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Reference Frames and Movement

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I create objects and images that explore the instability of what I value personally and culturally, as well as the fragmented and shifting nature of reality that surrounds me. I am interested in the passage of time, the speed in which we move through it, and the difficulty of being able to slow down to analyze things to a critical degree. Elements within my work may feel familiar because of my engagement with recognizable and iconographic material, but meanings and uses seem purposefully obscured suggesting something is awry. Traces of my hand are evident throughout my sculptures, drawings and paintings revealing a commitment to process. There is an emphasis on persistence found within the visible repetition and the laying bare of imperfections resulting from my handmade efforts. When persistence goes up against the mundaneness of a chosen subject, the subject is provisionally granted higher status and questioned in a new light. In that moment I upset expectations of function, value and history providing viewers with an opportunity to consider something strange. At times my pieces look as if they must have social or political meaning, but references to politics, identity, history and current events are connotative. Without explaining any sort of definitive position or specific critique of the supposed topic, my work acts almost as a prop to point to conversations greater than themselves. I am noticing things, modifying them by various means, and restaging them to search for what is lost and found in translation.

Certain drawing or sculpting processes I use simultaneously work to build something up while negating it at the same time, as seen in my scratched drawing on the surface of a television, or the enlargement of my Social Security card with colored pencil. The television as a machine is rendered useless and becomes an object of accumulated activity, rather than an enforcer of passivity. My enlarged Social Security card brings a private marker of identity into a public space counteracting its purpose. There is an element of absurdity here as well due to the large scale of the drawing and its awkward misstep into a conversation regarding identity—for nothing is actually gained about my identity in the voyeuristic encounter.

A similar conclusion is reached in other works when I make replicas of functioning objects or devices that in their designs were always destined to be lifeless facsimiles. This occurs in my graphite drawing of a predator drone constructed out of twigs and leaves referencing the uncertainty of detached violence. In the instance of my American flag piece, the importance of the flag as a symbol is destabilized with my clumsy construction using inconsequential materials such as window screen and bubble wrap. These trivial materials are tentatively overlooked because their composition survives to indicate the stars and stripes. Slippage occurs in our understanding when form and function become askew, and I play with how much information is shared about the implications of those shifts.

I also generate relationships between individual pieces that demonstrate there are different degrees of what it means to be “made”. Some pieces are handmade imitations of recognizable items, and others are the actual found objects

wrapped in modeling clay or drawn and painted on. Made of pine wood, steel screws and wood stain, my mock version of an airplane engine is naive in its mimicry. It has the presence of a daring wood working project but looks like the product of a budding amateur living somewhere between Home Depot and Gilligan's Island. In contrast, a pair of children's juice containers purchased from the grocery store became "un-readymades" once I enclosed them in modeling clay, and they were further stylized, anthropomorphized and arranged in a playfully menacing position. In either case both sculptures are pretending to be something they are not, acting more as a prop or a stand-in for something else. They fail to attain true likeness to their ideal form and can feel surreal, humorous, anxious and even slightly gloomy at the same time.

The physical surfaces of my pieces are often emphasized through repetitive mark-making, polishing, burning or carving. The repetition of such activities seduces the viewer on a formal level and alludes to there being some sort of history attached to a piece—both in the labor involved in their production as well as possible references to fictional histories or imagined narratives. For example, the damage to my flight data recorder piece is simulated, and my statue of a wall-mounted light fixture and energy-efficient bulb includes tinges of dirt and only fantasizes about being an artifact from an archaeological dig. In these examples I am interested in confusing the story of how the objects came to look the way they do, and I play with expectations of what is literal or imagined. The juxtaposition of routine items and images against a commitment to the embellishment of their surface patinas proposes a viewer ought to look closer. Leaving evidence of the

hand-made and holding process and craft to a high standard is for me a way of speaking about time, presence and attention in this digital age.

My artwork suggests a variety of points of reference from aspects of everyday life to topical current events that bombard my purview. At first glance many of the references appear exact. However, in their relationship to one another, or through the materials, techniques or titles that I use, the initial impression of the pieces is then complicated and at times undermined. In a small abstract colored pencil drawing on paper with a limited palette of pinks, peaches, yellows and whites, I have included the words “color test for a portrait of all my friends”. This matter of fact title on the front of the paper seems to suggest what viewers are seeing is a study for a more significant drawing yet to be completed. The relationship between the language used and the palette choice is potent in and of itself, but the drawing has a blatant level of detachment from the actual issue it presents. By occasionally lodging meaning within a trail of breadcrumbs inside of and surrounding my work, I aim to create starting points or catalysts for other people’s thinking.

As I notice my attention span diminishing as our instant media climate continues to shape my existence, my art practice involves trying to be more acutely aware and render the world more perceptible. In this undertaking of heightened surveillance I examine indicators that demonstrate society’s nervousness, and I look for the prosthetics of society keeping things together. Often times the implication of a subject’s existence demonstrates how society is continuously inventing intelligent ways to compensate for how unsophisticated we actually might be. My sculpture of airport security checkpoint trays is a relic from front-end preventative measures

designed to help a government agency protect us from one another. On the other hand, my reproduction of an airplane's black box is an artifact from the back-end of things and helps us make sense of our failures- the failures of the machines we have created for ourselves, or the inability for humans to universally get along with one another. I tend to work with items that in their very existence reveal what I see to be some of my culture's victories and disappointments.

I want my artwork to simultaneously feel familiar and unfamiliar, thus creating tension between what is known and unknown. Fluidity between elusive critique and subtle absurdity comes to the forefront in a lot of my pieces. I believe if any humor is sensed it is a byproduct of a viewer's expectation for meaning that is challenged, as well as an awareness of a detectable separation of form and function. Subject matter with a sense of political ambiguity and cultural fatigue begins to feel more absurd once it has been selected and overworked, recontextualized and reflected back at us. My pieces are uncertain about the future and propose we slow down to recognize and contemplate aspects of our world that at one time felt strange and new, but have since been accepted and reduced to being commonplace, unexceptional and unchallenged.