

4-1-2015

nothing's wrong

Christina Mesi
Claremont Graduate University

Recommended Citation

Mesi, Christina, "nothing's wrong" (2015). *CGU MFA Theses*. Paper 103.
http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cgu_mfatheses/103

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the CGU Student Scholarship at Scholarship @ Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in CGU MFA Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship @ Claremont. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

Christina Mesiti
Written statement
MFA Thesis

On installing in the big gallery

Finally, I understood the need to abandon convention and let the objects find/make their own spaces. I had to trust their own agency. I had to trust the small textures holding the world.

What is it to be a means without ends? A medium, a passage, a tool.

Who do I make art for?

Since childhood I've always been wide-eyed, the kind of person who points and says, "look at that" too much. I instinctively knew not everyone felt this drinking kind of looking, so I use my practice to protect this quiet touching, pointing, looking. I also view the things I make as a kind of beacon to find others who are equally excited by long walks pointing at things, like a bat signal but closer to the earth. This searching for connection is why the pieces feel propositional. I want the viewer (and the objects?) as a friend and partner. I'm not interested in providing an experience for the viewer to consume but rather sharing one between me, the viewer, and the objects themselves. I would like to become close enough to experience together and not together all at the same time.

Feeling around the edges

This shared feeling has to do with adjusting the edges of things both physically and intellectually. I work with flexible containers. Physically, I push two or more materials together so that they can find their own form, their own edge. I pour the plaster into different kinds of flexible emptinesses like envelopes or discarded gift wrap so that the two materials can exercise their own material agency and vitality, the materials working with themselves and the space to decide their own inevitable shapes. I allow the pieces their own logic.

By filling empty space and turning surfaces inside out I play between positive and negative. This lets the work sit on the edge between thing and not thing. I try to fit all my work within the edge between inside and outside, positive and negative, as if it were the infinitely large space between zero and one on the number line.

When the materials and space decide their own moves it makes the conceptual container of the work flexible too, the names of things, the ideas of them. The work shifts its taxonomy sideways. I unhinge materials and spaces from their signifiers. Plaster-cast wrapping paper reads as products, presents, and spilled food. Paper mached product packages become small architectural monuments. Multiple references intertwine and cancel each other out. When a firm idea of an object is loosened, it reprioritizes the embodied experience of it: its specificity and its relationship to its space.

Felt continuity between material, body, and space (the body is material!)

I want to level the space, the objects, and the viewer so that none of the three plays foreground or background to the others. Activities, architecture, furniture, and bodies all become active, equal players in a spontaneous game of call and response. By reprioritizing physical specificity of an object in its space, time becomes equally specific (i.e.this plaster feels this way to me right now). This temporal specificity creates the sense of potential movement across many individual moments. The work circulates and breathes, the objects moving around the viewers as much as the reverse. The objects' shiftiness defends them from crystallization and purity. This is why I intuitively reach for materials that circulate or are modular (envelopes, gifts, blocks). A sense of the equal possibility of movement between the viewer and the pieces knits our relationship to the material world closer together. It creates a felt sense of interconnectedness or interbeing.