



*Being Within* explores spatial thresholds as living interfaces by re-imagining architectural structures and enclosures. Drawing from the materiality of natural membranes, the sculpture explores the tension between interior and exterior, liveliness and rigidity. A silicone membrane is animated by a cluster of stepper motors, creating a surface that shifts, expands, and contracts. It is a site-specific sculptural work that reshapes the exhibition room's spatial logic, creating a dialogue between the work and its environment. Visitors are invited to experience the sculpture physically, engaging with it as a presence that is both tangible and impenetrable. The work examines spatial boundaries as porous and invites reflection on the unseen structures that surround us, inspired by the topological concept of interface. Through this interplay, *Being Within* encourages a reconsideration of space as an active, living structure: one that breathes, listens and reacts. *What can permeate through the divide? How is it oozing back what it has soaked in?* Drawing from topological thinking, *Being Within* reclaims architectural limits as a site of differentiation, memory, and response.

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## A permeable interface

*Being Within* is a sculptural and spatial intervention that engages with “limit” as a condition of becoming: it narrates an unseen machinic organism as a point of passage between two dimensions of a building. It is an investigation of spatial ambiguity and material agency that imagines architecture not as rigid enclosure, but a living entity structured by tension, exchange, and permeability.

Leaning into the concept of the “in-between” described by Georges Teyssot in his book *A Topology of Everyday Constellations* (2013), I imagine space not as static, but as continuously composed through relations. By repositioning windows, frames and screens not as simple mediums, but as active thresholds, Teyssot explores the liminality between opposite sets of spaces: visible and invisible, exterior and interior. Similarly, I translate the materiality of skin and plasmatic membranes into an exploration of walls, surfaces, and spatial enclosures as fluid boundaries between two worlds.

In his last chapter, “Windows and Screens”, Teyssot presents two relevant references that deeply informed my understanding of space as a symbiotic entity. First, Siegfried Ebeling proposes buildings as living beings, with his text *Space as Membrane* (Teyssot 2013). To Ebeling, space is a medium of exchange and behaves like biological skin: responsive, adaptive and sensorial (Ebeling et al. 2010). With *Being Within*, I am embodying this same idea through a sculpture that mimics membranes in nature: biological structures that separate and connect, simultaneously acting as a division and a permeable interface. This idea that architecture provides both separation and permeability is the main aspect of my sculpture. Secondly, Paul Virilio’s *The Lost Dimension* is extremely significant to my research, as he reconsiders the idea of limit with his concept of electronic topology (Teyssot 2013). He defines “limit” as the interface between human and machine: an overexposed and virtualised space restructured by image and code (Virilio 1991). With *Being Within*, I intend to reframe this electronic topology, where instead of a flatness, like Virilio described, the audience can experience an embodied machinic presence.

## A sculptural and performative intervention

I make use of silicone to respond to these concepts, creating an architectural presence that is both sculptural and performative. Just as natural membranes define and mediate between environments, *Being Within* enacts a threshold that creates a physical division. The membrane cuts across the exhibition site, separating the audience from the speculative inner consciousness of the building, a living or-

ganism that, although not visible, can be sensed. In this way, the work forces the emergence of an inside and an outside, not as fixed categories, but as spatial roles constituted by the membrane itself. In this redefinition of space, where does the audience lie? Can the exhibition space be now understood as an exterior space, while the real interior of the building stands beyond the membrane? Or is the audience discovering a new exterior beyond the limits of the moving sculpture?

Although the silicone behaves as a boundary, its surface is not a mere separator but a dynamic threshold that responds to and redefines its surroundings. I fiction this presence as a *reaction*: it breathes in the voices, histories and memories of the space, oozing them back with its own independent mechanical patterns. With this, I create the narrative of a networked organism that lives behind the originally impenetrable, but now permeable architecture of each building. What can permeate through these boundaries? What do they absorb and what do they push back to the audience? How do we communicate with them?

Teyssot concluded that life “lives at the limit of itself” (Teyssot 2013, 272), suggesting that life happens exactly at the limit between inside and outside, visible and invisible. My membrane, by being porous and affective, is where difference happens. By making this liveliness apparent locally in each exhibit, I prompt the audience to meditate over the spaces that surround us and the way they are built of exchanges, tensions, gradients, and differentiations.

## A tactile exploration

Although not interactive in a computational sense, *Being Within* encourages tactile exploration. The audience is invited to touch the membrane, opening new ways of communication and feeding the membrane with new movements. Below (Figure 1), you can find video documentation on *Being Within*’s exhibition at St. James’ Hatcham Church in London. This physical engagement deepens the awareness of the sculpture’s materiality, fostering an embodied relationship between the audience and the work: a space for reflecting on the structures we inhabit and how they can communicate with us.

The sculpture consists of a custom silicone membrane (Figure 2) stretched across a frame, actuated by a network of stepper motors (Figure 3) that control its tension and movement. These motors (Figure 4) operate on push and retract commands, allowing for undulating shifts in the membrane’s surface (Figure 5). The sculpture also considers sound as a crucial element, as the motors produce subtle mechanical noises due to the friction between the acrylic gears, highlighting the membrane’s liveliness.





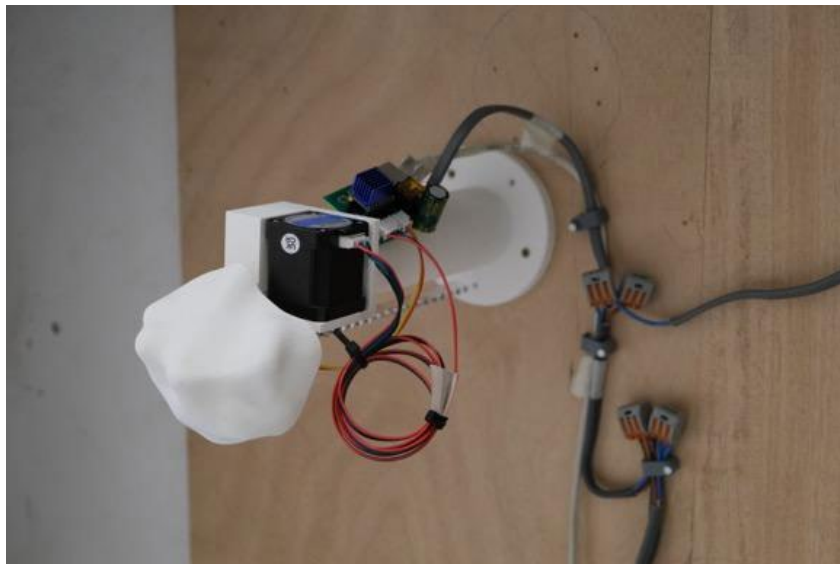
**Fig. 1.** Video documentation ([vimeo.com/1007644104](https://vimeo.com/1007644104)).



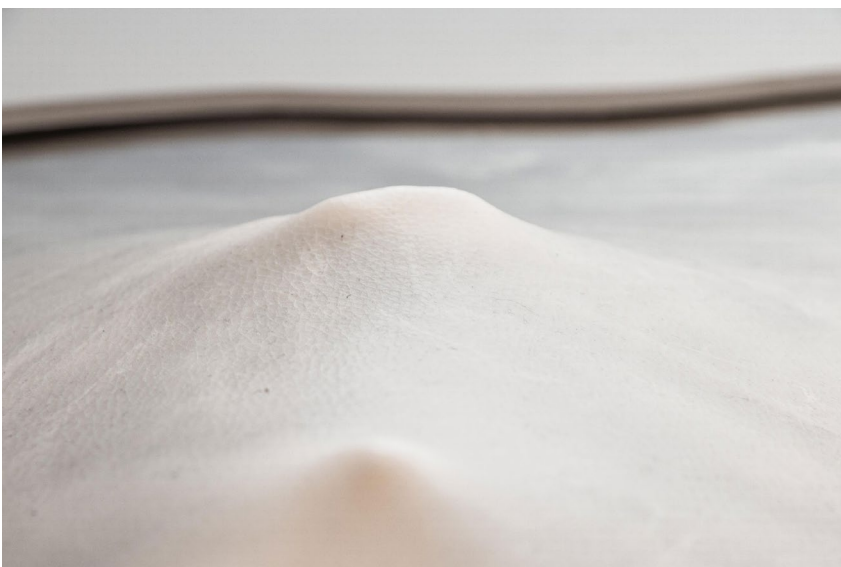
**Fig. 2.** Making of the silicone membrane.



**Fig. 3.** Cluster of motors behind the sculpture.



**Fig. 4.** Close up of one of the motors inside the sculpture.



**Fig. 5.** Close up of the membrane.

Each iteration of *Being Within* is adapted to the specific architecture it inhabits. In past installations, the membrane has occupied recesses and overlooked corners, revealing the unconscious layers of its surrounding space. For the xCoAx conference and exhibition, the sculpture integrates with the space's unique geometries and acoustic conditions, allowing the space itself to shape the membrane's breath.

## References

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