

# ARTFORUM

‘Artforum Critics’ Pick: Emily Wardill at Altman Siegel,’ Jeanne Gerrity, *Artforum*, June 2017

## San Francisco

### Emily Wardill

ALTMAN SIEGEL  
1150 25th Street  
May 11–June 24

The title of the central work in Emily Wardill’s solo show here, *I gave my love a cherry that had no stone*, 2016, is a nod to the paradoxes that dominate the exhibition. Body and machine are indistinguishable. Past and future overlap. Absence and presence coexist.

In the video, a male dancer lurches and sways around the lobby and theater of a Portuguese museum at night, shot by a drone-mounted camera and a hand-held one that jerk and soar through the modernist interior. The nostalgia for the utopian future built into this architecture contrasts with the mechanical movements of the cyborg-like protagonist, who occasionally manifests an eerie CGI effect, such as an eyeball popping out of its socket. A disembodied white shirt becomes a character, floating across the room and inflating as if to accommodate a phantom body. The entire piece is nearly silent, save for sudden jarring sounds: an ominous laugh, the applause of an invisible crowd, rhythmic dripping.

Boundaries between mediums blur throughout the exhibition. An imposing tilted screen allows the aforementioned piece to act as a sculpture, while works hung on the wall resemble flattened three-dimensional forms. Cast-resin reliefs of wrinkled white shirts—*Noh Costume*, *An Easy Swan*, and *Crimp*, all 2017—are drained of their materiality. Listing the credits from a past film, four rayograms from the 2013 series “Credits” include ethereal prints of the artist’s hands on the margins. All of these works suggest people who aren’t there. The lonely, haunted undertones of this installation express an alienation and anxiety endemic to the contemporary human condition.



Emily Wardill, *I gave my love a cherry that had no stone*, 2016, digital video, color, sound, 9 minutes. Installation view.

— Jeanne Gerrity