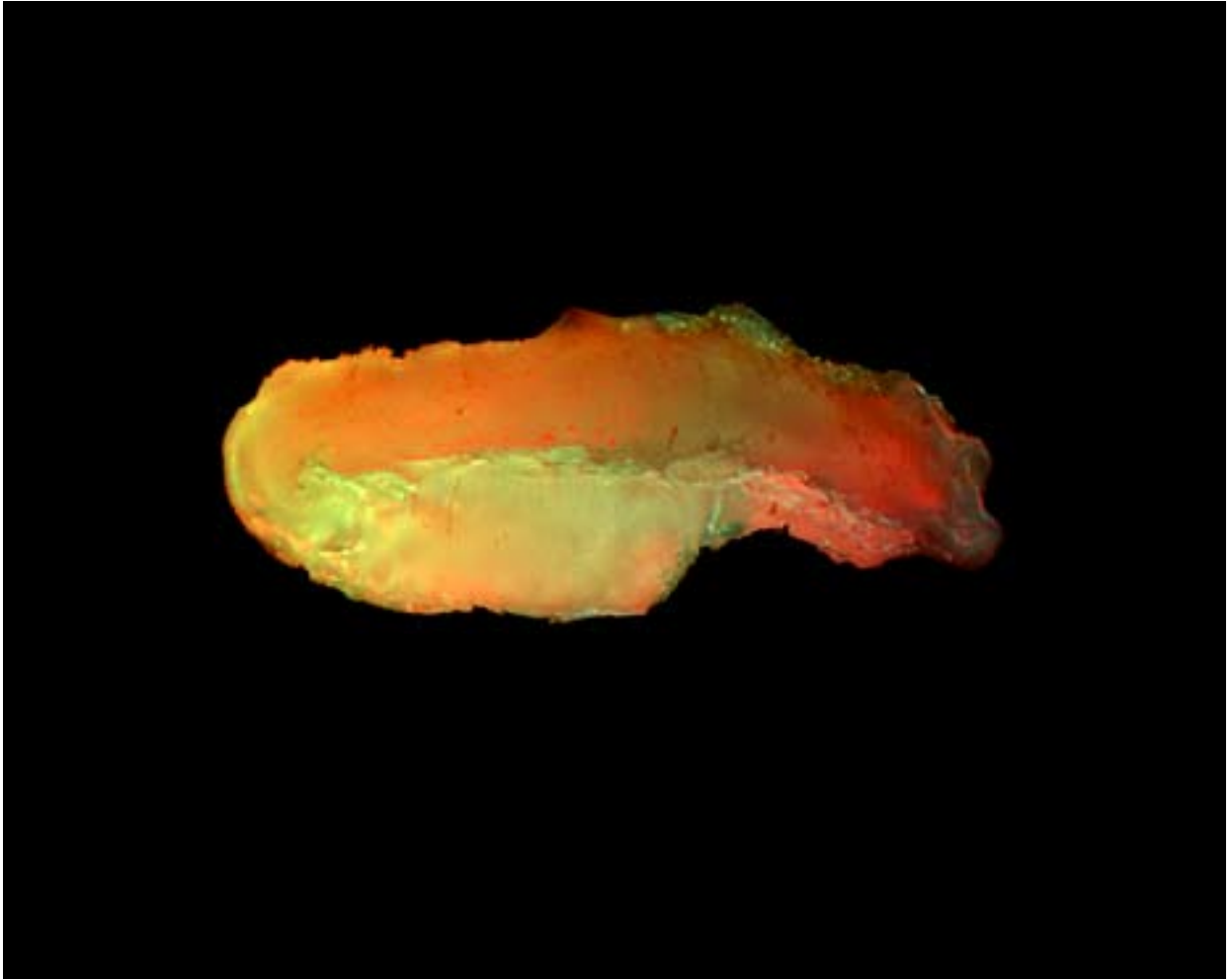
Rob 01-02-03-04-05, archival pigmented prints, 13 x 13"



Rob 04, archival pigmented prints, 13 x 13"



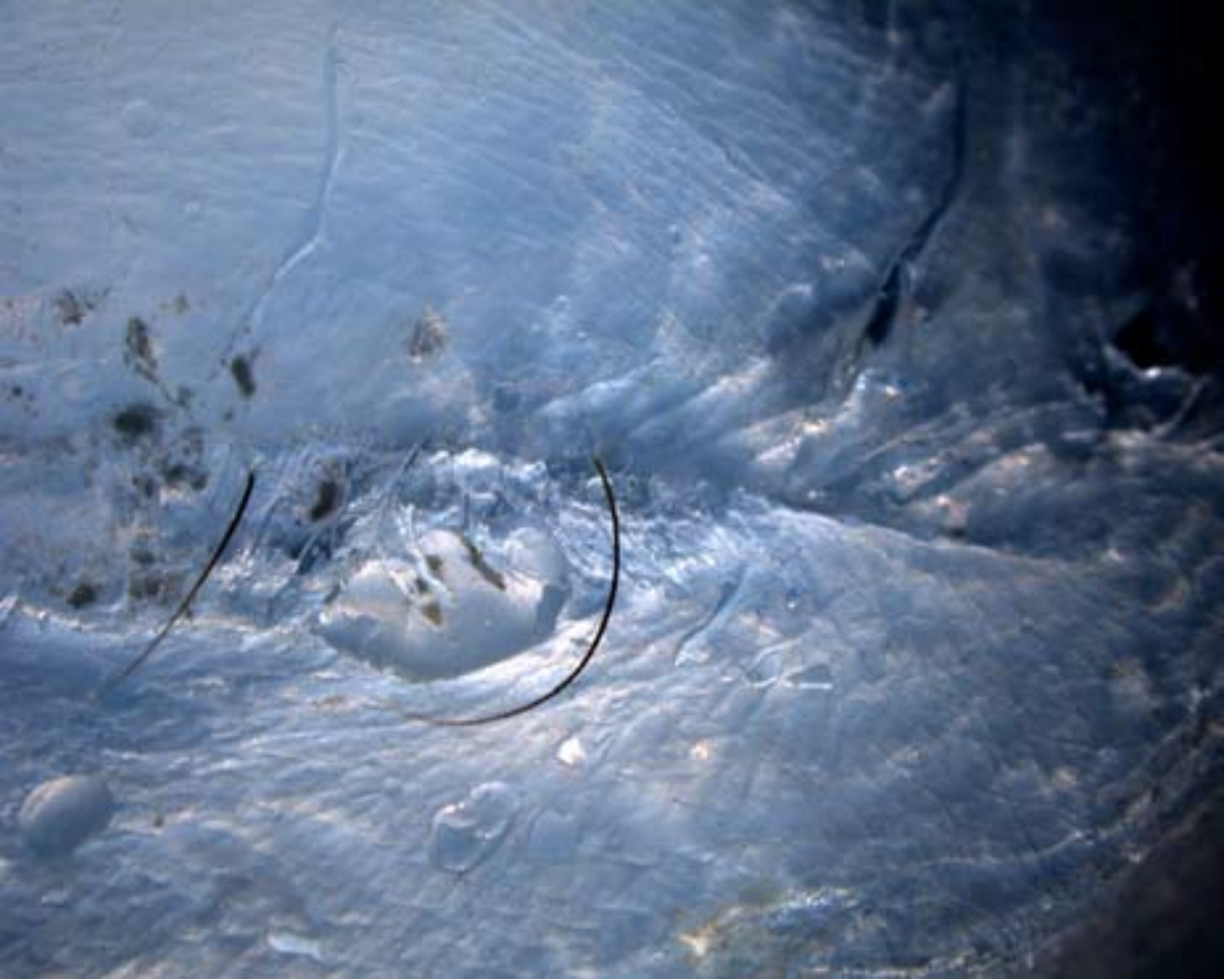
Michelle 01, archival pigmented print, 8 x 10"



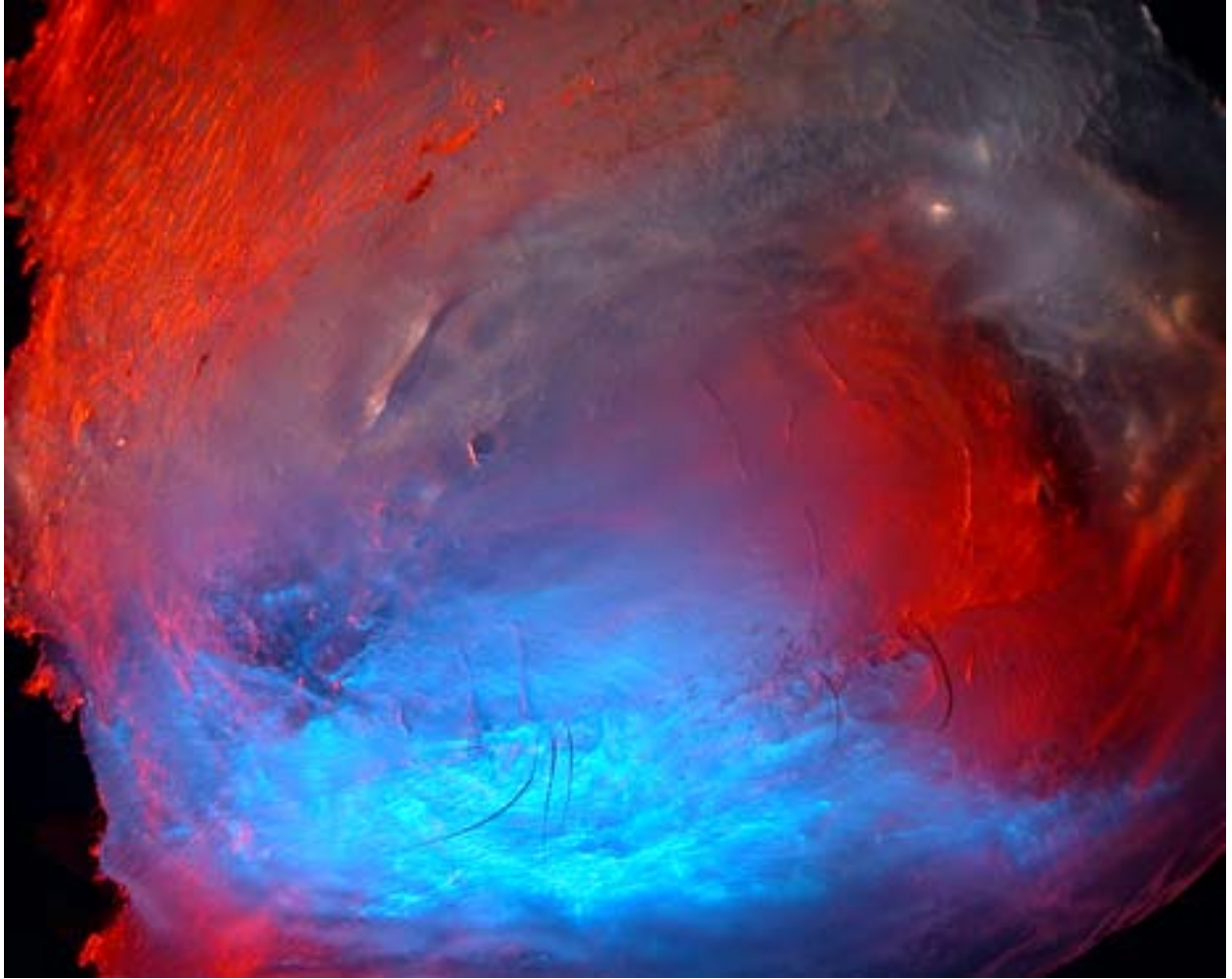
Michelle 03, archival pigmented print, 8 x 10"



Michelle 02, archival pigmented print, 8 x 10"



Paul 01, archival pigmented print, 8 x 10"



Paul 02, archival pigmented print, 8 x 10"



Paul 03, archival pigmented print, 8 x 10"

Samples 2004-2008

In this version of Samples the human umbilicus (navel) was cast to create the silicone imprints. When photographing the new imprints all the color gels and laser lights used in the 2003 series were eliminated. The color is striped down to a minimum denominator provided by the tungsten lights illuminating the subject. Depending on the number of lights used, their intensity and the thickness of the silicone imprints, subtle cool to warm variations are obtained.

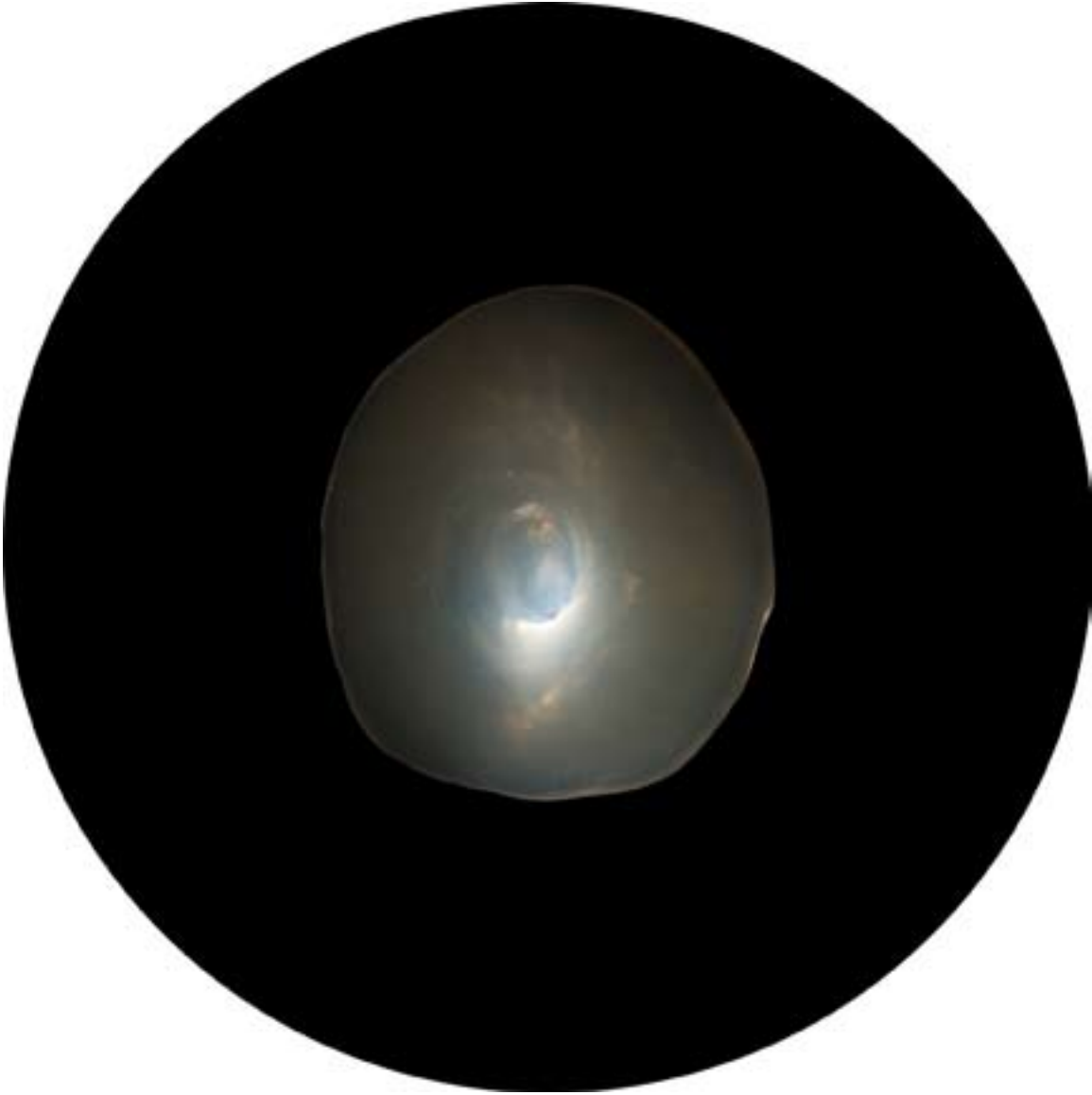
While casting the models, video and sound was shot to document the process of masking the body and creating the positive sculptural imprints. These sequences will be used in the creation of a video to be exhibited within the Samples installation.



Evan Reed 00, archival pigmented print, 19 x 19", 2004.



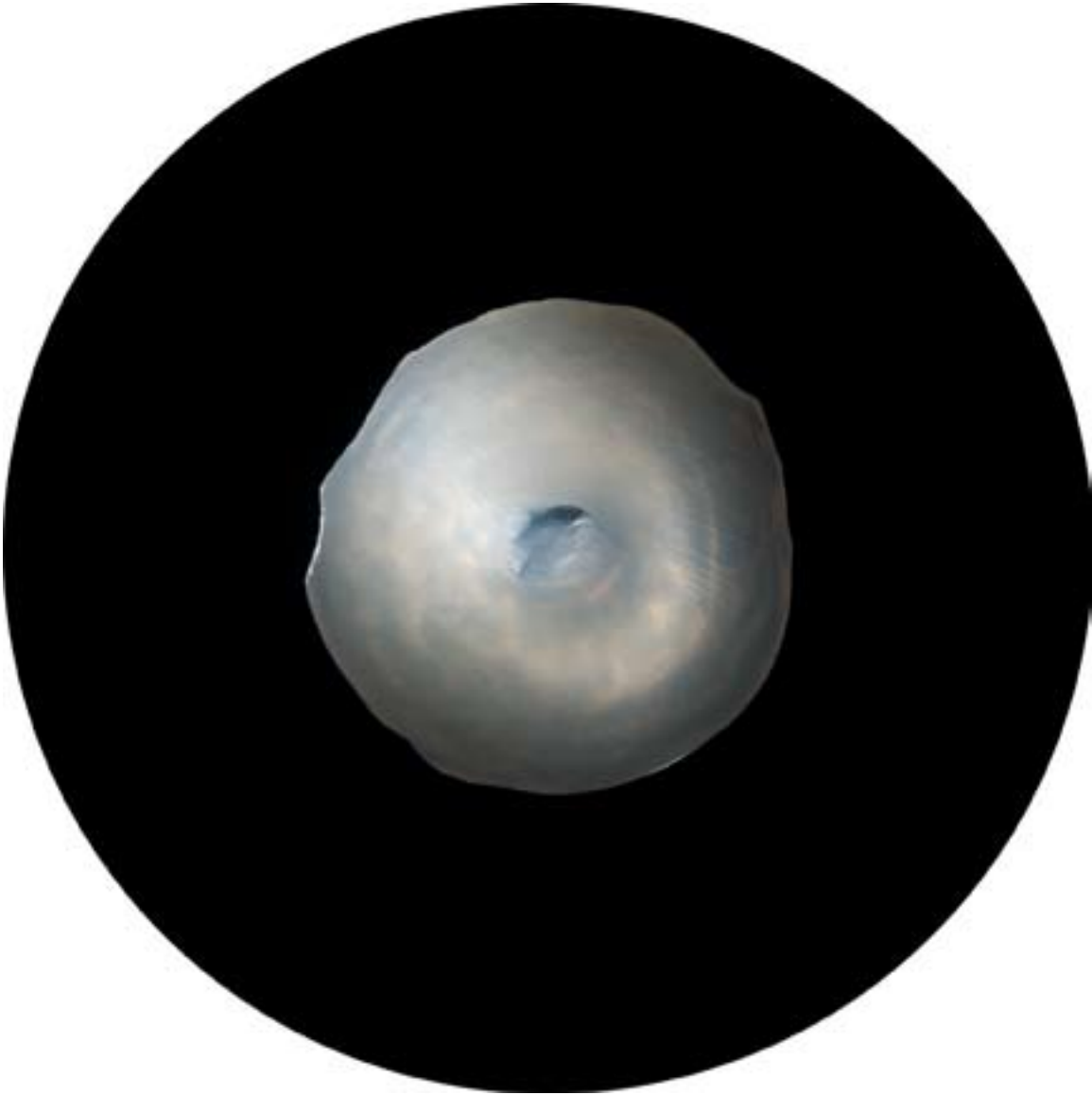
Bruce McKaig 00, archival pigmented print, 19 x 19", 2004.



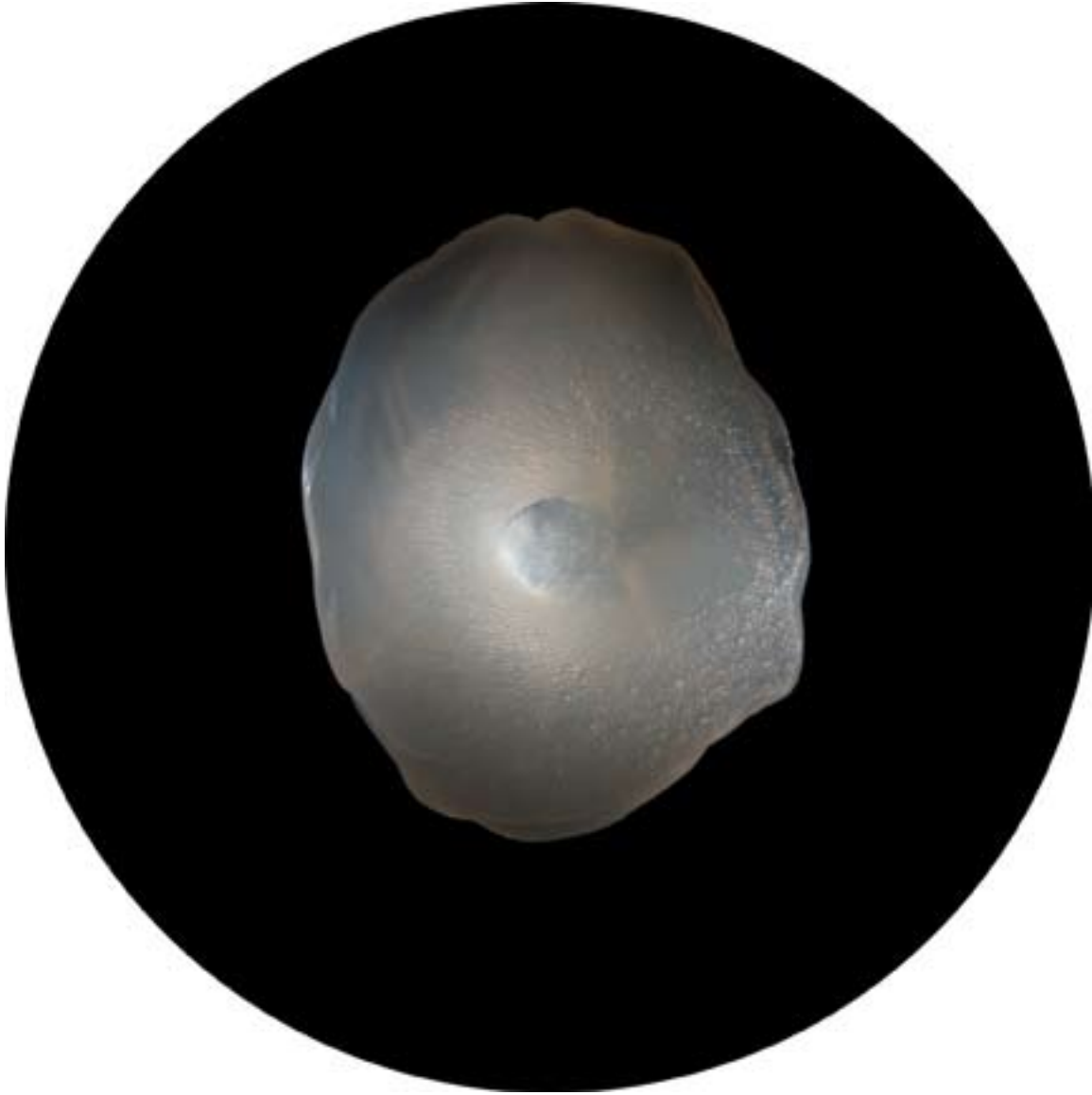
Bruce McKaig, archival pigmented print and/or Duratrans, 17 x 17", 2008.



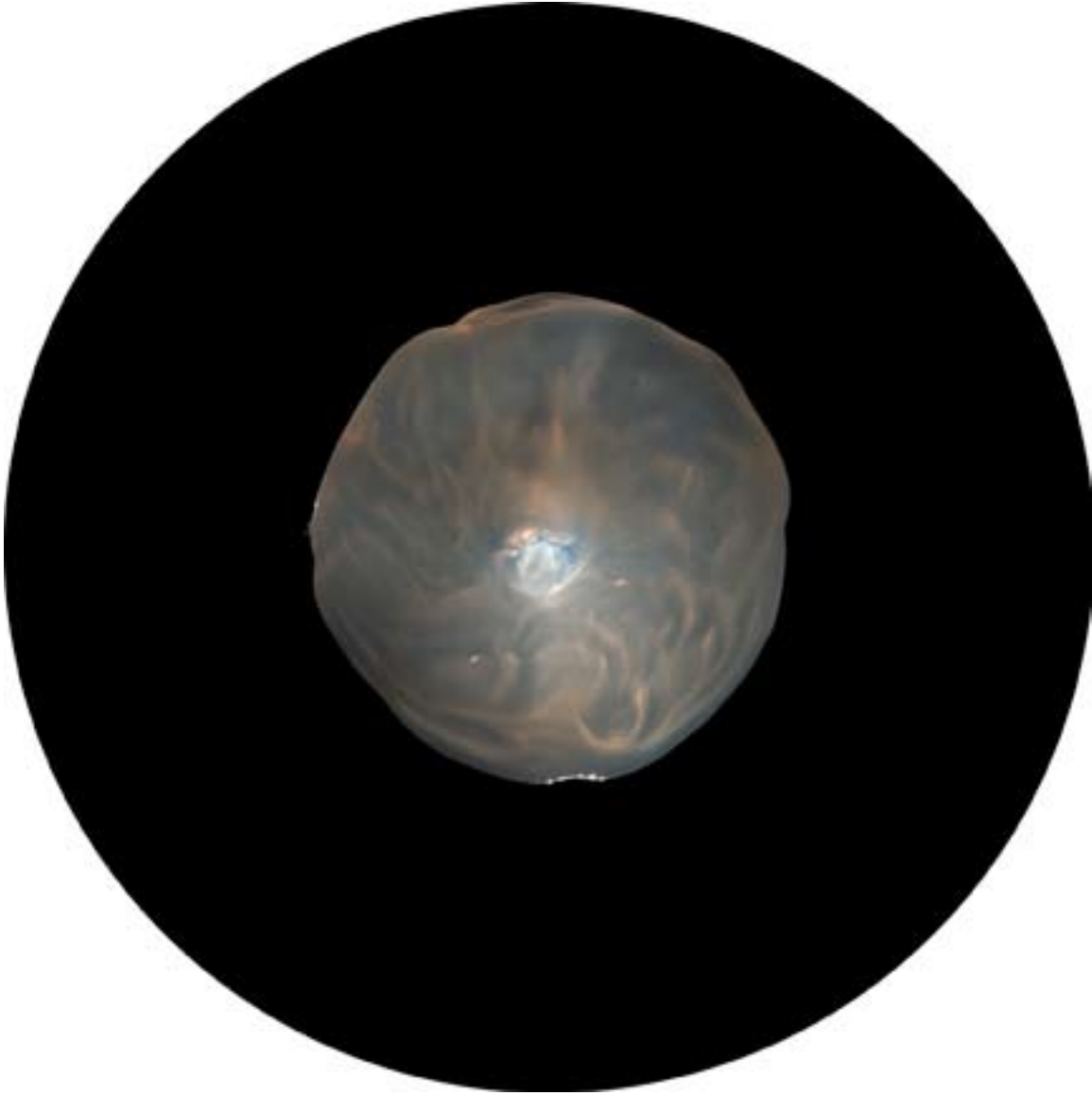
Evan Reed, archival pigmented print and/or Duratrans, 17 x 17", 2008.



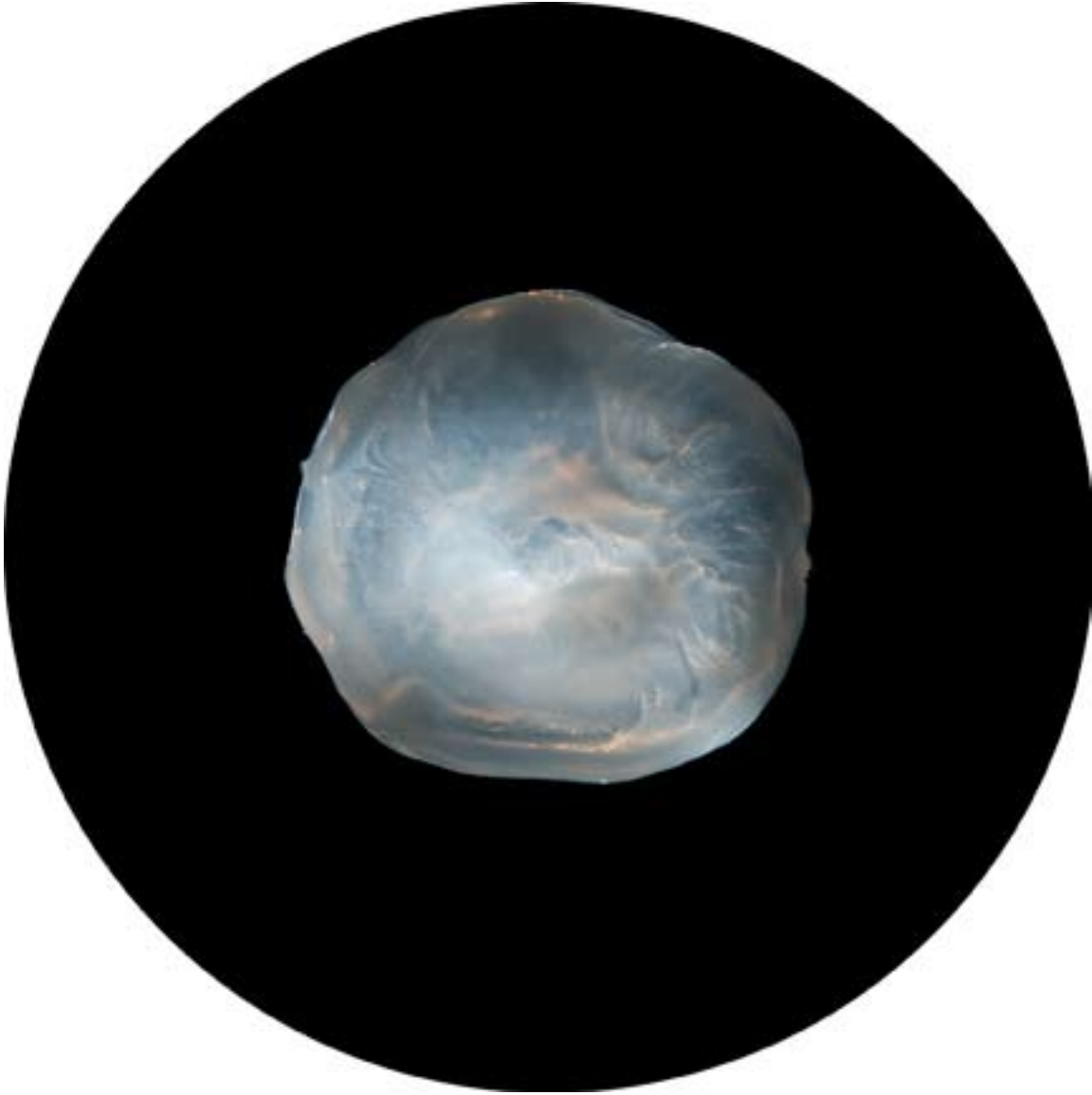
Roberto Bucci, archival pigmented print and/or Duratrans, 17 x 17", 2008.



Roberto Bucci 01, archival pigmented print and/or Duratrans, 17 x 17", 2008.



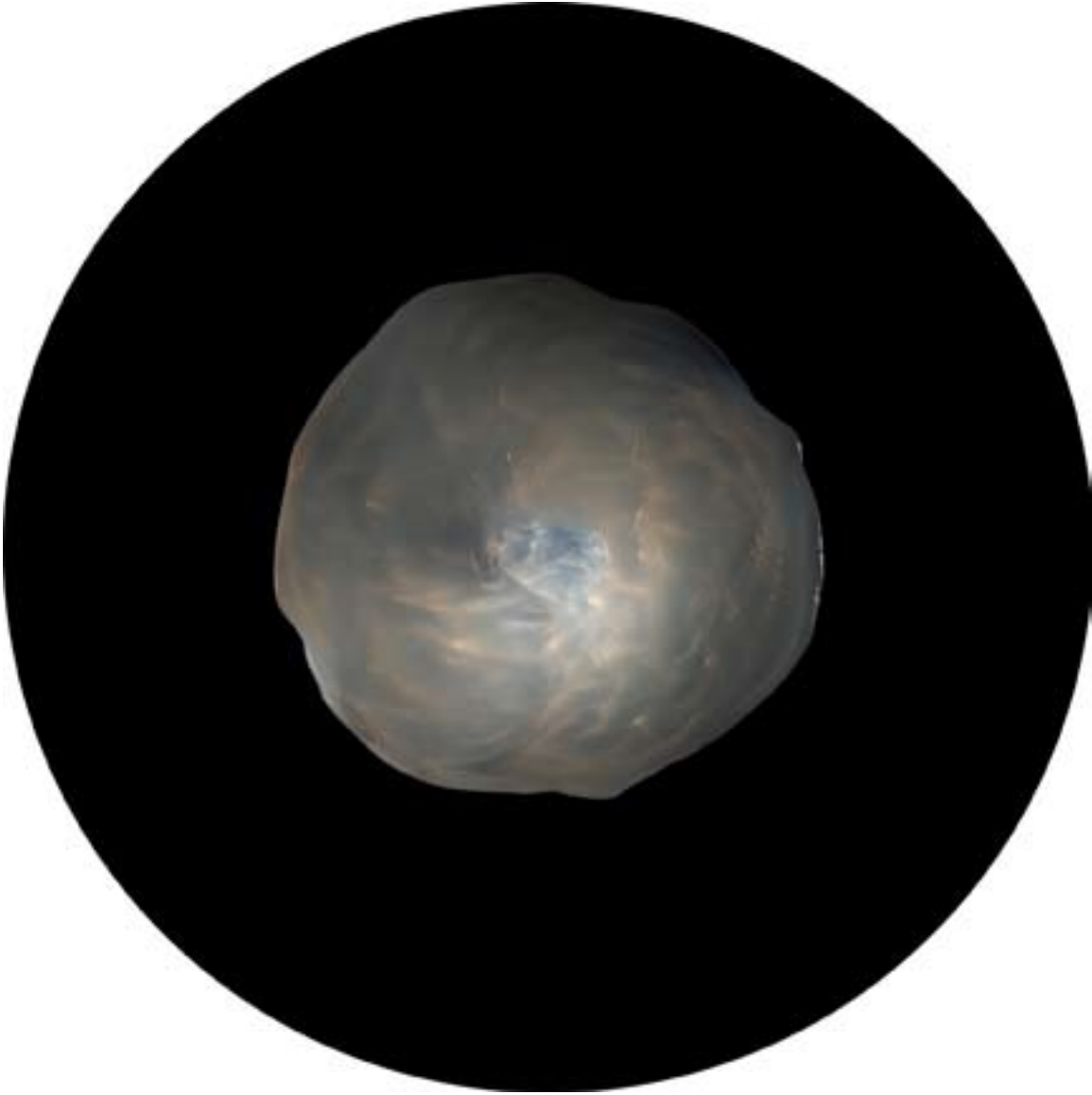
Rula Jones, archival pigmented print and/or Duratrans, 17 x 17", 2008.



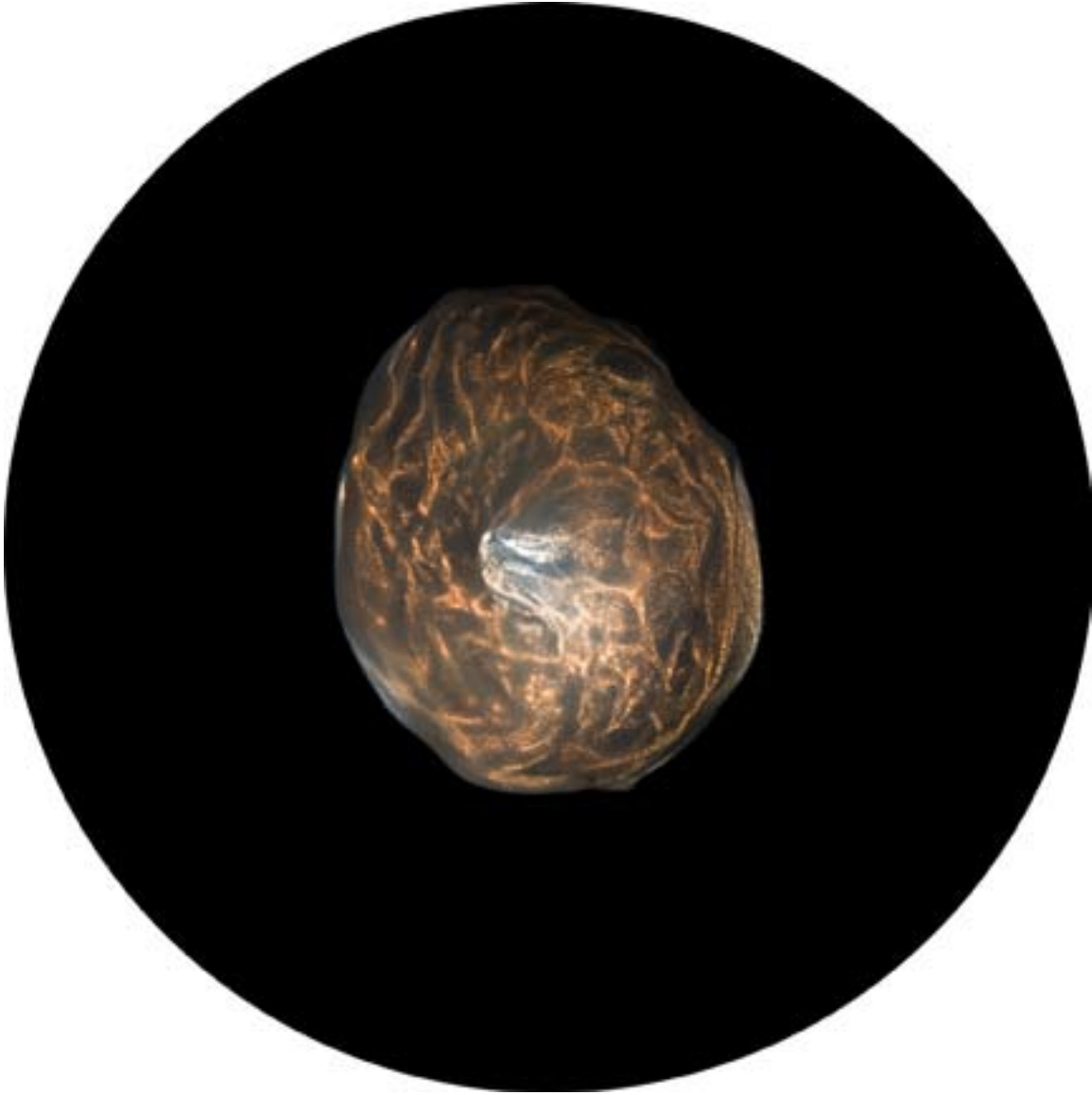
Simone Paterson , archival pigmented print and/or Duratrans, 17 x 17", 2008.



Suzi Fox, archival pigmented print and/or Duratrans, 17 x 17", 2008.



Darius Torshizi, archival pigmented print and/or Duratrans, 17 x 17", 2008.



Darius Torshizi 01, archival pigmented print and/or Duratrans, 17 x 17", 2008.



Samples 2008 installation. Pyramid Atlantic, Silverspring, Maryland, 2008. 17X17" Duratrans transparencies on lightboxes, silicone imprint, video loop.

Concept and realization: Roberto Bocci

Many thanks to:

Paul Beel
Michelle Dallavista
Jenny Daughters
Suzi Fox
Jonathan Gardner
Rula Jones
Bruce McKaig
John Morrell
Simone Paterson
Evan Reed
Barbara Stephanich
Jeff Stephanich
Darius Torshizi
Lyndsey Kelly Weiner

For more information about this project

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