UNDER CONSTRUCTION: foam

NEW POSITIONS
AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHY
The ascendency of colour in art photography began in the late 1970s and transformed what had hitherto been a highbrow monochromatic playing-field into a medley assemblage, equal parts advertisement, family snapshot and cinema film still. Irving Penn’s 1977 Frozen Food (with String Beans) is an excellent example of a picture that merges what could be a frozen food ad with a colour field painting. In a certain formal sense it could prefigure Jessica Eaton’s fad series with its indebtedness to Angeles, where Brecht sought refuge along with Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer.

One of the goals of Brecht’s epic theater was to always make the audience aware that they were looking at a play that used various devices such as direct address, on-stage lighting and set changes in full view of the audience. These techniques would help break down the so-called fourth wall and prevent the audience from becoming too immersed in the fictional representation happening on stage. In a similar vein, the artists in this exhibition have a variety of devices at their disposal to interrupt the naturalism that photography encourages. Three fields in particular are worth highlighting: colour, software and the Internet.