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Ominous Optimism

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Jesse Standlea

I create contemplative and meditative spaces. My structures emphasize modular and bodily elements. The resulting spaces lie between a physiological and psychological consideration of self and space. My interest in creating self-reflective spaces derives from the seemingly sensible impulse to seek truth. Paradoxically, my pursuit of truth is fogged with uncertainty and complicated by deception.

My works are made from everyday materials employed illogically. In an effort to make ordinary objects appear extraordinary I employ a variety of strategies. Specifically, I build layers in the work that make materials work at cross-purposes with themselves, other materials, and viewers. I embrace an irrational system of decision-making, in which I attempt to dupe myself into new discovery. I reuse discarded materials, past works and ideas.

The age-old concept of building is integral to my work. When I apply it to the specialized context of art I challenge my understanding of architecture. My investigations result in works that emphasize the liminal space between model and architectural scale. The resulting effect disjointedly holds onto both elements. It is important that the elements occupy the ambiguous space between the two; their incompatibility is emphasized like what takes place when oil and water are mixed.

The joining and blurring of building units may initially seem to be a futuristic construction aimed at some utopian fantasy. But I am more interested in the reality of the here and now, in the fact that the familiar persists and is present. My work invites contemplation of daily routines and the self while suggesting a curious sort of ominous optimism.