Eventually Everything Becomes: MonumentMemoryMetaphorMyth

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Artist Statement

We live in an age of consumerism, wherein people are quick to buy and replace easy and cheap products. This rapid and frivolous consumption is often a futile attempt to satisfy our longing for something more significant or profound. Since the industrial revolution, consumerism has driven the pace and quality of life. We become more disconnected from our ecosystems and fail to be sustainable – both environmentally and personally. What we now call “sustainable” is less than what it essentially means: the ability to take care of and provide for ourselves and others in the most basic human ways (food production and preparation, shelter, and furniture construction etc.). Human production and excess continually deteriorates the environment: our landfills are full, countless species are extinct, and our natural resources are depleted. We are in a state of economic and ecological crisis.

This is my departure point in my work that spans the production of discrete sculptural objects, tactile functional furniture, boxes, large-scale integrative installations, and site specific performance projects. Through my work, both formally and conceptually, I investigate physical interactions—visceral, sensory, tactile, and emotional experiences in art and life as it relates to personal, artistic, and ecological sustainability.

Everything around us is relevant; the objects collected in an art piece or within one’s home each contribute to how we experience the world. Textures, sounds, the existence or absence of objects in that space collectively contributes to an individual’s experience of ‘space’ and hence, life. What is the value of our lived experience as it relates to art as a daily practice? What metaphorical connotation does a chair have at a table versus a bench? What historical relevance do certain objects hold in our memory and why are they important to our present or future? Is the texture, finish, or design of objects within a space significant in our relationship to that space? How does it enhance or detract from our sensory experience, influence our memory or the quality of our lives? As an 3D artist and builder, I delight in and am intrigued by the ways in which people move through their personal spaces—how this parallels the way they metaphorically move through their lives. I work to understand the psychophysical connection people have to the spaces they inhabit, or rather the culture of how we understand our body in space. I explore this in my current work with performing installations. Movement through constructed environments encourages audiences to observe and engage with the materials, their histories, and the complicated nature of our gendered spaces and body politics. I create multisensory experiences through installation and audience engagement to contemplate the value of everyday rituals and materials, encouraging the audience to occupy the spaces in familiar and unfamiliar ways. Familiarity elicits the power of memory, personal stories, and re-connection, engaging seemingly disparate emotions and reactions in one space. This process of creating, constructing, and deconstructing presents an engaged, critical framework for articulating assumptions, perspectives, and power dynamics; how we reflect society and also the ways we can affect change in and create society. Intersubjective experience manifests through the installations and objects to create deeply connected experiences with art.

Evaluating these broader concepts in my work and reflecting on my childhood growing up in rural North Carolina, I am conscious of the inseparability of food, home, rituals, and daily life as art practices. Particularly I am interested in the cultural interactions, practices, and
material culture present in working the land for food, livelihood, and beauty typically found in rural southern families. Living in urban areas for the past five years, issues of access, social justice, health, and the sensory experience of food integrated into my artistic practice and research questions. Over the past year, I have committed myself to deeper investigations surrounding food as a reflection of cultural values and artistic engagement. Through beekeeping, gardening, cooking, bread, and cheese making, I investigate these rituals in my artistic practice through the lens of constructed identities such as gender, race, class, and sexuality. My work, which is ultimately a finely crafted object, evolves from intersubjective actions.

These explorations focus the lens upon the specific experience of my Southern upbringing by excavating place to explore both memory and spectacle. Through this excavation and research, my artistic inquiry initiates and interrogates gender assumptions around domestic and manual labor practices. These recent explorations feature sculptural tool studies in lard, soil, building materials, flour and cornmeal—offering the opportunity to experience familiar everyday objects in new and critical ways, thereby challenging assumptions of both form and function.

Cathy O'Keefe, from her article *Culture as a Guidepost for a Balanced Life,* invokes the spirit of William James, the father of American psychology who “advanced the idea that we can’t think our way into a new kind of living; rather, we must live our way into a new kind of thinking.” My artistic practice blurs boundaries of viewer/artist, promoting the participation and exploration of ecological design and sustainability in our lives for vibrant cultural engagement, creating spaces for critically reshaping our tools (perceptual and material) necessary to manifest art as a lived experience. At the intersection of political and aesthetic discourses, art as social practice animates my work through considerations of collaboration, intelligibility, freedom, collectivity, and action. Through this lens, art possesses the capacity to integrate and explicate considerations of urban planning, built environments, social and environmental policy, histories, economies, and sustainable food practices to foster collective and embodied change in communities. However, it is only through a dedicated and disciplined art practice and understanding of craft that any social practice by a visual artist can succeed.
Andrea Nicole Bauguss

eventually everything becomes: monumentmemorymetaphormyth

Prior to my arrival to the MFA program at UNC-, my work fit neatly into distinct categories of fine art/painting, design/built environments, historic preservation, craft, large-scale integrative installations, site specific performance projects, and set design for dance. Through each of these facets my artistic explorations fused my background as a Visual Communicator and Historic Preservationist working at the intersection of anthropological, sociological, environmental and artistic studies of what we value and what we dispose of as individuals within our communities-and over time, and how repurposing materials and ideas impacts our lives.

I returned to North Carolina, to the south, enthusiastic about the rigor of creative research in the MFA program but with reservations for my recollections of growing up Queer in a conservative South…. a sense of compression and limitation and access and possibility as such. I have long equated my queer southern experience to that of the African American experience of a racialized south- an experience of gendered exile– specifically the segregation I have experienced most of my life. Granted, this is usually a self-segregation. A Queer migration to more liberal urban centers, somewhat opposite of “white flight,” many queer southerners move into dilapidated urban areas- renovate and improve to create new communities. This an idea posited by bell hooks in her book- belonging- a culture of place. The continued physical self segregation for many Queers is for reasons of safety- remaining near more liberal “urban” centers… despite a longing for perhaps more agrarian settings of their childhoods. In my community of queer southerner’s we have return to the south despite this sense of alienation because of a desire for connectedness (or at least the idea of connectedness) to land, family, and tradition. For many of us, the greatest sense of southern life and connectedness lay in reclaiming public and private spaces, commitment to rebuilding/building communities through food, education, and land stewardship.

With that said my work and research over the past 2 years has honed in on: auto ethnographic research, streamlined into intersections of Contemporary Art, Folk Art-Craft, Design and Building, Performance and the Performative Object.

I have maintained a commitment to the vernacular materials and metaphorical objects related to southern material culture and utilize nostalgia as a tool to explore and interrogate access, gender, class and body politics in and through my work.

“He had the feeling that everything he saw was a broken-off piece of some giant blank thing that he had forgotten had happened to him.”
Flannery O’Conner ,Wiseblood 1952

eventually everything becomes: monumentmemorymetaphormyth amalgamates my research and explorations into a fractured landscape of architectural environments and sculpted vernacular objects of paper, wood, metal, fabric, food and reclaimed/altered
objects. I utilize a process of constructing and deconstructing both memory, materials and architecture as an engaged, critical framework for articulating assumptions, perspectives, and power dynamics within and through an installation that asks viewers to experience and occupy spaces in familiar and unfamiliar ways… asking that they orient/reorient themselves in relationship to their own memory in relationship to materials and their kinesthetic experience with in space.

Exhibiting this work within the Allcott Gallery offered a unique experience in the sometimes quandary of site-specific installation. I was interested in a monumental gesture- constructing/deconstructing/moving/and reconstructing this structure articulates and experience of the flux of identity as a queer southerner returning to a place of exile and alienation after twenty years. Utilizing the glass walls of the gallery as a citrine- the structure itself acts as a monument to process and to an architecture long considered of lower class and associated with a poor black south because of scale and simplicity of design. This structure was built based on the architectural floor plan of a shotgun house. In folklore and culture of the south, it is an iconic architectural design. Myth suggests that the name shotgun derived from the ability to shoot a gun through the front door and that would fly cleanly from end to the other, actually the term derived from the African term “togun” meaning place of assembly.

In returning to the wound- the physical space of the south- eventually, everything becomes- re-assembles and re-collects both material and memory- it works to reclaim and repurpose spaces- and excavates nostalgia for traditions and histories Queers have been denied historically. Through language, architectural, material, and psychological constructions it explores, identity, power of connectedness, home, tradition through an environment that can be experienced in a state only best articulated as feeling – backward. Somewhat temporal in nature, this environment is hurried and childlike- full of a sense possibility of history- compression and limitation and as such slow and fixed thick with metaphor and mythology.
Device for Orientation

- educated as in Visual Communication
- emphasis typography, package and environmental design

- abandoned the use of computers to pursue a career as a builder focusing on Historic Preservation and Green Building.
Contextual frameworks:

Architecture:
• Information Architecture: hierarchies both visual and linguistic modes of communication

• Physical Architecture: Understood as built habitable space, an aesthetic synthesis of Design (the idea) and construction (the materialization of that idea)

• Architecture is a physical and spatial manifestation of cultural ideas, relationships, and values, architecture shapes and is shaped by how people imagine themselves in the worlds in which they live.

Quilting:
• Architecture concerns itself with the deployment, experience and aesthetics of space. So too does quilt making. For quilts are not just made they are inhabited.

• A process of sewing together two or more layers of material
**Methodology:** Practice as Research – Autoethnographer

**Intersections:**
- Contemporary Art – Folk Art-Craft
- Design- Building
- Functional versus Non-Functional Object

**Materials:**
- Reclaimed/ Local - Environmental Impact- Anthropological and Sociological study of what we value, collect and dispose of within communities.

**Interests:**
- Preservation
- Social Practice
- Intersections of life and art/ performance and the body
- Institutional Critique
- Sustainability Practices
- Community Engagement- Accessibility
- Education
William Christenberry: Hale County, Alabama
Rural Studio : Hale County, Alabama
Gee’s Bend Quilts: Gee’s Bend, Alabama
Robert Rauschenburg: Gee’s Bend Quilts
“painting relates to both art and life...[and] I try to act in that gap between the two.”
Gee’s Bend Quilts
Title: Box, Simply- The Box Project

Size: Varied. From slightly smaller than a shoe box size up to 20” x 24” x 12”

Materials: Reclaimed house parts, antique lumber, found furniture, reclaimed cabinet and door hardware, reclaimed screws, license plates, letterpress letters, postcards, typewriter keys. Linseed Oil Finish.

Year: 2005 to present

Description: An investigation materials reuse through the design and construction of over 1800 of these functional boxes. Sample of 103 pictured here.
Title: Living Presence of Space: Garage Gallery
Location: Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco Ca
Size: 8’x 13’x 16, 5’ x 25’ x 2’
Materials: Reclaimed house parts (siding, interior/exterior trim, flooring, architectural details etc.)
Year: Summer 2008
Title: Bed, Bath, Stage, and Beyond
Location: Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco Ca
Size: 8’x 13’x 16, 5’ x 25’ x 2’
Materials: Reclaimed house parts (siding, interior/exterior trim, flooring, architectural details etc.)
Year: Summer 2008
Title: Boy’s Knife: Set Design and Building Project
Location: Montpelier, Virginia
Size: 25’x25’x25’
Materials: Fallen timbers, reclaimed house paint, found parachute, reclaimed glass block, screen, corrugated roofing material, found objects
Year: Summer 2005
Domestic Matters: Distilling Geographies, Identities and Boundaries

• *Domestic Matters* explored the intimate geographies and everyday life practices in the Agrarian South. The experience of *Domestic Matters* consisted of bi-weekly performances (11 different roaming choreographies) with culinary events, film screenings, multidisciplinary art labs, and culinary workshops for adults and children. Combining mixed media, moving bodies and constructions of recycled materials and familiar spaces, the company entertained questions of art as a necessity and the embodiment of socio-cultural norms, socio-economics and constructions of identity.

• Using materials (tar, reclaimed wood, corrugated metal, house paint, photographs), dancing bodies, stories and recipes of the South, *Domestic Matters* worked with memory, displacement, concepts of home, and the complexities of gender, race and sexuality. They investigated the ways in which the stories and material culture are reflected and created through repurposing.
Domestic Matters: Distilling Geographies, Identities and Boundaries 1

**Title:** Beautiful Broken Objects  
**Size:** 20’x9’x 4’  
**Materials:** Reclaimed house parts (siding, interior/exterior trim, flooring, architectural details etc.), objects, paintings  
**Year:** Spring 2011  
**Description:** Performance Installation
Title Above: RedBand WhiteLily
Size: 6’ x 6’x 5’
Materials: Cake, plywood, recipes, photos, whisk, flour sacks, fabric, Vintage Silverware and enamel top table
Year: Spring 2011
Domestic Matters: Distilling Geographies, Identities and Boundaries 2

**Title Left:** In an Upright and Circular Motion
**Size:** 4’x8’x6’
**Materials:** Plywood, tar, house paint, reclaimed dish drains, washers, screws, vintage faucet and enamelware
**Year:** Spring 2011

**Description:** Installation Painting Performances

**Title Above:** Housepainters Blues
**Size:** 12’ x 8’x 3’
**Materials:** Plywood, tar, house paint, ruined house painting brushes, Vintage wooden ladders, bucket, boots, cut nails
**Year:** Spring 2011
Working Living
feeling
both
forward and backward:
I often make
the thing
I look for
before
I find it,
replicate
the experience
before I have it
Domestic Matters:
Distilling Geographies, Identities and Boundaries

**Title Left:** Outhouse Confession  
**Size:** 4’x4’x7’  
**Materials:** Reclaimed tin ceiling, reclaimed wood, casters, screws,  
**Year:** Spring 2011  

**Description:** Installation Painting Performances
Henry River Mill Village, Burke County N.C.
Outhouses
Junction
ENGAGE CONVERGE AND EMERGE

A Center for Practice in Sustainability and the Arts
Title: Inbetween (post performance still)
Size: Varied. From slightly smaller than a shoe box size up to 20”x24”x12”
Materials: Antique table and chair, ropes and pulley system, vintage dresses and men’s suit jackets, 9 cakes, hammer, house paint, sound score
Year: 2012
**tool:** Device for making material changes on other objects, the main means by which human beings control and manipulate their physical environment.
Title: CornbredWhitebred  Size: 8’ x 2’ x 3”  Materials: Cast Iron skillets, homemade cornbread, sliced white bread, nails

Title: Some Useful Tool  Size: 24” x 15” x 4”  Materials: Homemade biscuits, lard  Year: 2012
Title: Timeliness and Measure (Performance still & video clip)
Size: 8’x 8’x 2’
Materials: Drywall, 2x4’s, House Paint, Live Collard Greens, Vintage fan, water, water bottle, stool
Year: 2012
Title: Grey Matter: The Space Between
Size: 14’ x 25’ x 16’
Materials: Plywood, house paint, reclaimed house and mechanical parts, antique lumber, found objects and furniture, hardware, rope, wire and flannel
Year: 2012
Chaim Soutine: French Expressionist Painter
Title: Grey Matter: The Space Between
Size: 14’ x 25’ x 16’
Materials: Plywood, house paint, reclaimed house and mechanical parts, antique lumber, found objects and furniture, hardware, rope, and wire
Year: 2012
Title: Grey Matter: The Space Between
Size: 14’ x 25’ x 16’
Materials: Plywood, house paint, reclaimed house and mechanical parts, antique lumber, found objects and furniture, hardware, rope, and wire
Year: 2012
Giorgio Morandi: Still Lives, Artist Studio. Important forerunner to Minimalism
Title:  Brief History of the American Labor Movement
Size: 4’x 4’x 12’
Materials: Vintage desk chair, ropes, shovels, fountain pen, men’s suit coats
Year: 2012
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2013: reclaimed lumber, architectural details, carpet, paint, sand, bed, light, vintage school desk, salt, cotton muslin, silverware, plastic, wallpaper, dried collard greens, school paper, vintage family photos, frames
“It's very hard to stop doing things you're used to doing.
You almost have to dismantle yourself
and scatter it all around
and then put a blindfold on and put it back together so that you avoid old habits.”
— Tom Waits
Return – to the wound- the south- physical place

Reclaim- spaces- architectural, material, psychological, power, identity, space- psychologically physically- power of connectedness, home, tradition

Re- collect- materials spaces memory

Repurpose- creatively, purposefully

Reinventing traditions  and tools to connect to the land/spaces we are from we become…

Reclaim – power, identity, space- psychologically physically- power of connectedness, home, tradition

Research as practice and practice as research
Resources


Williams-forson, Psyche A. *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black