



Up Close and Personal | 'Second Skin' at VPL

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Katerina Jebb's "Mouth of a Sex Doll," 1999. Courtesy of the artist and INPUT Journal/Vara Fine Arts

The designer Victoria Bartlett is no stranger to intimacy. VPL, her line of clothing and accessories, started as a collection of underwear, and several years later undergarments and their fabrication and construction still figure prominently in her creative conscience. But perhaps more significant, over the years she has built a close and intimate community around her, inviting artists and other creative types into her studio and her life in equal measure. "VPL has always been a collaborative entity," Bartlett explains. "It's a family of people who are attached to my world."

Many of those collaborators will show their stuff in "Second Skin," an exhibition curated by Bartlett and Renée Vara, opening tomorrow at the VPL store and studio in SoHo and running through July 31. While names like Mark Borthwick, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, David Armstrong, Ugo Rondinone, Jack Pierson and Collier Schorr might seem familiar, the show and an accompanying limited-edition publication reveals sides to their work most of us don't usually get to see. Armstrong, who is well known for his photographs, has contributed sculptures made from personal objects that are all around his house. Pierson contributed both a photograph and what Bartlett describes as series of "very nice drawings of phalluses." Schorr's portrait of a young man whose bare back is riddled with shrapnel scars and Adam McEwen's graphite "plank" point to the range of interpretation on the show's theme. ("I think of wood as the second skin of a building," Bartlett says.) Then there is Sarah Lucas, whose strange, erotic and ultimately humorous sculptures often incorporate stockings and underwear. "This is the world that I live in," Bartlett says emphatically. "She encompasses it all."

"Second Skin" is on view at VPL, 5 Mercer Street, New York, from May 18 to July 31.