



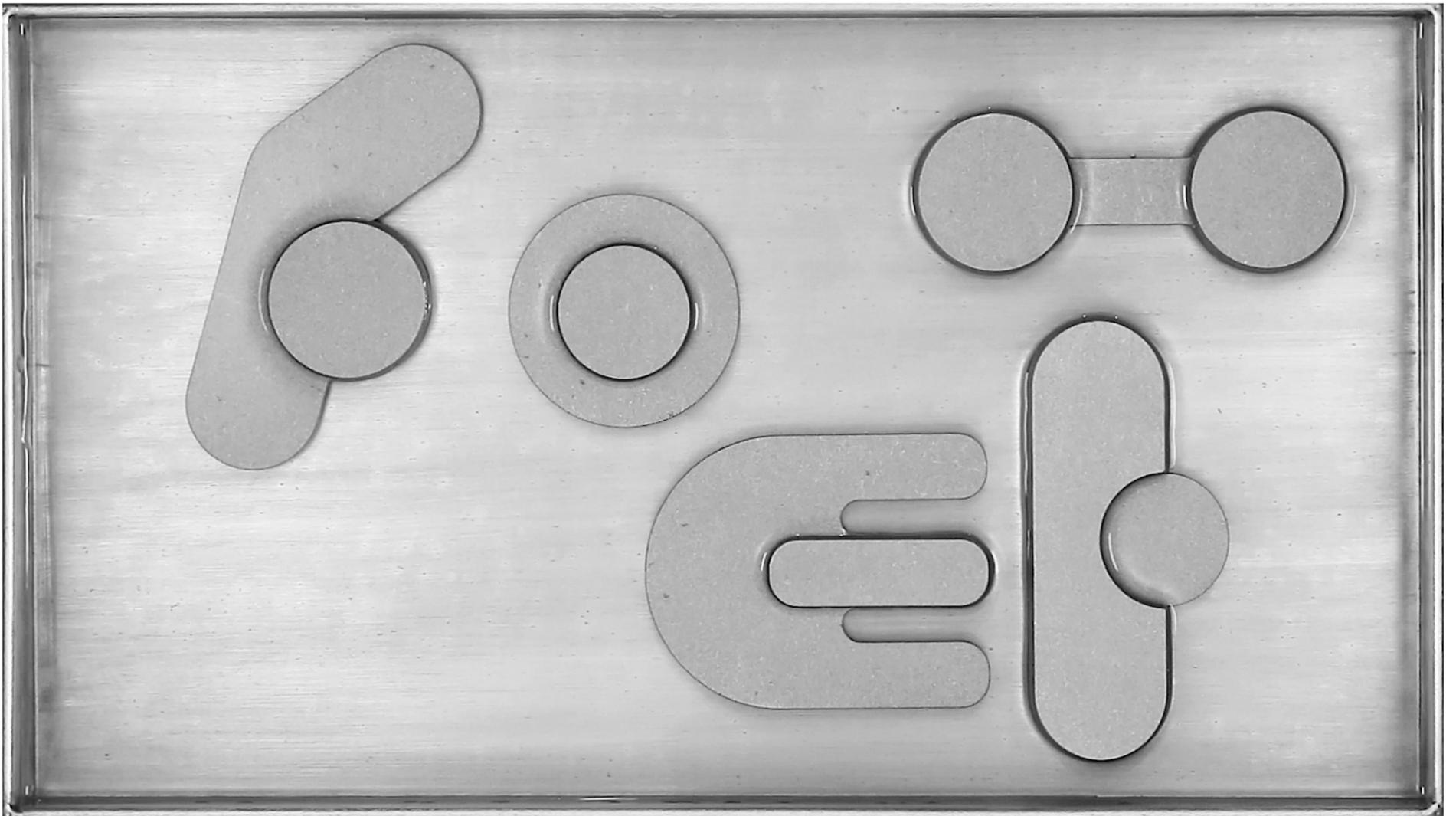
**H a r d w a r e**  
**AT ISLAND HARDWARE**

MARCH

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APRIL

2026



# Alina Tenser

## DRAG SWIPE CLICK

### P I N C H

MARCH 1 – APRIL 30, 2026

Alina Tenser's *Drag Swipe Click Pinch* references the touch-screen gestures famously patented by Apple and performed by human hands on our digital devices. Across her work, Tenser is interested in the physical characteristics that allow our bodies connection with an object. Here, playfully calling our attention to each gesture's form, the artist animates metal pieces lured by magnet in a tray filled with water. As they drag, swipe, click, and pinch their way across the screen in this video, we are left to contemplate a familiar choreography endlessly performed by our own fingertips.

Alina Tenser is a Ukrainian-born artist and educator who was a Lighthouse Works Fellow in 2023. Working across sculpture, video, and performance, her practice explores the dialogue between play, constraint, and language, often through forms that invite tactile or imagined interaction. Tenser is especially interested in affordances—features like handles, zippers, or wheels that suggest use and shape behavior—as a way of thinking about how we navigate the limitations and openings in our lives. Born in Ukraine and raised in the U.S. from the age of nine, she mines the entanglements of her experience as an immigrant and parent to inform her attention to resourcefulness, transformation, displacement, and the embodied experience.

**LAUREL PTAK** Like so much of your work, *Drag Swipe Click Pinch* involves a combination of material specificity, an economy of means, and a sparse minimalism that I incredibly appreciate. How do you think about these elements across your practice?

**ALINA TENSER** Thank you for that observation. I try to find the poetic logic of objects. This requires negotiating between form and materials.

For me, it's important to strike a balance between the universal—often accessed through minimalist forms that are on one hand simple (circles, prisms, etc) but can also feel quite opaque—and the use of everyday, familiar objects like zippers and rubber bands, things we have immediate language for and experience with.

In *Drag Swipe Click Pinch*, the materials and color palette are limited to aluminum. The forms in the tray have a certain logic between them, while the water and aluminum tray provide the quotidian aspects that allow the viewer to connect and relate.

**PTAK** The title of this piece brings our attention to tiny motions our bodies are endlessly performing yet hardly noticing

in a digital age. My own fingers probably drag, swipe, pinch, and click hundreds of times a day across my phone. What is your interest in these movements and in asking us to dwell on them?

**TENSER** In this video all of the objects are based on drawings of patented gestures—movements captured in the body, then further calcified as aluminum vector forms.

There are multiple steps of abstraction and mediation between the creative, haptic expressions of our hands and our understanding of such motions as “drag,” “pinch,” or “click” on a trackpad. These abstract, symbolic gestures are patented by corporations and subsequently memorized by our bodies. In the video, these calcified gestures are set in motion—albeit within a confined space—and their movement is further punctuated by reverberating water.

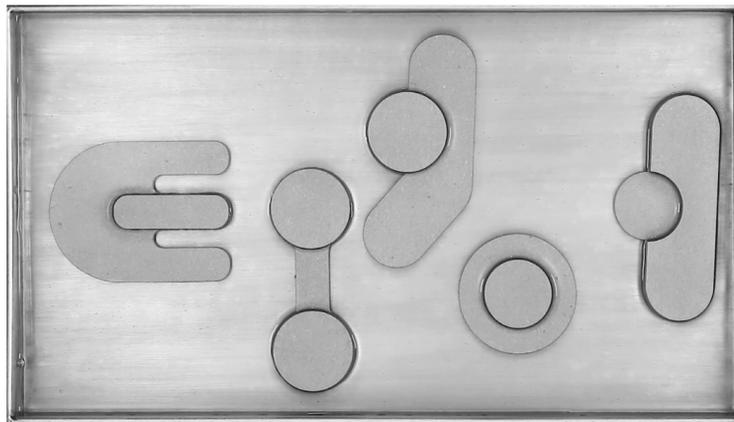
Another point of connection between the objects and somatic understanding lies in how motion is activated through manipulation from underneath. Similar to how puppetry can possess an uncanny presence—human motion simultaneously mimicked and performed—I move these shapes with magnets from beneath the tray. There's an imperfect quality to how

Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, with recent solo exhibitions at KinoSaito Art Center (Verplanck, NY), HESSE FLATOW (New York, NY), SE Cooper Contemporary (Portland, OR), 17Essex Gallery (New York, NY), Konstepidemin (Gothenburg, SE), Soloway Gallery (Brooklyn, NY), and AIR (New York, NY). Her work has been reviewed and featured in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Artforum*, *BOMB Magazine*, *Cultured*, *Hyperallergic*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, and *The Third Rail*.

In 2024 her work was included in *Great Women Sculptors*, a Phaidon Press publication honoring 300 women sculptors from the Renaissance to today. In 2022 she completed *In Parentheses*, a public installation at the Memorial Sloan Kettering Chemo Infusion Center in Brooklyn. She has participated in residencies at Triangle Arts (Brooklyn, NY), Lighthouse Works (Fishers Island, NY), the Queens Museum Studio Program (Queens, NY), and Recess (Brooklyn, NY). Tenser is an Assistant Professor of Art at Lehigh University, where she teaches sculpture.

*Alina Tenser: Drag Swipe Click Pinch, 2021, 2 minute 15 second video without sound played on loop.*

they start, stop, and glide that can be observed but is difficult to articulate precisely. The dissonance is really just the



recognition of human imperfection and human breath within inanimate forms.

**PTAK** Why, how, and when did you make *Drag Swipe Click Pinch*?

**TENSER** I was invited to make a video piece in 2020 in collaboration with

Infinite Object, a physical display device for digital work that plays a single video on a permanent, seamless loop, knowing the video would be experienced with the intimacy and scale of an iPad and without audio.

I began thinking about gesture, something I consider frequently in my practice: functional gesture, affected gesture, performative gesture. The confined nature of the Infinite Object led me to consider other confined gestures of similar scale, and the video started to coalesce around this idea.

I wanted a phantom quality to the movement. Manipulating objects with magnets from underneath provided both control and an odd, slightly awkward motion—too imperfect to read as digital animation. My son was fascinated with magnets when he was younger, so I was already familiar with this kind of movement through watching him play.

**PTAK** This work is not the only time you've explored water's relationship with the body. While you were a fellow at Lighthouse Works in 2023 you embarked on another video that employed a metal tray with water, but to different ends. Can you tell us more about what you produced during your time on Fishers Island and the work's afterlife?

**TENSER** The video I made at Lighthouse Works is called *Walking in Circles with Sharp Corners* and it became the cornerstone for my solo exhibition at Hesse Flatow gallery in 2024, *Circles with Sharp Corners*.

The residency was incredibly productive for me. I arrived knowing I wanted to complete a video in which I would walk inside a metal tray filled with water. I brought all the materials and a mini welder to fabricate this tray—which was quite large, 72 x 48 x 2 inches. As I was making the tray and spending time on the island, new ideas started to emerge. For example, I realized I wanted the flow of water to be continuous and hooked the tray up to the island's water system through a hose.

The tray I made for the video was a compelling object but too large to transport back to the mainland, so I cut it in half and added a hinge, starting a new series of sculptures I think of as portable

fountains called *Water Carriers*. All of the sculptures in this series are steel trays that fold in the middle like a suitcase and are equipped with a water nozzle that can attach to a hose. They can attach to a water system anywhere they are placed and, in a sense, become a part of that ecosystem.

**PTAK** As an artist you work across sculpture, video, and performance. How do these mediums relate for you? Are there things that a video can do that a sculpture or a performance can't?

**TENSER** I really appreciate this question because in some ways I am a sculptor who reluctantly started working in video, and then performance, because each provided a way of exploring form that objects in space did not quite offer.

The first video I ever made, *Relief 1*—which I stubbornly insisted on calling a sculpture—was a green screen work in which I painted a blobby sculpture chroma green and touched it with my hands, creating fleeting moments of understanding the form without ever fully grasping it. My early green screen videos allowed me to isolate forms or parts of objects and separate them from materiality, gravity, and scale in a way that felt exciting and unavailable through sculpture alone.

Performance allows for another kind of emphasis on form and process. I think about performing with objects I make as an extension of the making process—I know how to move them, hold them, position my body in relation to them through the act of making them. For example, I might want an object to create a certain sound when rolled, which means building it hollow and lightweight. Or I might need it to match my height or arm span perfectly, so the scale of the object is decided by the terms of my body. Movement and performance create additional criteria for making an object that in turn impact its form.

**PTAK** Who are your artistic influences? Do you see any of them in this work?

**TENSER** There are many, but with this video I think about both Lygia Clark and Senga Nengudi.

Lygia Clark made interactive art objects for a long time, then moved toward making objects employed in art therapy. She described these therapeutic objects as aiding the client to enter states of the “body's fantasy dimensions.” I too think a somatic resonance occurs either through direct interaction with an object or through visualizing form. In this video, there's something about anticipating movement and watching the water's unsettling and settling that carries that kind of somatic resonance.

Senga Nengudi has a way of filling limp or two-dimensional materials like plastic tarp or pantyhose to animate them. I love her *Water Compositions*, where a plastic tarp is filled with water, often dyed bright colors. She talks about always choosing materials that feel alive over those that are everlasting or archival—something I connect with. Water is something I return to frequently in both my video work and sculpture. It's a way to signify volume and shared presence, while also enacting a process that is ever-changing.

Image captions: ABOVE & LEFT Stills from Alina Tenser, *Drag Swipe Click Pinch*, 2021, 2 minute 15 second video. Courtesy of the artist.





**HARDWARE** is a year-round exhibition space for film and video by contemporary artists located in the loose screw section of Island Hardware on Fishers Island.

Every two months, a new moving-image work by a former Lighthouse Works Fellow appears, inviting unexpected encounters with contemporary art where the everyday rhythms, textures, and temporalities of a hardware shop frame the work.

Located inside Island Hardware at 741 The Gloaming on Fishers Island, **HARDWARE** is programmed by Lighthouse Works and open to the public during business hours, from Monday–Friday 8am–4pm and Sunday 8am–noon, or by appointment.

**HARDWARE** is curated by Laurel Ptak with support from Claudia DeSimone and Eliza Schmidt. Exhibition guide designed by Eric Nylund. Special thanks to Dave Beckwith and the entire team at Island Hardware for their ongoing support.

For further information about these exhibitions contact Nate Malinowski at [nate@lighthouseworks.us](mailto:nate@lighthouseworks.us) or (631) 788-7713.

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