Is a Call to Pleasure a Loss?

Carley Zarzeka

“Documents submitted to the Faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the Master of Fine Arts in the Department of Art”

2018

Approved by: Hong-An Truong (Chair)
Joy Cox
Katherine Guinness
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Objects are time stamps; markers of place, class, and culture. *What happens when we intervene upon their existence, repurpose their use or mimic their collapse? How does the paint roller feel when it is squeezed by an egg-slicer? Does it feel emasculated? Liberated? When does an object’s life end? Does its life end?* These are questions that direct my interactions with the objects that make up my work.

Though sculptural and installation-based practice, Is a Call to Pleasure a Loss? investigates the standardization of construction materials in the United States and their relationship to the domestic space. An assemblage of found objects, including building supplies, are employed in the service of these sometimes precarious constructions. This exploration also highlights how standardization has become essential in the world of product design and in the spaces in which these objects reside. Ultimately, by intentionally sourcing generic objects to use in the sculptures, the work simultaneously operates on both a universal and personal level.

Collect and build, disassemble and preserve, coerce and release – the tension between these actions is central to my practice. One example of how this oscillation has become integral in my process is in the construction of my work, *Sale*. For months, multiple times each day, I drove by a faded “Home for Sale” sign at the end of my street. This sign became a guide, sending me on my way every morning and welcoming my home at night. On a day no different than any other, I veered into the right-hand turn lane and began to turn up my street when I stopped, kidnapped the sun-washed sign and proceeded to my studio. In a cyclonic moment of cutting, spraying, binding and balancing the piece was complete. By removing the sign from its intended location and stripping it from its predetermined purpose, I interrogate its prescribed meaning. In placing the sign atop a squat L-shaped shelf I am extracting it from patterns of domestic use, calling attention to its meaning as an overdetermined symbol of domesticity, and redefining it’s prescribed utility.

Although they operate in this doubled way, the materials that I use in my work are familiar, but not inherently personal. Instead of using intimate or private objects, say from my childhood, I scour for and collect items that together construct a framework of time and place; an identity, not of myself but of the generic. I believe that by using everyday objects like outlet plugs and pasta strainers, the work cannot be biographical or specific, but can serve as an entry point into other biographies, other specifications beyond my own. My work is not about my life, but about aiming for individualism, yet faltering due to unconscious, generic consumerism.

While formal strategies of line, gravity, and balance govern the compositions of each work, it is not until I remove the object from its original context that I see the potential in disguising it as a serious formal element in a piece. By extracting a domestic object such as an outlet plug or a pasta strainer and treating it as a relic of design, my work disrupts our normalized perception of the things we rely on, whether we choose to acknowledge it or not.
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MFA Thesis Presentation

Carley Zarzeka
Is a Call to Pleasure a Loss?, 2018
Indeed, meaning is language, but being its abstraction it cannot be seen. Despite this, in the current use of language one sees and hears only its abstraction, but being its abstraction it cannot be seen. Indeed, meaning is language, but being its abstraction it cannot be seen.
Diverse Penetration
Close for Penetration
Under Construction
Simply manual, not quite header
Not quite top
Register the trademark
Misnomer

Cognitive Dissonance
360 degrees
Is a call to pleasure, a loss of conceptualization?
Engaged abundance. Take care of your own bird
Women walk through clouds
Secondhand sadness

Tales:

List of Titles:
Is a Call to Pleasure a Loss? (installation), 2018
Sale, 2018
Sale (detail), 2018
Is a Call to Pleasure a Loss? (installation), 2018
Announcing

The 1956 Jubilee

Price $11,600

Levittown, PA, 1956
Is a Call to Pleasure a Loss?

(installation), 2018
0.10. The Last Futurist Exhibition of Paintings, 1915
Black Square, Kasimir Malevich, 1913
We begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us: when the drill breaks, when the car stalls, when the window gets filthy when their flow within the circuits of production and distribution, consumption and exhibition, has been arrested, however momentarily. The story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relationship to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation.

-Bill Brown
Untitled (Ladder), Virginia Overton, 2010
Bicycle Wheel, Marcel Duchamp, 1951
Gift, Man Ray, 1958

Head, David Hammons, 2004
Blue Glove Right #3, Amanda Ross-Ho, 2015
Is a Call to Pleasure a Loss? (Installation), 2018
Is a Call to Pleasure a Loss? (installation), 2018
Is a Call to Pleasure a Loss? (installation), 2018
Waning (detail), 2017
Is a Call to Pleasure a Loss? (Installation), 2018
Is a Call to Pleasure a Loss? (Installation), 2018
Thank You