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DEMONSTRATION: MONSTROUS OPERATIONS IN SCULPTURAL PRODUCTION AND DISPLAY

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**DEMONSTRATION:
MONSTROUS OPERATIONS IN SCULPTURAL
PRODUCTION AND DISPLAY**

(Spine Title: Demonstration)

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by

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Graduate Program in Visual Arts

2

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada**

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entitled:

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ABSTRACT

Sculpture is an equivocal medium, at once occupying the abstract space of representation and the real space of the viewer. This dual nature often produces an uncanny or monstrous experience for the viewer who feels drawn into the space of the work, and who is met by its disruptive, but evasive presence. This monstrous condition is revealed in modern and contemporary sculptural practices that have sought to complicate the dynamics of the relationship that sculpture has had with the furniture used in its production and display. Manipulations of the pedestal and the workbench, in various degrees of integration with the work, *demonstrate* (a word connected to revealing and monstrosity) this monstrous condition by providing both a transition and a barrier at the borders of meaning.

In fulfillment of the Project-Based Stream of the PhD in Art and Visual Culture, the material in this thesis consists of three parts. The first part is a written thesis that utilizes an image from the 1931 film version of *Frankenstein* as a model for looking at sculptural practices and the furniture of its production and display. The second is a record of my studio research, which is based in sculpture and is directly engaged in the questions described here. Workbench forms used to produce sculptural artifacts are then used as 'pedestals' in the context of an exhibition. This work culminates in an exhibition at the McIntosh Gallery, in London Ontario. The third part documents Parker Branch, an ongoing collaborative curatorial project of which I am a part. The project consists of a small museum space that mounts a rotating exhibition program of found objects, with an emphasis on lateral diversions in meaning engendered by manipulations of

traditional taxonomic systems. What is shared among these projects is an engagement with material artifacts and the mechanisms by which they are displayed. Each project explores the ways in which those mechanisms shape the production of meaning through various corruptions in linear development.

KEYWORDS

sculpture, contemporary, art, pedestal, plinth, display, monster, monstrosity, Rachel Harrison, Jean Dubuffet, Mike Kelley, Liz Magor

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PART ONE

DEMONSTRATION:
MONSTROUS OPERATIONS IN SCULPTURAL
PRODUCTION AND DISPLAY

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The pivotal scene of the 1931 James Whale adaptation of *Frankenstein* is one that contains the signal depiction of the monster's animation into life. The scene marks the film's narrative turn from its contextual foreshadowing to its consequential unfolding. Henry Frankenstein is in his laboratory, in an abandoned watchtower perched on a craggy outcrop; he is at the cusp of performing his definitive act. With the help of his assistant Fritz, he has gathered a heterogeneous collection of organs and limbs "from graves, from the gallows— anywhere", and constructed a sutured hybrid in the misshapen form of a man. The body lies covered upon an elaborate surgical table, attached to a complex array of electrical conduits that extend upwards, through the roof of the tower. It is to be brought to life by a jolt from the growing storm outside. Frankenstein is seen running a final test when an intervening party knocks urgently at the tower door: his fiancée, a friend, and a former professor have arrived uninvited, concerned for his mental wellbeing. After some discussion, Frankenstein urges them to take seats in a raised part of the room, where they will form an audience for the ensuing act.

The surgical table, with the prone body of the monster upon it, forms the nucleus around which all activity in the scene orbits: Frankenstein and Fritz absorbed by their fiendish work; the party of witnesses; the arcane crackling technology; and the raging storm. Until the end of the scene, with Frankenstein's famous emphatic declaration of his

success, the body of the monster and the table are physically and conceptually entwined. Taken together as an assemblage, the monster and the table might be read here as a compression of the entire film into a dense physical form. They appear to function as two parts of the same technological apparatus. We as viewers await the unveiling and the removal of electrodes, but Whale suspends our direct encounter with the independent monster to a later scene where, upright and mobile, its umbilical connection to the table has already been severed. At that point the narrative turn is thus complete and the second part of the film has begun. This device helps sustain an image of the monster and table beyond the eventual end of the film, a scene that has endured as one of the film's most iconic images.

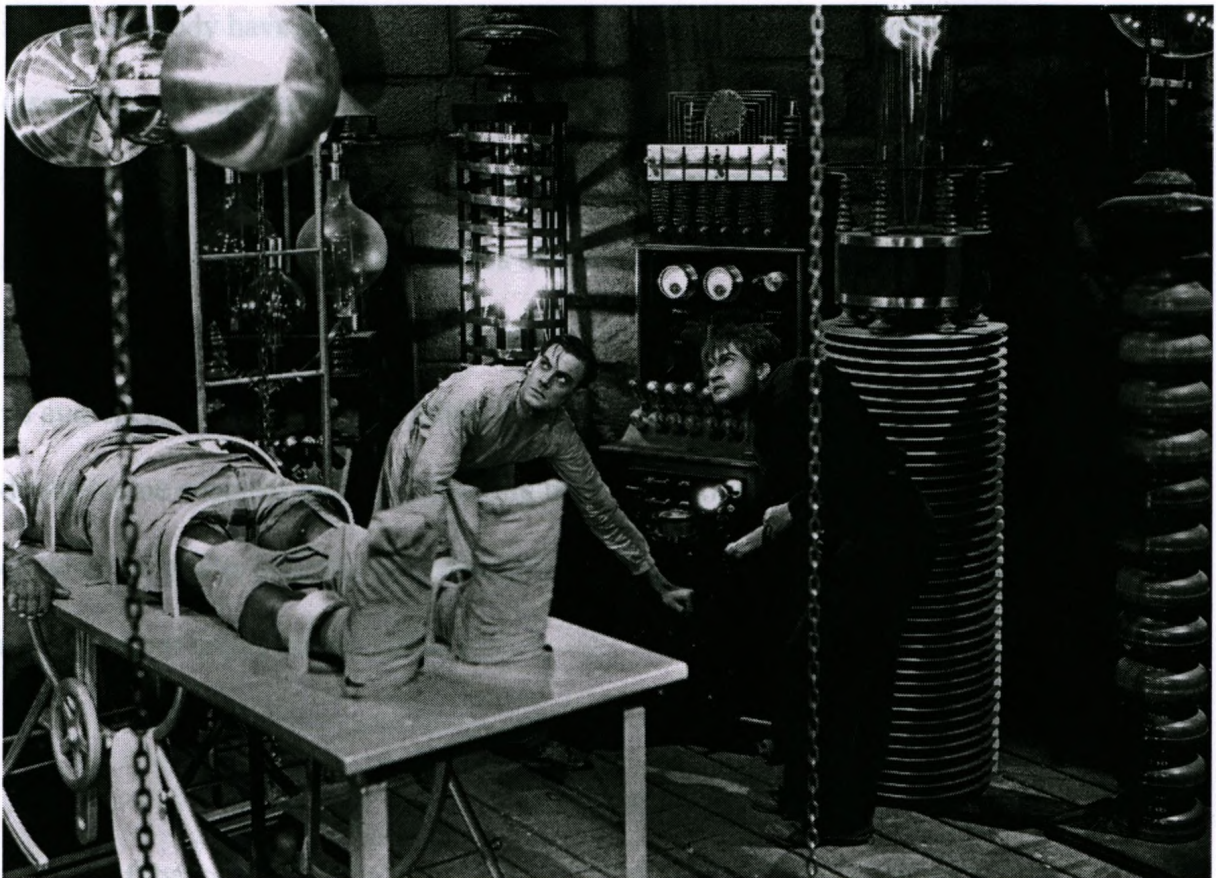


Fig. 1. James Whale, *Frankenstein*, 1931.

A cursory survey of the themes at play in this imagery reveals some of its paradigmatic potential for engaging and analyzing artistic practice: the monster is the product of an individual human creator; the monster is a hybrid, constructed from a heterogeneous collection of parts; the monster is alive, an organism of sorts, that is set to function actively in the world; the table is the site, and to some degree, the matrix of the monster's creation; the presence of spectators positions the table as a context of display where the monster's body is laid out awaiting its unveiling. My interests for this study centre on how these constructs have the potential to be transposed onto operative relationships involving sculptural objects and the furniture used in their construction and presentation. The morphology and the affective, meaning-generating potential of the monstrous body have particular resonance for sculptural manifestations of hybridity (assemblage), duplication (casting and mimetic figuration), and the operations regarding formation and deformation (additive and reductive practices, and process art). Moreover, Frankenstein's surgical table registers simultaneously as workbench and pedestal: it is the productive site where the monster is constructed, and later the site where it is displayed to its audience. But before proceeding with my analysis of art/sculptural practice, I want to devote some space to further unpacking the constitutive parts of this model I have been developing, and provide an overview of how I propose to mobilize it to useful ends with respect to our engagement with art.

The Monster

Of the various forms of monstrosity, signaled by the Frankenstein monster, the hybrid registers most strongly. The hybrid is the monster of classical mythology. Take

the chimera, for example: it is lion and goat and serpent existing in a single being, but it is not a species and did not descend from a line of chimeras. Nor is the creature a mule, a sterile result of breeding, or the genetic product of lions, goats or serpents. Its extended monstrous lineage is a vast heterogeneity of human and animal combinations that defy classification. Invoking Foucault, in *Monster Culture*, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen notes that the “refusal to participate in the classificatory ‘order of things’” is a defining trait of monsters: “they are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration.” (6). The hybrid appears as a grafted composite, where each part is awkwardly identifiable, and so, digging beneath the fur, we expect to find the scars, the seams of the creature’s assembly. The *Frankenstein* monster is just such a hybrid; the bolted neck and scarred surface of the 1931 depiction have formed the archetypal image of this monster in popular consciousness. Our first glimpse of the monster’s body is of Boris Karloff’s hand hanging out from beneath the sheet. The twisted wrist is poorly fitted and a gruesome scar marks a break in the continuity of the body, reinforcing that this monster is an authored creation.

Mary Shelley is less explicit about the assembly process than Boris Karloff’s stitched hulk suggests, but it is clear that the monster is more than the revived corpse of an individual. The passage that corresponds to the James Whale scene described above reveals the origins of the body’s parts:

I collected bones from charnel houses; and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop of filthy creation: my eye-balls were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation, whilst, still urged on by an

eagerness which perpetually increased, I brought my work near to a conclusion.
(Shelley 38)

Despite that there is no indication of the form that would eventually integrate the parts, it is clear that Frankenstein was not sculpting in ‘unused’ material. The scars cleave (adhere *and* divide) the monster’s body into a decentred assembly of elements, each having arrived along an independent trajectory. Every scar is an index of a particular history, or a different path of development. As a hybrid, the monster poses challenges to legibility by redirecting the avenues of meaning at each juncture. The monster initiates a rupture of limits, in a very literal sense, by manifesting both the severing and the stitching of parts. And as a result, the monster is rendered unclassifiable; it is a *misfit* twice over, firstly because its parts are ill-fitted, forming a living challenge to ideas of wholeness and perfection; and secondly, in the more usual sense, because it has no right place in world.

In addition to being a hybrid, the monster is also a double. Whereas the hybrid destroys the systems of difference that make the construction of meaning possible, the double achieves the same undoing by replicating itself in mockery of existing categories, thus tormenting the distinctions that separate one thing from the next. To reapply Fred Botting’s observations about *Frankenstein*, the monster, whether the hybrid or the double, “operates along the borders of narrative and linguistic indeterminacy, traversing the indefinite boundaries which police the differences constitutive of meaning.” (Botting

4) The double offsets the reliability of the singular with the instability of the duplicate.

The instability stems not least from the threat of *further* doublings; the monster becoming the horde.

Following his repeated declaration, “It’s alive! It’s alive!”, Frankenstein, while restrained by his colleagues, delivers the final lines of the scene: “In the name of God! Now I know what it’s like to *be* God!” Likewise, Shelley shows the monster confronting his creator: “Remember that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed.” (74) Frankenstein has performed the monstrous act of raising from dead tissue what is both his offspring and his nemesis.

David Ketterer notes that this “doppelganger relationship” is first revealed in the broadly popular misunderstanding that the monster is named Frankenstein. (11) A modern Halloween costume of “Frankenstein” is more likely to resemble Karloff’s heavy-footed brute, than it is the man who created it. In light of this and other such misappropriations, when we speak interchangeably of the film and the novel it becomes apparent we are not speaking of one kind of doubling but two. Four characters share the name Frankenstein: Shelley’s Victor Frankenstein and his monster, *and* Whale’s Henry Frankenstein and his. Ketterer goes on to point out that *Frankenstein* is also the name of the book “which in some fashion is a monstrous creation.”(11) Likewise, remarking on the work’s inclusion of existing texts (such as Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*) Steven Baldick writes: “Like the monster it contains, the novel is assembled from dead fragments to make a living whole.” (30) The creator-monster pair is repeated again in author-text pairs; Shelley and her “hideous progeny”¹ and also in James Whale’s filmic one. This pattern of mitotic doubling generates scores of

¹ A frequently quoted phrase from Shelley’s introduction to the 1831 edition. See Baldick: “Her own description of the novel as ‘my hideous progeny’ has been one of the most suggestive starting points for recent interpretation” (31).

author-monster recouplings, as each adaptation, retelling, and critical essay is spawned.² The monster text has therefore escaped Shelley and roams at large, to reappear as a film, a rubber mask, a metaphor, or as an abbreviated prefix signifying hybridity. The monster becomes more than an individual, or a pair, but a force able to enact itself in numerous and unexpected fields.

The Table

The second component of the Frankensteinian paradigm, as I am engaging with it, is the table upon which the body of the monster is made, displayed, and brought to life. Frankenstein's dual process of disassembly and reassembly corresponds to the oppositional procedures of autopsy and surgery, and the table corresponds to both dissection and operation. The tasks of anatomist and surgeon are revealed through the table's role as the space of seeing and putting into order. But, it is as the physical table of the surgical theatre and the figurative table of taxonomy about which I am speaking. It is the space of Laureamont's proverbial dissection table, that, as observed by Foucault, "enables thought to operate upon the entities of our world, to put them in order, to divide them into classes, to group them according to names that designate their similarities and their differences - the table upon which, since the beginning of time, language has intersected space." (2002, xix) A table is a piece of furniture that supports physical objects as well as being a figurative site that supports propositions. Not insignificantly in this regard, the table's form is determined by our human anatomy. It raises the ground to meet our hands, but also lifts objects out of their context in the space of the world and on

² Fred Botting's *Making Monstrous* explores the kaleidoscopic doubling of authors and discursive monsters produced by the novel.

to a figurative plane of thought and language. Once things become isolated in this manner they are ready to be ordered, put into categories and defined. Anatomy as a field of study synthesizes operation, examination, and language, in the manipulation of the body and its parts. The dissection table, of the late 18th into the 19th century – particularly within the institutional surgical theatre – was the site of a developing epistemology that had an ever-increasing appetite for bodies. Tim Marshall, in *Murdering to Dissect*, connects the concurrence of the publication of *Frankenstein* with the prevalence of grave robbing for anatomical study and for the penetrating view it could afford the institution. The body upon the slab is laid out and torn open to be seen and acted upon: “Visible and legible, death is the enabling presupposition of the new medical gaze” (Marshall 136). In this context the body undergoes the ultimate objectification, its limbs and organs arrayed by the authoritative hands and eyes that order.

Lautréamont’s infamous metaphoric encounter upon a dissection table of an umbrella and a sewing machine, championed by Bréton and the Surrealists, proposes the shock of the incongruous: two unrelated objects interact upon an unrelated site. When Foucault recalls Lautréamont’s scene in the *Order of Things*, it is to contrast it to Borges’ order-defying Chinese Encyclopaedia. The table does not achieve the “monstrous” character of the encyclopaedia, he notes, because it provides a *site* for the encounter: “Startling though their propinquity may be, it is nevertheless warranted by that *and*, by that *in*, by that *on* whose solidity provides proof of the possibility of juxtaposition” (Foucault 2002, xvii). This holds true as long as the objects are suspended within the static spatial assembly of the metaphoric image. The Frankenstein monster’s body is a synchronous collection where the temporal narratives of each part are subsumed to the

spatial logic of the system. Baudrillard observes: “The organization of the collection itself replaces time. And no doubt this is the collection’s fundamental function: the resolving of real time into a systematic dimension” (102). Similarly, Susan Stewart notes: “The collection replaces history with classification, with order beyond the realm of temporality.” (151) However, opening up the monster/table relationship to the dynamics of an *event* makes monstrous generativity possible. The *Frankenstein* table not only provides the site for the juxtaposition of disparate fragments, of “setting one thing beside the other without connective” that defines juxtaposition (Shattuck 256), but it is also the matrix for the monstrous result of the encounter.

Material manipulation is regularly defined by *passage*, the unfolding of form through process.³ Frankenstein does not stop at the disordering and reordering within the surgical theatre; his monster is a deformation of the corporeal material with its reformation into a *living* entity, thwarting the table’s ability to sustain knowledge-producing systems. Speaking generally about monsters, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen offers this useful summation of his findings: “I argue that the monster is best understood as an embodiment of difference, a breaker of category, and a resistant Other known only through process and movement, never through dissection-table analysis.” (x) While his evocation of the dissection table may be metaphoric, it is apt here. Indeed, it makes apparent that the possibility of an ordered system is lost entirely when the specimen collection climbs off the table and becomes a free agent in the world.

³ See Shattuck 270, for uses of the term *progression* (in opposition to *position*) to characterize this operation. I have used *passage*, because it does not imply seriality.

Demonstration

The Oxford English Dictionary offers a little-used verb form of *monster*, which brings the term closer to the interest of this study: “To make a monster of; to make monstrous; (also) to transform (something) *into* a monstrous version of itself.” (OED, *monster*) The monster at work in this usage is an active principle, an outward force, having the potential to produce monstrosity. In a 1990 radio interview with Elizabeth Weber, Jacques Derrida reflected upon the monster, touching upon this active potential: “is not just this chimerical figure in some way that grafts one animal onto another, one living being onto another. A monster is always alive, let us not forget. Monsters are living beings.” (1995, 386) His emphasis on the living qualities of the monster once again reminds us of the defining utterance of our focal scene: Frankenstein crying out “It’s alive! It’s alive!” As we have seen, the monster’s body is a hybrid like the chimera, defined spatially; now the verb form offers us the notion of a temporal event where something can be made monstrous. In light of this, I want to suggest that we also accept an intransitive verb form, *to monster*, in order to describe the temporal process of becoming, which may occur in a given entity. This would then apply to situations of mutation, evolution, and metamorphosis, the mobilizing of forces produced within the body that propel its own transformation.

Derrida continued his statement by pointing out that the –as yet unknown– monster frightens when it “shows itself [*elle se montre*]” (1995, 386), drawing attention to the word’s Latin origins. The second item in the OED verb form definition, still more archaic than the first, nudges the word towards *revealing*: “To exhibit as a ‘monster’; to point out as something remarkable.” This meaning retains within it the word’s roots in

the Latin, *monstrare*, “to show, point out, indicate”, from which we also derive *demonstration*. (Klein 1000)

It is amidst this constellation of terms that the monster/table model to which this paper addresses itself may be situated: first, we find the *monster* (noun), describing the body as spatially situated assemblage; second we encounter *monstering* (verb), a force acting upon, or from within an object producing monstrosity; lastly, a revealing *demonstration* of the entire event occurs. Frankenstein and Fritz roll back the cloth that covers the monster to reveal it to the reluctant guests, the monster is shown along with the entire process of its animation, and the encounter of monstrosity and presentation is demonstrated.

I wish to propose that monster and the table at the dense centre of this scene be used as a tool for examining a host of sculptural practices. This examination will look at monstrosity with an emphasis on the morphological relationship regarding sculptural forms, and to the generative potential of monstrosity in the construction of meaning and viewer affectivity. My study will also examine the functions of the workbench and the pedestal as two table forms underpinning sculptural production and display. Particular emphasis will be placed on practices which demonstrate a vertical dynamism between the constitutive parts: where tables act as generative sites for the production of monstrous bodies; and where hybridized, amorphous, or unstable forms destroy the boundaries between display furniture and displayed objects.

In the sections that follow I will be using the monster-table model as a point of departure, rather than as a template. I avoid literalized representations of monsters in the study, much less artworks about *Frankenstein* or “mad scientists”, preferring a parallel

relationship to the model, based on the artwork's morphology, methodology or function. It should be noted that I am not attempting to charge each individual case study with fulfilling a defining criteria of the paradigm, but rather, I allow the works to retain their monstrous potential to escape confinement. Each work in the study produces its own generative derivations on the theme, and though I will be returning to the particularities of my model on occasion, I prefer to imagine that the *Frankenstein* monster haunts the following, rather than anchors it.

CHAPTER 2

THE HYBRID

Assemblage is the sculptural mode that is closest, in terms of structure and methodology, to the Frankenstein monster. In the passage from Shelley's text quoted in the previous chapter, Victor Frankenstein hints at his material sources, which include the dissecting room and the slaughter-house. Shelley's suggestion that the tissue and bone are not all of human origin fulfills the expectation of heterogeneity characteristic of assemblage. In the catalogue essay for *The Art of Assemblage*, MOMA, 1961, William Seitz writes that *assemblage*, a term he attributes to Jean Dubuffet, "originates in unrelated fragments... and draws from the environment" and as such its function is opposite to "automatic expression, which moves outwards from the centre of consciousness" (39). Fragmentation, and discontinuity define assemblage. Heterogeneity and juxtaposition are its hallmarks. Assemblage is defined by contiguity and there is therefore in its composition the proximity of elements in time and space that do not share common origins. Each fragment holds its own histories of production, circulation and use.

If the hybrid object is legible at all it requires a new mode of reading at each intersection. Robert Rauschenberg's *Monogram*, 1955-1959 (fig. 2), to choose a definitive example, satisfies the criteria of this study by, quite literally, presenting a body

upon the surface of a table-like form.⁴ As an assemblage, the work is characteristic of Rauschenberg's *Combines* (his term for his hybridized painting-sculptures), in that it holds within it elements of radically different orders. The assembled objects, like the tire-wearing goat, and tennis ball that rest upon the surface of base, occupy a real space that requires a navigation of the body to be fully seen, whereas the Schwittersian base itself is composed of elements that rely upon the construction of illusionistic space on a two-dimensional plane (albeit one that is tipped horizontally).



Fig. 2. Robert Rauschenberg, *Monogram*, 1955-1959.

Furthermore, the two-dimensional images are of disparate origin and of distinct materiality – photographic reproductions, printed paper and fabric– each bearing their own complex of signifiers. An overlay of gestural painting registers an expressiveness, which as William Seitz has suggested, operates in a mode incongruent to the array of reproductions beneath them. Rauschenberg's omnivorous browsing methodology is

⁴ Much has been written on *Monogram*, what has been described as “Rauschenberg’s most extensively illustrated and best-known work” (National Collection of Fine Arts 1976, 101. Also Kotz (90) and Tompkins (219) make similar statements). I want to use it here only briefly for its familiarity and exemplary potential.

echoed by the notorious dietary habits of the goat at the centre of the work. The simultaneity of conflicting visual registers, and varying densities of content, challenge one's ability to reflect on the experience of the work in a meaningful and coherent way.

When faced with the difficulty of reading, of extracting, or constructing the meaning of a work such as *Monogram* one develops the gnawing suspicion that such operations are not necessarily appropriate to it. The apparent subject matter – the conjoined goat/tire object– refuses rational engagement; it is a neo-Dadaist visual joke. Turning to the title offers limited solace. A monogram is a symbol constructed by superimposing separate letters or other marks and is used as a signature. The goat/tire object follows a similar formal logic, presenting the compression of elements in a shared space, but any effort toward attributing the parts to an external referent– as the *A* and *D* stand for Albrecht Dürer in his own monogram– is clearly an absurd premise. Rauschenberg also refused the suggestions of historians who read the work as autobiographical or sexually connotative, saying “A stuffed goat is special in the way that a stuffed goat is special.” (Kotz 90) As a signature presented at the centre of a work, the monogram of *Monogram* appears to refer only back to itself.

John Cage, writing about the *Combines* in 1961, observes that “Each thing that is there is a subject. It is a situation involving multiplicity.” (Cage 101) Positioning the work as a situation, rather than a mere object suggests an event; an *encounter*, like the one taking place on Lautreamont's dissection table, where elements are suspended in temporal and spatial proximity. Relative to this, I have previously explored various uses

of the word “about” as a way to approach the problems of subject matter,⁵ and would like to revisit some of those ideas here.

When one speaks of a work being *about* something, the word is taken to mean “on the subject of” that thing, which establishes a qualitative relationship or connection. If we allow the word’s designations of *proximity* to become more apparent, a new set of possibilities opens up for an understanding of meaning that repositions the mechanisms of language, and the operations of signification, and interpretation. Things enter into various vicinities or regions defined by their proximity to other things. The stated proximity might be qualitative (this is the usual sense in which “about” designates subject matter, as one might say that *Frankenstein* is about the creation of a monster), quantitative (*almost*), spatial (*out and about*), or temporal (*about to happen*). In this light, the body of *Monogram*, like the body of the *Frankenstein* monster, is not understood as unified within a crystalline wholeness, but as a “diagram”⁶ of the *aboutness* of its parts.

In mapping the constellation of proximities to *Monogram*, we see that the work is *about* Angora goats, just as it is about 42 x 63 x 65 inches, and it is about the Moderna Museet, in Stockholm, just as it is about 1955-1959. If we indulge further in cosmological charting, in a field as infinite as space, *Monogram* infers a diagram involving: Ab-Ex, Dada, waste, Jasper Johns, nostalgia, taxidermy, death, the museum, America, (...). There is a beauty in the contingency of the constellation metaphor. The act of tracing a constellation depends upon the flattening of the sky into a two dimensional plane, creating the illusion that the stars within a given set of coordinates are

⁵ In my MFA thesis.

⁶ My use of “diagram” owes much to its use by Deleuze and Guattari. Brian Massumi provides an extensive citation of their use of the concept on page 144, note 11.

in proximity. The truth is that light years of depth separate them, and when our viewing position changes, the arrangement is destroyed. The construction of meaning here is a directionally oriented activity of charting that is wholly dependant upon position. Orion is reshaped when seen from another point in space just as *Monogram* is reshaped when seen from the respective positions of the academy, tourism, animal rights, 2011, or Google. Each position necessitates or proposes a new diagram.

In *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (a book about the work of Deleuze and Guattari much in the spirit of what I have been suggesting above), Brian Massumi offers the example of a woodworker to map the complex dynamics of what is, on the surface, a simple encounter. In his depiction, a tool is borne down upon a piece of wood and the wood's grain guides the tool as it cuts. Each element in this encounter (tool and wood) is an envelopment of force, which, if we widen the frame of inquiry, is in fact "a network of enveloped material processes" (10). All of the natural, industrial and commercial events – each one consisting of countless other encounters – which take place in order for that particular piece of wood to arrive beneath that tool, form a complex of forces. A corresponding complex brought the tool to its position above the wood. Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the rhizome proposes an alternative to the structured arborescent model of a succession of binary divisions that occur in a hierarchical order. The rhizome, rather, maps trajectories and forces non-hierarchically and across heterogeneous elements. Massumi offers the following:

Force against force, action upon action, the development of an envelopment: meaning is the encounter of lines of force, each of which is actually a complex of other forces. The processes taking place actually or potentially on all sides could be analyzed indefinitely in any direction. There is no end, no unity in the sense of a totality that would tie it all together in a logical knot. No unity, but a region of clarity: tool meets wood. (10)

Monogram, like any assemblage, is thus arguably composed of *envelopments*, and when working across it, in the *development* of each passage, one is repeatedly met with shifts in speed, texture, and material. Development requires a new viewing strategy for each successive part.

John Cage suggests that the elements contained within the *Combines* are interchangeable with any other element therein and that what the work provides is a context for their proximity. He describes the *Combine* as “a place where things are, as on a table or on a town seen from the air...” (99) A related notion would, some eleven years later, be proposed by Leo Steinberg, describing Rauschenberg’s reorientation of the viewer’s relationship to the picture plane from one that is vertical and perspectival to what the author refers to as a “flatbed”. This is the painting as archive – as “dump, reservoir, switching centre” (Steinberg 88) – where elements are not plotted according to an illusionistic Renaissance pictorial logic, but arrayed like objects on a table.

Describing this shift, Steinberg makes one of the earliest written uses of the term “postmodern” in the context of a work of art. Forecasting the characterization of postmodernism as a condition where “anything goes”, Cage’s line of thought continues: “any one of [the items included in the *Combine*] could be removed and another come into its place through circumstances analogous to birth and death, travel, housecleaning, or cluttering.” (99) To suggest that any element can be switched out for any other does not mean that the work is not changed by the act; rather, a new diagram is drawn along which new trajectories of meaning are mapped.

Importantly, Cage suggests that the *Combine* need not be static and he thus proceeds to connect its function to life and movement (recall that we are talking about

monsters here, and it is essential to the function of the monster that *it's alive*). While the *Combine* may fail in any substantive way to preserve the cultural memory of the objects that form it, it is productive of new connections and affects. In his application of Deleuze and Guattari to an understanding of art, Simon O'Sullivan suggests that we move from "notions of definition" to "notions of function," asking ourselves not what an artwork *means*, but rather what it *does* (22). So we can accept the judgment that "anything goes" in a work like *Monogram*, if the idea can be nuanced away from an implied indifference and towards the *going* of a machine, or the *quicken*ing of an organism. What distinguishes the events generated within the work is intensity, quality, lines of force, and, perhaps most importantly, the effect they have on the elements they encounter.

In her catalogue essay for *Unmonumental*, 2007, the inaugural exhibition of the new New Museum in New York, Laura Hoptman begins: "After a hiatus of perhaps as long as 40 years, sculpture is again leading the contemporary art discourse." (Hoptman 128) Whether her statement is accurate, provable, or designed to be self-fulfilling is open to debate, but it proposes, at the very least, that there is a renewed interest in the use of objects and object making as critically relevant artistic strategies. Hoptman goes on to specify that the sculptural practices in question are characterized by strategies of assemblage and unmonumentality. Such work is indebted to Dada as much as it is to Rauschenberg, and Hoptman positions the exhibition in relation to William Seitz's aforementioned 1961 MoMA survey. She proposes, however, that what distinguishes the twenty-first century work from its predecessors is a coherence of intention and meaning. The curator also surveys the importance of chance to Duchamp and Cage, to the avant-garde and neo-avant-garde alike, but she nevertheless claims that the works in

Unmonumental are “holistic, in the sense that discrete objects coalesce into a single form, a narrative told with clarity. Despite the fact that they look like they are about everything, these contemporary assemblages are each about something specific.” (133) Hoptman goes on to use Rachel Harrison’s *Huffy Howler*, 2004, as evidence of her point, arguing that its meaning is fixed and precise (fig. 3).

Huffy Howler is notable for the work’s inclusion of a large photographic print of actor Mel Gibson, which hangs from a long pole extending from the back of a mountain bike. The title is lifted from name of the bike, which flashes across the yellow frame on sporty decals. Hoptman claims, rather gushingly, that the work “is a sharp criticism of a cultural moment whose incisiveness can be credited in part to a composition as sophisticated and tightly-wound as an El Lissitzky Proun.” (133) The Harrison work was, at the time of its creation, and to some degree during Hoptman’s writing, operating in relative temporal proximity to Mel Gibson’s various public antics and mishaps. As a topical and immediately tangible pop-culture reference, it is an ideal work to support Hoptman’s position (this also may account for the work’s repeated use to represent the exhibition). To establish a connection between the name of the bike and Gibson’s behaviour is to draw the sort of diagram I have described. That this meaning can be constructed for this work cannot be denied, and such an elision may very well have been Harrison’s intention. But to suggest that it has been executed “with a precision that leaves no room for aleatory musings” (133) is to deny the viewer any agency in the process whereby the work becomes elucidated, and to hold a limiting position on the operations of the sign – one where the relationship between signifier and signified is static.



Fig. 3. Rachel Harrison, *Huffy Howler*, 2004

Laura Hoptman's position also suggests that the remaining elements of the work – flat tire, faux fur, handbags, purple bricks– are mute, though they are still presumably essential in achieving the “sophisticated” and “tightly-wound” composition. Reflecting upon the stucco bricks, for example, we see that they are a characteristic formal motif of Harrison's, and point outward to her extended oeuvre. The work's situation in a broader arc of production reduces the topicality of Mel Gibson to a temporary flicker in a dense field of meaningful events. Nor has any place been left open in Hoptman's analysis for possible affective or haptic viewer responses: feelings that might recall dreams of running without moving, memories of bicycle accidents, an impulse to physically mimic or counter the lean of the work, or a revulsion at the suggestion of a skinned animal, etc. Such a list of resonant references could quickly fill pages; the generative potential of

riffing on the work's terms and materiality ends only when the viewer chooses to stop the undertaking.

In his own contribution to the catalogue for *Unmonumental*, co-curator Trevor Smith offers a contradictory position: "What seems most remarkable is how generalized the refusal is among these artists to traffic with any sense of fixed meaning." (185) Rhizomorphic networks move in all directions to, from, and through the elements of the work. The Huffy mountain bike opens up a rhizome that includes adolescent suburban recreation, department store chains, and global circulations of commodities, each opening their own massive tangles. Similarly, the many handbags slung over the handlebars might begin to map an alternate economic system involving Canal Street and contraband goods. The work's status as a discreet object, in contrast to the installation-based and relationally oriented artworks so prevalent in recent decades, situated within the inaugural show of a museum that anchors the gentrification of the Bowery at the cusp of the economic crisis of the late 2000s, opens yet another rhizome of meaning. In Brian Massumi's terms, a criticism of Mel Gibson's binges and slurs is not the 'logical knot' of the work, only one "region of clarity" among many. (10)

Simon O'Sullivan proposes that the relationship between assembled elements within a work, as described earlier, may be transposable to the encounter between the finished work and the viewer, who is also "the envelopment of a potential, a set of capacities to affect and be affected." (21) Returning to Massumi's example, we see that both the woodworker and the wood have their own set of enveloped forces with the potential to act upon and affect the other. The woodworker is not the sole agent of expression giving form to a passive material, "The human body is a natural object with its

own phylogenesis; from the point of view of the social forces that seize it, it is as much a raw material to be molded as the wood from another perspective.” (Massumi 11)

The encounter may be between a flower and a bee, or between a dog and a stick, or between a viewer standing before *Huffy Howler* and the perfume of someone who has recently left the room. Indeed, anything forming a part of an encounter might be formulated as “an event/object which has the capacity to affect or be affected.”

(O’Sullivan 20) We might further stipulate that each development produces new envelopments. An object acquires new content and the results of its encounters are perpetuated.

Assemblage is of course defined by the gathering of found elements and as such might be characterized as a *compound readymade*. The envelopments gathered in the assemblage predate their inclusion into the new whole. Among the first critical reactions to Duchamp’s *Fountain*, (1917) to appear in print were those published in *The Blind Man*, May 1917, which included the now famous photograph of the urinal by Alfred Stieglitz. Louise Norton’s article *The Buddha of the Bathroom*, also included therein, offers an anonymous aesthetic response to the work: “Someone said ‘like a lovely Buddha.’”(Camfield 140) William Camfield has suggested that this response, as well as one that compared the work to a Madonna, quickly circulated among Duchamp’s circle, following the work’s exhibition. Despite the indifference that Duchamp has insisted, perhaps disingenuously, was at work in the selection of the Readymade (Duchamp 141), the meaning machine was set into motion almost immediately. The seated Buddha interpretation requires a combination of aesthetic musing and associative leaps of fancy that are now rarely applied to the readymades; a mode having little to do with the

intellectual questions of anti-art, authorship, and the recontextualization of found objects. Camfield argues that Stieglitz's staging for the early photograph of the urinal appears to be informed by this Buddha/Madonna interpretation, a manoeuvre that ensured that this particular tethering of meaning would be sustained. Regardless of its origins, the envisioning of the *Fountain*-as-Buddha is now enveloped in the work and forever available for development.

This model suggests that an encounter with an art object is not structurally different from an encounter with a non-art object, but our adherence to it on this basis should not be misunderstood to imply that the institution of art produces no effect. If meaning is simply a mapping of forces, then any object, however crafted, whatever the motivation for its production, can enter into a system of meaning. This proposal provides a way of confronting the readymade – and by extension the assemblage – by positioning it not as a sublimation of the overlooked, or a recuperation of the devalued, but as a shift in perspective and a realignment of the diagram. The site, which plays the defining role in our understanding of the readymade, is just another force mapped in the encounter. The site of the gallery or museum, or upon a pedestal, remains vital to understanding a work like Duchamp's *Fountain*, just as the absence of that site is what defines those urinals encountered in a restroom.

Likewise, we might include the *act* of recontextualization as yet another force in the diagram. By this I mean we might take an interest not just in the objects arranged within a work, and the relationships between them, but also in the artistic gesture of putting them into proximity. This would account for the role of authorship in shaping our understanding of an object. Here we see the relevance of the notion that the readymade

enters into the sphere of art by virtue of the artist's authorial hand, rather than as merely a passive manifestation (of the urinal) in the gallery. As we have seen with the Buddha reading, the artist and viewer are performing the same role: each is drawing diagrams, and each is subject to affective forces, and each has the potential to envelop the object with further material for subsequent developments. If the site, the act, and the viewer are all included in the diagram, we begin to see that meaning appears, and is to some degree capable of self-generating, hence the applicability of mechanistic and organic metaphors to our model making.



Fig. 4. Buddha Reading (Temporary, 2001)

CHAPTER 3

CENTERPIECE

Rachel Harrison's *Centerpiece*, 2009, is a large work exhibited as part of the Palazzo del Esposizioni portion of *Making Worlds* curated by the Daniel Birnbaum for the Venice Biennale (fig. 4). The sculpture consists of a rudimentary copy of Richard Artschwager's *Table with a Pink Tablecloth*, 1964, that has been doubled in length and lifted onto a tilted wooden base. In place of the Formica surface that is Artschwager's hallmark, Harrison treated the object with her own characteristic stucco smearing and painted it to crudely mimic the original.

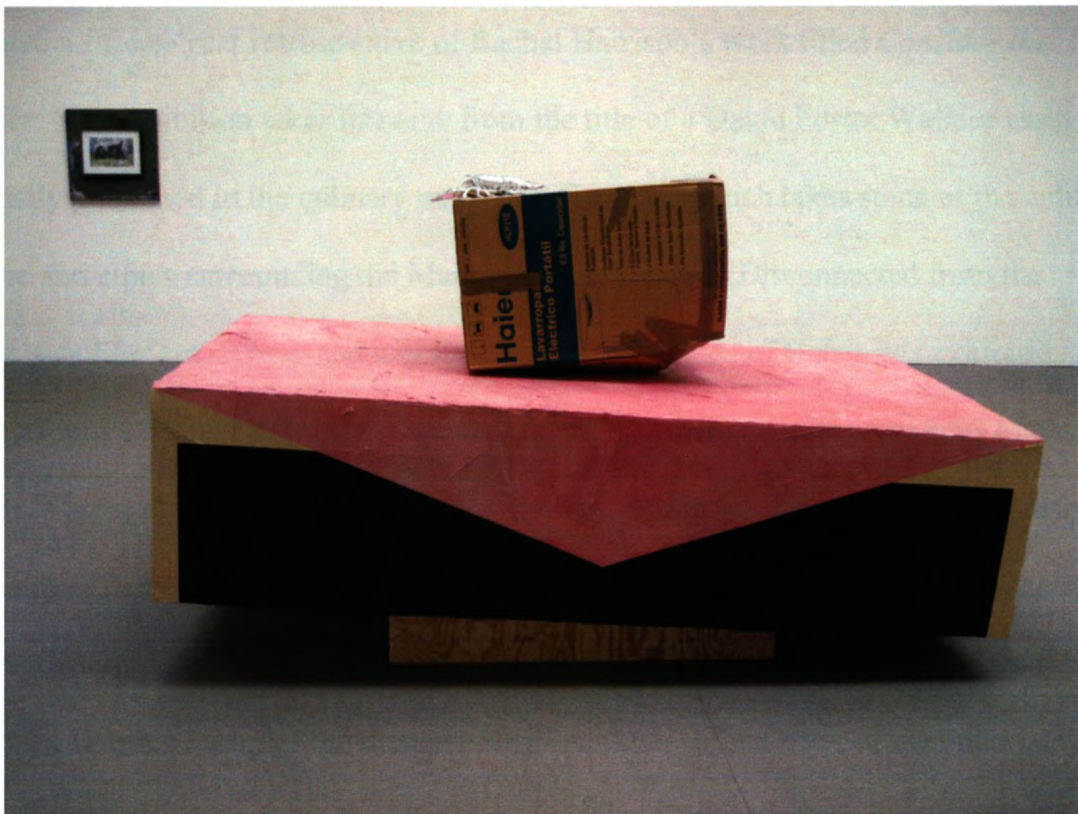


Fig. 4. Rachel Harrison, *Centerpiece*, 2009.

The centerpiece indicated by the work's title is, presumably, a polished metallic lobster displayed on a cardboard washing machine box that is tipped sideways at the middle of the table. The box's opening has been tucked to form a round orifice with a lump on its underside. There is a vertical correspondence, in scale and colour, between the upper cardboard section and the plywood base at the floor. Together they form a column that ascends through the center of the work. Analyzed strictly in formalist terms, the work shows a dynamic sort of integration, evoking a haphazard form of Constructivism. Each movement is met by a counter-movement and there is a swaying formal play in the distribution of weight that lends stability to the work despite that nothing is level.

Concurrent to the exhibition of *Centerpiece* in Venice, the CCS Bard Galleries mounted a fifteen-year retrospective of Rachel Harrison's work titled *Consider the Lobster*. The exhibition takes its name from the title of a David Foster Wallace essay, originally published in the culinary magazine *Gourmet*, which takes stock of the culture, science and ethics surrounding the Maine Lobster Festival. Disconnected from the source's call for empathetic and moral reflection, the words of Harrison's exhibition title invite us into a context of humorous wonderment. Perched upon its precarious totem, the lobster is brought to eye level, its metallic shell reflecting us. We seem to be asked to contemplate *lobsterness*, to fathom the lobster in its unsettling strangeness, its prehistoric and yet distorted familiarity. Within the model of monster-upon-the-table proposed in this essay, the Lobster occupies the monster position, the repellant body of the other laid out in display. As an invertebrate the lobster is taxonomically extremely distant from us, yet

its form is not entirely alien. It has eyes that look back, a digestive system and an omnivorous diet, and one cannot help but see its claws as hands, yet these similarities to human traits are circumstantial, in that our nearest common ancestor is a worm. We have evolved in a parallel course to the lobster, each roaming the surface of our respective realms, one surrounded by water, the other surrounded by air. Looking down into the water our wobbling reflection is superimposed on the lobster much like it is by the burnished centerpiece upon the cardboard box (fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Lobster – detail of Rachel Harrison’s *Centerpiece*.

With respect to the analytical model at hand, the lobster does not hold the exclusive position of the monster role. Musing on Harrison’s choice of title for the retrospective Elisabeth Sussman remarks, “Like the lobster, Harrison is a scavenger, rooting in the waste bin of our material lives.” (Sussman 2009) A range of material

choices and deployments collide in *Centerpiece*, all resting ambiguously in states between constructed and found. For example, it is unclear if the plywood slab that has been put to service as a base was found or has been constructed. Official material descriptions offer only “lobster” to identify the metallic specimen. Harrison appropriates the Artschwager work, but modifies it dramatically, rendering it only as a distorted placeholder, or decoy, of the original. The cultural resonances of these objects are of markedly different intensities, and move along distinct vectors. These objects share little that can contribute to an understanding of their perceived value, function, and meaning. In this light, *Centerpiece* is exemplary of assemblage as it has been defined thus far. What is further arguable is that the monster is not only the body on display, but the entire work. The monstering force moves vertically through the work to include the display furniture, effecting a collapse of distinction between figure and ground.

In Rachel Harrison’s sculptural approach, display furniture and displayed artifacts are fused in endless assembled hybridized variation. Harkening to our central metaphor, we see her work fulfilling one of the principal characteristics of monstrosity, that is, its disruption of order. It is notable that this disruption occurs not only in the sense whereby the monster wreaks havoc in the world, but also in the monster’s inability to be classified, as a “breaker of category.” (Cohen, x) Everything is available to serve as a potential pedestal in Harrison’s work, and the logic of assemblage with its relative heterogeneity, dictates that by moving vertically in the stack, the making of a distinction between the work and its display furniture is to perform a kind of autopsy upon the body of a thing that defies the construction of knowledge.

As with much of her sculpture, the strategies Harrison uses to complicate the object-display relationship recall Brancusi's formal experimentation. In particular, Brancusi's formula of applying the vertical stack that transitions through a range of materials as it moves upward from base to polished figure, with an apparent interchangeability of the parts, is invoked. In his bird series of the 1910s the base takes on distinctly sculptural character, making it difficult to discern where the sculpture ends and the base begins. Brancusi further complicates the object's status in his reapplication of particular sculptural forms of certain works into the bases of others. Sanda Miller notes that, "between 1914 and 1917 his experiments had crystallized into a deliberate decision to use furniture, bases and sculptures ... interchangeably." (Miller 181) This shuffling of elements led Brancusi to a vocabulary of abstract forms that were then iterated to assert syntactical relationships according to his own formal language. The totemic *A King of Kings*, 1938, reuses a hollow block form as its base that had been previously used in another untitled work, and even, for a time, as a coffee table (Balas 36).

As furniture in the service of sculpture the pedestal occupies an intermediary space between the world of art and the world of regular objects. The pedestal's relationship to sculpture is somewhat analogous to the frame in painting, functioning both as transition and barrier. In his unfolding of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, Jacques Derrida devotes some space to the *parergon* – that which is outside, or supplemental to the work (par-ergon, *hors d'oeuvre*), yet also an extension of it. Kant's use of the term is brief:

Even what is called ornamentation (*parerga*), i.e., what is only an adjunct and not an intrinsic constituent in the complete representation of the object, in augmenting the delight of taste does so only by means of its form. Thus it is with the frames of pictures or the drapery on statues, or the colonnades of palaces. But if the

ornamentation does not itself enter into the composition of the beautiful form-if it is introduced like a gold frame merely to win approval for the picture by means of its charm-it is then called *finery* and takes away from the genuine beauty. (Kant 68)

Derrida's operations reveal the complications of the concept. The parergon is both of the object and outside of it, and what determines its limits is not necessarily clear. Looking at the frame specifically, he notes that it "stands out against two grounds (*fonds*), but with respect to each of those two grounds, it merges (*se fond*) into the other." (1987, 61)

Clearly, the pedestal functions in the same way: on the one hand it is not part of the work, rather it is part of the apparatus of display that includes the wall, and the lights; but on the other hand, in the rhythm of forms across the gallery, pedestals and sculpture rise up as more or less unified, and the pedestal appears to be of the work.

Rachel Harrison's title, *Centerpiece*, playfully contributes to the undecidable nature of her iterative operation. A centerpiece is conventionally understood as a decorative addition to a dining table, *finery* that is supplemental to the main oeuvre. And yet, the lobster in *Centerpiece* might be read, according to the conventions of traditional sculpture, as the figure displayed upon a pedestal. This would bump the lobster, upon its cardboard server, into the position of main course, a position that is not entirely inappropriate for a lobster (It should be noted that the creature is on the verge of crawling off the edge of its perch, as if evading its categorical pinning, as much as it appears to be evading being eaten.). Then as the elaborate base rises up from the floor, it transitions through three elements, each having distinct densities of meaning. The Artschwager element in particular draws a measure of viewer attention that prevents its compliant submission within the pedestal position, going so far as to challenge the lobster for the

titular role of centerpiece. Indeed, in contrast to the lobster's hold over the horizontal center, the Artschwager is the centerpiece of the vertical stack. The "table" here oscillates between the positions of object of focus and the vehicle whereby focus is centered elsewhere.

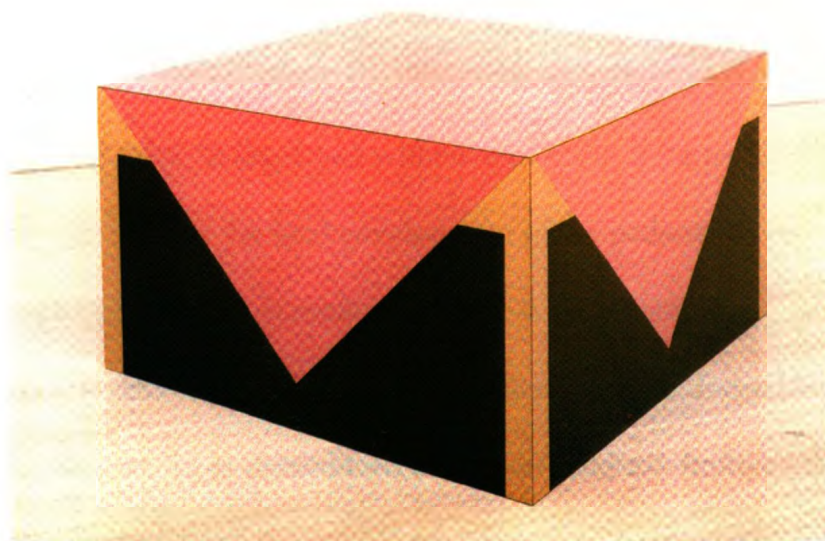


Fig. 6. Richard Artschwager, *Table with a Pink Tablecloth*, 1964.

The original *Table with a Pink Table Cloth* is exemplary of Artschwager's experiments in the mid 1960s with objects and their representation (fig. 6). They consist primarily of reduced geometric solids with artificial veneered surfaces creating simple illusions of furniture. The table of 1964 is essentially a shortened cube, with pink, beige, and black Formica forming a depiction of the object and the negative space beneath it. The sculpture is self-effacing, participating in painting's ability to both attest to and deny its own materiality. The act of applying veneer literally reaffirms the cube by laying-on and doubling its surface, while the illusion it creates works to make the cube invisible. Inasmuch as it approaches abstraction, the work betrays a minimum of representational intentionality, becoming a sign for a table, a picture in real space. Yet, the power and

appeal of *Table* is its refusal to sustain the pictorial illusion. As viewers we take pleasure in the simultaneous perception of two image-objects, a cube and a table occupying the exact same space.

Table with a Pink Tablecloth holds an uneasy, destabilized position with respect to its categorical location. It engages unexpectedly with seemingly unrelated artistic tendencies of the 1960s. As we have seen, part of the effort to sustain the illusion of a table requires that the work be displayed without a pedestal. Alternately we might say that Artschwager has enacted the total envelopment of the pedestal by the work. This act, whether by default or by design, combined with the work's cubic form, mimics the strategies of many of Artschwager's Minimalist contemporaries. Indeed, a similar table piece, *Untitled*, 1964, would be reproduced in Donald Judd's definitive essay *Specific Objects*, the following year. (Judd 188) However the faux finish is certainly not "literalist" in the sense that Michael Fried uses the term to characterize Minimalism. *Table* is defined by the fiction of illusion. It flirts with *objecthood* (another of Fried's terms, used to describe the condition of non-art), yet it does not abandon the pictorial. Artschwager, like the Minimalists, deploys commercial/industrial processes metonymically (Formica is used to surface furniture), but the work also evokes the everyday through metaphor and representation, which is conventionally understood as the terrain of Pop. *Table* is a picture in a way that Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* are pictures. Further, this work engages with the semiotics of *things*, much in the way Joseph Kosuth's chairs do. There is in Artschwager's gesture an investigation into what constitutes the meaning of signs. And finally the work offers the optical pleasure of a *trompe l'oeil*. My cursory survey here reveals that in these various registers, Artschwager's table enjoys an

oscillating position amidst the dominant art tendencies of the decade: Pop, Op, Conceptual Art, and Minimalism.

Harrison's manipulations amplify the instability of Artschwager's *Table* into a fullblown teeter. The sloping base, which holds the table at an angle to the floor, appears to literalize this destabilized condition. By lifting the "table" off the ground, she first pushes it away from pictorial illusionism. The depicted legs hang beyond the plywood base, leaving the object supported by what should be a void. As the implied negative space regains its solidity, the illusion of the table begins to fade and a megalithic mass emerges in its place. However, by placing the cardboard box and lobster on top of the object, Harrison knocks it back in the other direction, giving it the opportunity to fulfill a table's primary function as the bearer of objects. Harrison bestows upon the Artschwager a real *tableness* it was unable to enjoy in its original form.

Not least among Rachel Harrison's destabilizing manipulations is that the object at the vertical center of *Centerpiece* is not an Artschwager at all, but a copy of one. As noted above, Harrison's table is a monstrous decoy in relation to Artschwager's original. She has doubled it in scale by elongating it along one axis, which results in a disturbing distortion. The pristine laminate has been replaced by the mottled surface of putty knife scrapes. Her rendering is a mockery of the original, a deformed and crude giant. A similar effect is alluded to in a text about Kim Adams's *Decoy Homes* (1982-87), in which, as Andy Patton observes: "(The) work does not function in the way a series of drawings 'about' housing might. It is more than representational. But it is less than actual." (18) Adams' decoys are too emphatically real to slip into the realm of representation but they also fall short of functioning as architecture. The decoy is a placeholder and a lure, and

not a functional substitute. In the case of *Centerpiece*, by placing objects upon the decoy Artschwager, Harrison reveals the unexpected functionality of the cube as a table. It is useful to be reminded that a surrogate is distinct from the decoy in that it has the functional ability to replace the thing it stands in for. A decoy table collapses under the pressure of confirmation, whereas a surrogate table is a table in the end. As such, the Artschwager sculpture achieves the role of surrogate. While his “table” falls short in its ability to fully appear as a table, it holds up in its ability to hold things up.

Having been loosened from nominal categories the four elements of *Centerpiece* – base, table, box, and lobster – are free to be reworked into a range of syntactical relationships. One arrangement that will prove of interest to the present study positions each element of the work along a spectrum from illusion to reality, between the space of the viewer to the space of representation. The plywood base ultimately performs the role of pedestal by the simple virtue of being the lowest element in the stack. Setting aside for a moment that it is sloped to one side (a fact that demonstrates its reluctance to perform that role), its form and material lend it the appearance of a low riser, that is, a modest stage. Elevated upon this base, the Artschwager table and its centerpiece become the pedestal and sculpture in a tableau, a sculpture within a sculpture. The nesting motif is replayed as the cardboard box and lobster becomes another pedestal/sculpture pair presented upon the stage of the Artschwager table. According to this model, the lobster rests on a plane of representation three degrees of remove from the one occupied by the viewer.

Malcolm Baker has surveyed the strategies of eighteenth-century sculptors who complicated the sculpture/pedestal dynamic through the deployment of such sculpture-

within-sculpture motifs. Among the examples he provides is the *Monument to Sir Peter Warren*, 1757, by Francois Roubiliac, which depicts Hercules setting a bust of Warren into place upon an inscribed pedestal (fig. 7). (Baker 66) The entire scene is set upon a larger pedestal signaling to the viewer that the act is taking place within the realm of representation. Not to be outdone, Roubiliac has depicted a figure, interpreted variously as Navigation, Britannia, or Lady Warren, resting at the edge of the larger pedestal “beyond the ‘stage’ into the spectator’s space.” (65) The work performs what Baker refers to as a “slippage between different levels of representation”(65) amounting to a dissolution of boundary.

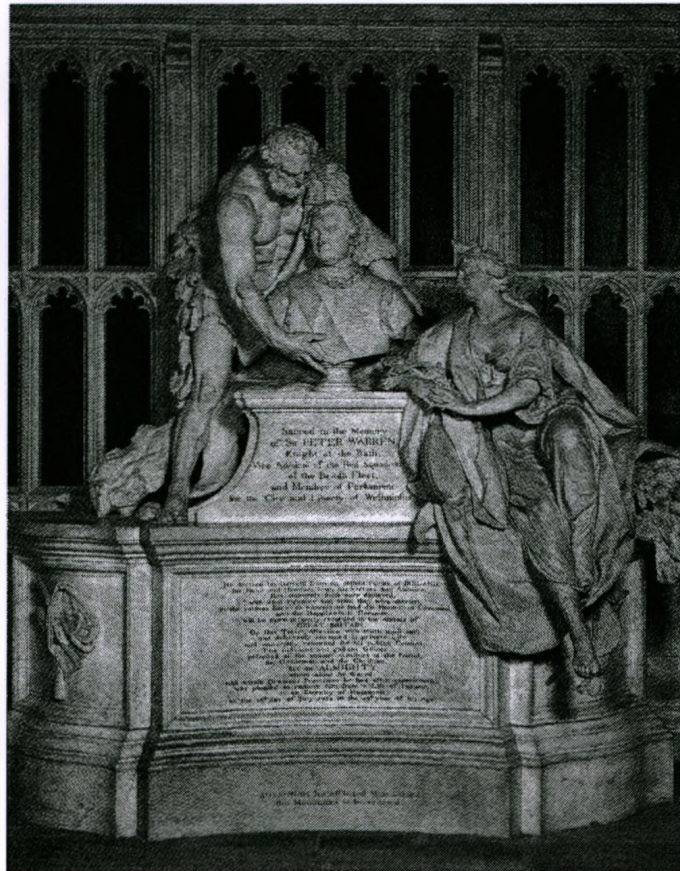
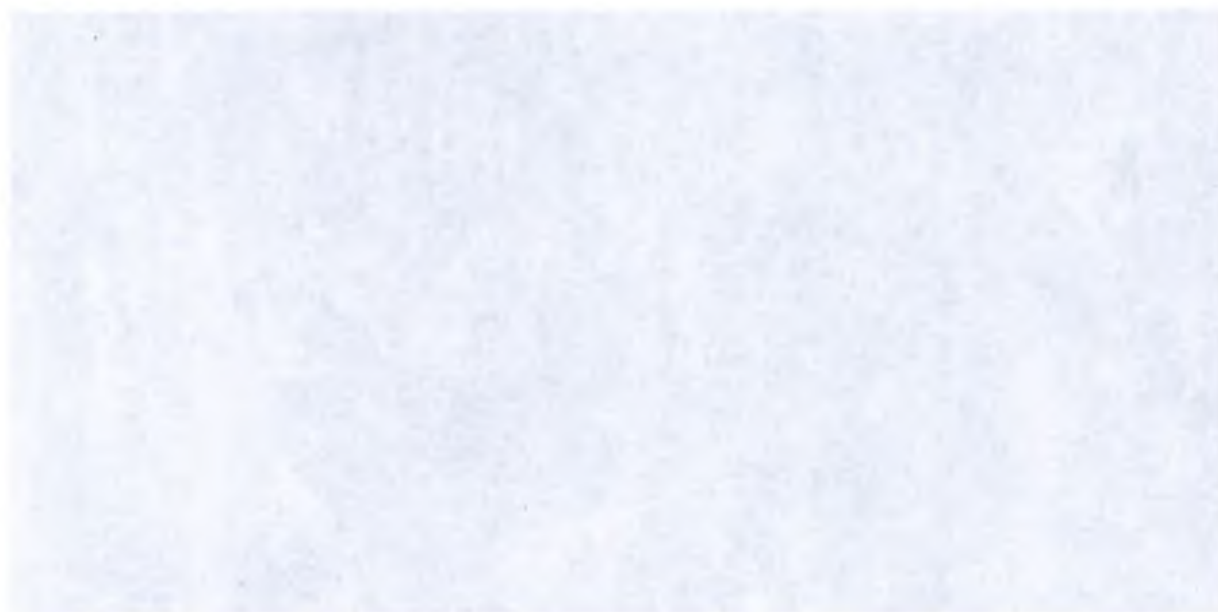


Fig. 7. Francois Roubiliac, *Monument to Sir Peter Warren*, 1757.

Centerpiece as a whole can be read as a hybridized body, having been constructed of disparate and unrelated parts of varying densities and histories of origin. As such it would suffice to fulfill the criteria of the monstrous. What it does beyond this is pose the possibility of the monstrous condition to contaminate the space beyond itself, that is the space of the viewer. In revisiting the dynamics of the pedestal it *demonstrates* the pedestal's function as transition and barrier. It has *monstered* the pedestal, that which curbs the outward force that threatens the most fundamental of distinctions; the ones between subject and object, between the self and the space it occupies.



CHAPTER 4

GUSSIED UP

The 1956 Don Siegel film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* tells the tale of a small California community that is overrun with an “epidemic mass hysteria”: increasing numbers of the townspeople are becoming convinced that those close to them have been replaced by imposters. The duplicates are identical in every way, retaining every detail of the victim’s physical traits, behaviours, even their memories, yet those close to them claim that the imposters lack a certain emotional ‘spark’ which betrays their real identity.



Fig. 8. Don Siegel, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, 1956

In a key scene, the film’s protagonists, Dr. Miles Bennell and Becky Driscoll, are called urgently to the home of some friends, Jack and Teddy Belicec (fig. 8). Upon

arrival, they are taken to a recreation room and shown a body lying on a billiard table. It appears to be a man, and there is some discussion about whether he/it is alive. Notably, the body appears to lack any distinguishing features:

Becky: Its face, Miles, it's vague!

Jack: It's like the first impression that's stamped on a coin. It isn't finished.

Miles: You're right. It has all the features but no details. No character. No lines.

Jack: It's no dead man. (Siegel 1956)

As the film unfolds it becomes clear that those who were thought to be afflicted with paranoia are in fact correct, and that extra-terrestrials have invaded, or infected, the town. These life forms, having the ability to assimilate the structure of any living thing, have been growing human clones in giant seedpods, which then absorb the minds of the cloned victims in their sleep. The body on the pool table is one such clone. It turns out to be Jack's and is, in fact, in a gestational state awaiting his eventual slumber.

The structural parallels between the *Frankenstein* model and that of the *Body Snatchers* are immediately apparent: the monster's body lies upon a table before a party of witnesses, one of whom is a doctor; another subject in the film will be the monster's first victim; and the monster, in both cases, is in a state of becoming. Becky even cries, "It's alive! It's alive!" echoing Frankenstein's famous line, though this time the tone is distraught rather than triumphant. There are, however, some important distinctions. Whereas the *Frankenstein* monster is composed of once-living tissue awaiting its reanimation, the *Body Snatchers* monster is synthesizing material of an unknown source

into an image of its victim. This “image” will eventually supplant the model and destroy it in the process. The *Body Snatchers* monster performs the monstrous function of destroyer of category not through a shuffling of elements into a disordered state, but through a slight of hand substitution.

As noted in the previous section, Rachel Harrison’s decoy *Table with Pink Tablecloth* is a mockery, a crude fake. Despite its functional ability to hold objects, it is nonetheless a dummy that remains at a verisimilar distance from the original (just as the original Artschwager distances itself from a real table). In this way Harrison’s Artschwager at the centre of *Centerpiece* echoes the *Frankenstein* monster, if not in its hybrid composition, then at least insofar as it is an aberration of the model upon which it was based. As such, the Harrison-Artschwager object, while monstrous, is not well served by the *Body Snatchers* paradigm. The disruptive power of the double emerges from another sort of condition, one more subtle. When the decoy/surrogate object achieves mimetic verisimilitude of the original, or further still, supplants the thing it represents, the effect is no longer grotesque (either in the horrific or humorous sense of that word), so much as it is *uncanny*.

Mike Kelley’s *Gussied Up*, 1992, consists of a typical, if dated, children’s bedroom set – a wooden bed, two chairs, and a side table – presented as a tableau, along with a drinking cup, upon a large simple workbench (fig. 7). The furniture has been dressed in children’s or doll’s clothing: knit hats are placed over knobs and hung on a backrest; a sweater is fitted to the bed frame; one chair’s leg is wearing a sock, etc. The work fits the criteria of the model being used for this study, as a table being used to display a monstrous collection of objects. Yet the relationship between the objects is one

of arrangement, rather than as a hybridized composite. Nothing is destroyed in the process of its integration into the work, rather what is constructed is a staged scene.



Fig. 9. Mike Kelley, *Gussied Up*, 1992.

There is something about the arrangement of the objects in the upper portion of the work that at first glance seems haphazard, like the way one might toss articles when getting undressed. The impression fades when it becomes apparent that the placement of the articles is too eccentrically specific. Another very fleeting impression is one of whimsy, as the possibility of a child protagonist playing dress-up with his/her bedroom furniture also quickly evaporates. There is no mattress on the bed and the vice on the workbench serving as the work's pedestal-stage is also wearing a tiny jacket. A baby's garment is stretched between a chair leg and the bed. Finally, the awareness of Mike Kelley's wider oeuvre, and his propensity for the abject, looms large and sinister, and the scene takes on a monstrous character.

Nonetheless the cues that contribute to the work's affective resonances remain subtle. There is no violence depicted, no smeared dolls, nor any horrifying masks. The workbench registers somewhat ominously, because while it is perhaps appropriate for the repair of furniture, it is decidedly not the domain of children. But in the end, the monstrous disturbance caused by the work does not come from the unknown, or the grotesque, but rather their opposite. The disquieting air of the work appears to emerge from a kind of familiarity in the unfamiliar, an air of the uncanny. In his essay on the uncanny (*unheimlich*), Freud unpacks the apparently contradictory meaning of its base term, *heimlich*, which "on the one hand ... what is familiar and agreeable, and on the other, what is concealed and kept out of sight" (Freud 199). The two terms begin to approach each other in meaning and ultimately the uncanny becomes "that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar." (Freud 195) Kelley finds the uncanny, not by invoking a narrative of trauma, but by enacting a state where the habits of adult reasoning have not yet taken hold, where fantastic projection clouds the limits of things.

In the same year that he produced *Gussied Up* Mike Kelley embarked on a major curatorial project taking its name from Freud's essay. The exhibition focuses on polychromatic figurative sculpture, work that elicits the uncanny through, in the words of Ernst Jentsch quoted by Freud, "doubts whether an apparently animate being is really alive; or conversely, whether a lifeless object might not be in fact animate." (201) In addition to including the works of such expected artists working in the described idiom (Paul McCarthy, Duane Hansen, Robert Gober, etc), Kelley enlarged the purview of the

exhibition to include medical instructional models, ventriloquist's dummies, nineteenth-century wax figures, and sex dolls. What is harnessed in Kelley's curatorial choices is how the aesthetic condition of the uncanny extends beyond the domain of art objects. The aforementioned doubts about whether a thing is alive or dead – in this case, things that take the form of the human body, in whole or in part – are as easily engendered outside the gallery as they are inside.

In *Gussied Up* the anxiety about whether what is encountered is living or dead is projected onto things that are incapable of life, have never lived, and for which questions of life and death generally have no relevance. Bedroom furniture has been treated like a collection of dolls, as each item has been cared for and attended to. The implication of an anthropomorphic projection onto furniture, while a common feature in historical and modern design objects, from claw foot tables to Mickey Mouse chairs, also points to a pathological disruption in the perception of what is animate and what is inanimate. There is, however, a morphological correspondence between the forms adopted for furniture and the human body. The evolution of furniture forms over time has occurred in direct contact and in conformity with the human figure, a feature perhaps attested to in the corresponding anatomical names we have given to furniture's various parts. *Gussied Up* reveals the degree to which, in approaching us in its forms, furniture has come to resemble us, and in its most articulated forms, takes on a decidedly monstrous and uncanny character (fig. 8).



Fig. 10. Dental hygienist's training chair.

Despite their uncanny resonance, Kelley's objects in *Gussied Up* are ultimately regular things; their only alteration is one of position. Naturally, the precedent here is Duchamp's readymade, which introduced the possibility of an object's duplicity, by virtue of its potential to be recontextualized. Kelley, in his catalogue essay for *Uncanny*, suggests that Duchamp be given credit for the invention of the sculptural still life. The traditional function of the non-figurative object in statuary – clothing, weapons, cups, etc – is as a prop in a way that is analogous to such functioning in theatre. Prior to the near simultaneous appearance of Picasso's sculptures of everyday objects (*Guitar* and *Absinthe Glass* both c. 1914) and Duchamp's readymades (begun in 1913), objects were ancillary to a figure and rarely, if ever, represented for their own sake. What is distinct, of course, about Duchamp's operation is that, in choosing to forego the rendering of his objects, he bypassed representation in favour of an act of repositioning. Kelley observes that the readymade poses a temporal problem as much as a spatial one: "one wonders *when* they are a real object, and *when* are they an illusion." (33 emphasis in the original)

The use of everyday things in the context of art makes us ask not only where the art begins and ends, but also *when* it begins and ends. The question of duration reorients the readymade from being merely an object to the possibility of being an event:

As 'art', they dematerialize; they refuse to stay themselves and become their own doppelganger. The categorical confusion raised by the readymade make them the father of all the time-based work that followed, the progenitor of everything that traversed the slippery dividing line between sculpture and theatre, between what is *in* time, and what is *out of* time. (Kelley 33)

Temporality is a condition of theatre, and one could say it defines theatre as distinct from sculpture. Once a sculptural object is seen in light of its relationship to duration, classificatory divisions that define media dissolve.

Before addressing the question of theatre directly, I would like to propose that the equivocal condition attributed here to the readymade might extend to *all* sculpture. Mike Kelley's allusion to the doppelganger in the above quotation can be usefully applied more widely, as a sculpture is at once a thing in the world and also an image, a representation occupying a virtual/language space. When asked to address sculpture as a medium, in a 1980 *Vanguard* interview, Liz Magor replies:

Okay... First of all, I like the fact that sculpture exists in the world of objects along with all the other objects like tables and chairs. That's what is important about it, what makes it different from painting in fact. (...) More and more, the sculpture that interests me is the sculpture that interacts with the ordinary objects in the world and sometimes disappears among them. (22)

What is notable, Magor observes, is that sculpture occupies a space continuous with the space of the viewer, and in many cases it has the ability to disappear among objects in the world. But sculpture never entirely abandons its position in the abstract space of

representation. It is thus suspended within it an apparent contradiction – it is emphatically concrete, yet is also elusive as material which offers itself to experience.

Earlier I suggested that that non-figurative objects in figurative sculpture act as props, that is, like the material trappings of theatre. Props, as distinct from set decoration, are the objects that come into direct contact with the actors. They are material agents activated in a given scene. Occasionally they are fabricated to mimic real objects, and at other times real objects are simply used to stand in for themselves. The parallels to the sculptural condition outlined above should be apparent, as we see that the prop shares with sculpture the double condition of being both a representation and a *thing*. The doppelganger function of objects in sculpture –as props without actors– repositions the object as subject, or, prop as actor. Malcolm Baker's choice of the word "stage" to describe the space of representation upon Roubiliac's pedestals addressed in the last section is revealing. It is easy to read the workbench in *Gussied Up* as an elevated stage, with the sculpture set above it as made up of attendant props-becoming-actors (this is presumably the premise for the work's inclusion in *The Puppet Show*, 2008, at the Santa Monica Museum of Art). According to the conventions of sculptural display, the analogue to the stage is the pedestal, which serves to elevate and isolate the work, and to bring it into the space of aesthetic contemplation. In the terms of this study, which has been demonstrating that the table itself becomes monstrous, the threshold of the gallery may be argued to function as the edge of a larger table-stage, with the floor becoming its surface as we enter into its monstrous condition.

In *Art and Objecthood*, 1967, Michael Fried laments the theatricality of Minimalism, work he referred to as “literalist,” which he argued signalled art’s corruption and perversion. (168) Specifically, Fried characterized this work – Donald Judd and Robert Morris are his primary targets – as failing to transcend its own objecthood, and that it was marked by definitive qualities of theatre: duration, and the staging of the viewer. Revisiting *Art and Objecthood* in the introduction of a 1998 anthology of the same name, Fried makes the following parenthetical remarks, which characterize his thoughts in a way that has some bearing on the present study:

My critique of the literalist address to the viewer’s body was not that bodiliness as such had no place in art but rather that literalism theatricalized the body, put it endlessly on stage, made it uncanny or opaque to itself, hollowed out, deadened its expressiveness, denied its finitude and in a sense its humanness, and so on. There is, I might have said, something vaguely *monstrous* about the body in literalism. (42. Emphasis in the original.)

There is clearly an explicit connection made here with regards to sculpture as it relates to the theatrical and the uncanny. The Minimalists, for Fried, had produced objects that retained their objecthood, that is, did not transcend mere things in the world. In his original essay he quotes Clement Greenberg, who said about Minimalism that, “a kind of art nearer the condition of non-art could not be envisaged or ideated at this moment.” (152) As such, the work might be described as marginal, as existing in-between categories, much like the doppelganger readymade in Kelley’s view. What also becomes apparent in Fried’s comments here is the effect this condition has upon the viewer. What is at stake is not only the categorical position of the objects at hand, but their monstrous affective power upon the beholder.

When one enters a gallery the encounter with sculpture proposes a form of confrontation. We are matched by the work because in a given encounter, regardless of its scale, its ephemerality, or degree of abstraction, it is contingently situated in a space in which we ourselves are not absolutely located. Additionally, the object in question is an envelopment of forces, ideas, intentions, and labour; to some extent a double of both its maker and its viewer. Ian Carr-Harris, in a staged third-person intrusion into a 1988 text by Philip Monk, asks himself “Why sculpture?” His answer articulates the confrontational nature of the medium:

As a surrogate of human identity, sculpture by virtue of its shared occupation of our space and by virtue of its intentionality as a mental construct was, Carr-Harris felt, not an ‘obdurate object’ as the Minimalists had suggested, but a vulnerable situation or event in the same manner in which any human experience is based on the constant construction of situation in order to protect the self against intrusion. (Monk 1988, 18)

Carr-Harris, then goes on to note that this quality of sculpture is “essentially theatrical,” in its concern with “human equivalence” and its ability to confront the viewer within a temporally determined condition. (18) What stands out particularly here is the notion of the intrusion of the work into the self, a threat that strongly echoes the surrogate condition of the *Body Snatchers* scenario, and the monstrous theatricality identified by Fried.

Searching to describe the motivation for the *Uncanny* project, Mike Kelley describes “strong, uncanny, aesthetic experiences” connected to unrecalable childhood memories. These feelings he writes “were provoked by a confrontation between ‘me’ and ‘it’ that was highly charged, so much so that ‘me’ and ‘it’ become confused.” (26). Just what constitutes the ‘it’ here is not clear, apparently even to him, but can be understood,

at least, to represent the object behind the uncanny encounter. Kelley's project for the *Uncanny* exhibition was to approach his subject directly through literal representations of the human form that elicit the uncanny through presence and an equivalence with the viewer. It could be argued, however, that this quality is something discernable in all sculpture through its confrontational redoubling, something apparent in *Gussied Up*, where human presence is relegated to the surrogate furniture.

Freud examines the use of the double as a motif in the writings of E.T.A. Hoffman, who he states is, "in literature the unrivalled master of conjuring up the uncanny." (209) Freud identifies the double as form of "ego disturbance" (212), an idea that resonates in both Mike Kelley's and Ian Carr-Harris' ideas quoted above:

Hoffmann accentuates this relation by transferring mental processes from the one person to the other—what we should call telepathy—so that the one possesses knowledge, feeling and experience in common with the other, identifies himself with another person, so that his self becomes confounded, or the foreign self is substituted for his own—in other words, by doubling, dividing and interchanging the self. (210)

In Hoffman's *The Sandman*, Nathaniel is tormented by the interchangeable figures of Sandman, Coppelius the lawyer and Coppola the optician. It also occurs in the strange misperception of Olympia, a neighbour's daughter, with whom he falls in love, based only on seeing her through a distant window. When Nathaniel eventually calls on the lovely Olympia, she turns out to be a clockwork automaton, and thus the person he had thought her to be was his a figure of his own construction. In light of the earlier observation that the uncanny is rooted in the return of the familiar, made unfamiliar, Freud concludes that the double motifs in Hoffmann are, "A harking-back to particular

phases in the evolution of the self-regarding feeling, a regression to a time when the ego was not yet sharply differentiated from the external world and from other persons. (212)

The uncanny quality of *Gussied Up* surely emerges from this condition, as it draws explicitly from a state of early childhood. The imaginary protagonist who has dressed the furniture – in the most innocent of possible scenarios – is only repeating the undepicted act of being dressed by a parental figure.

Any innocence that resides in the upper tableau of *Gussied Up* is undone by the presence of the vice. It is the outstanding element in the scene, having no real place in the proposed narrative. It is part of the apparatus of display – in this case the workbench which serves as the work's pedestal. The workbench resides in the space continuous with the viewer, and because of its provisional construction, one might entertain the possibility that it is a *real* workbench, something belonging to the installation crew. The vice is of the bench, part of its field of signs and fixed to its surface, yet it also punctures the horizon into the tableau above it. It resides between two distinct conceptual spaces: an upper realm of representation, and a lower realm of functionality. But what is readily apparent, despite that I have been teasingly avoiding it, is that the vice has been dressed in the same clothing as the rest of the furniture. There is a vertical dynamism set into motion between the two spaces for which the vice acts as a hinge. Like the nesting sculptures within the sculptures described in the last section, *Gussied Up* enacts a transitional push and pull between the space of the viewer and the space of the inner tableau. The vice is absorbed into the upper field and the workbench is dragged with it, effecting a disruption of figure and ground.

CHAPTER 4

WORKBENCH

Thus far, my study regarding sculpture's relationship to the table has been focused largely on the pedestal and on the table as it functions as a site of display. In order to move further along in the evolution of my model, it is useful here to note that Mike Kelley's use of a workbench as the base of *Gussied Up* also opens up another set of terms that concern the role of the table in the processes of production. In the pages that follow I will engage in a specific examination of the workbench as a dynamic system that also approaches the monstrous conditions surveyed thus far. My attention will especially be focused on the workbench of the hobbyist/bricoleur as prototypical example, one that can help us reflect on a longer trajectory regarding the evolution of workbenches as charged spaces of production more generally. I will then move to a study of work by Liz Magor that integrates the object produced, the workbench and the pedestal into a single event-object.

In advance of all other functions, a workbench is notable for insisting on the elevation of a surface in spite of the force of gravity. Whether made with a stack of bricks, a requisitioned milk crate, or a set of proper saw horses, the prototypical bench is *already* a bench, of sorts; a larval bench of the first order of tablehood. Returning to Levi-Strauss' bricoleur:

His universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand', that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because what it contains bears no relation to the current project, or indeed to any particular project, but is the contingent result of all the occasions there have been to renew or enrich the stock or to maintain it with the remains of previous constructions or destructions. (1966, 17)

While the material chosen for the bench may have no immediate relation to the task at hand or the task yet to be imagined, the form of the bench is shaped by necessity. Its inception is necessitated first because the work needs to be drawn away from the hands of the standing worker, thus producing the need for legs. It is an object contrived in relation to the work made before it, and which anticipates the work that will come after it. Built to serve immediate needs, and informed by the needs of past experience, it will shape future work in relation to itself. Its form is thus reworked to accommodate the worker and the work. As something the worker returns to, the workbench is a project that could be represented by a series of folds in the vector of production. It is a work outside of the work, yet, it evolves out of traditional labouring practices, the workbench often holds a central position within the production matrix or site, consuming a disproportionate amount of the worker's time and space. For the hobbyist, the work produced upon it might be seen as necessary in so far as it is made in service of the bench itself.

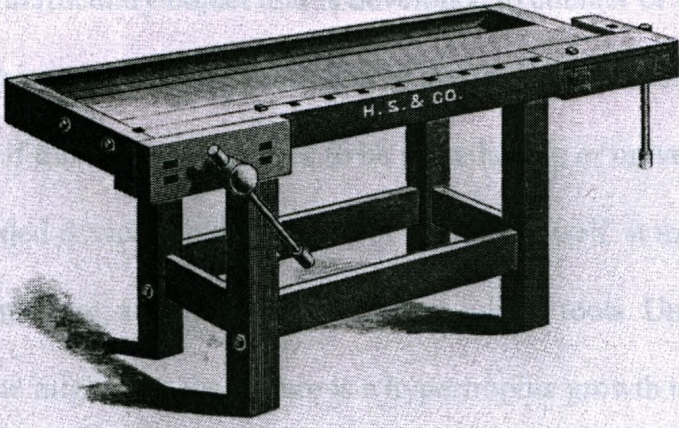
The workbench is an object that has a unique relationship to the worker. Typically it is shaped by the worker and constructed specifically for the purpose of doing work. The workbench that film director James Whale provides *Frankenstein* is a complex apparatus: it is equipped with large clamps to restrain the monster; it is cantilevered to permit the body to be stood up and/or reclined; and it is embellished with chains. We might usefully

infer the table is also the site of Frankenstein's initial dissections, the surface upon which his exploratory operations occurred.

A workbench is a table defined by a particular set of functions – most readily as a raised surface upon which work is conducted. The various specialized fixtures that extend its functionality serve to distinguish it from simpler tables whose purposes are more limited. Attached to it are forms that have been developed to suit the needs of specific trades –cobbler, jeweler, engineer, etc.– the most familiar being the woodworker's bench, with its face vice at the front left, and shoulder vice at the right end (fig. 11). Such is a basic design that has evolved over centuries, producing endless subspecies. In contrast, the homemade workbench is a bricolage of available scraps, gathered up and assembled into table form. The taking up of its construction is dedicated, ultimately, to the making of a purposeful shift in methodology: from using surfaces at hand to addressing the production of a worksite as a term in a larger production program. This move, however, is not one merely dedicated to digging in, or one of settlement and permanence, but rather it is one of intensity. Curiously, what separates this homemade workbench from the materials scattered around it is only a matter of the structure of an arrangement. So, despite its aspirations, the “made” workbench may repurpose an old dresser, or the legs of a sewing machine, and it is always susceptible to change, should better-suited parts come along.

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Fig. 11. Advertisement for Hammacher, Schlemmer & Company workbenches, ca.1920.

Along the morphing path towards the workbench's realization, what is taking shape is an *assemblage*, marked by heterogeneity, a monster that is bred for a purpose. Here we begin to see, in the terms of the preoccupations of this paper, an equivalence struck between the homemade bench and the monster it supports, and carried through it, a disruption of figure and ground. The accumulative development of the workbench's elements is in reaction to various encounters among directional forces. As noted above, the first of these is the downward force of the work as it is pulled to the ground. Later, as tools are pressed against the work, and momentum is transferred to the bench, additional elements are developed. In his text on the history of woodworking benches, Scott Landis

sums up their development: "In one very simplified view, the history of the workbench is the gradual development of an aid or replacement for the body as holding device." (6) Each new force is met with a corresponding adjustment to the bench's morphology.

A jig is an intermediary object that is developed to counter or to focus the directional forces. It is at once *of the bench* and *of the tool*. Successful jigs can become permanent *fixtures*, if their function proves to be more lasting or universal. The fixture is generally an embedded device, a modification of the bench itself. It may take the form of a stop to brace the material, a guide, a clamp, or a trough for tools. Understood morphologically, one might say, the fixture is a hypertrophic growth using the structural logic of the bench against the restraint of the work. An old workbench might show a history of such modifications and, as these modifications are compounded, the bench as a legible entity transforms over time. This transformation always happens in relation to the work, to fit the work. The bench is shaped by the work, just as the work is shaped by the bench. The work and bench approach each other; they *conform* to each other.

The bench is both furniture and a tool, the scale of which is in near one-to-one relationship to the body of the user. Possessing four limbs that stand upon the ground, and an otherwise horizontal orientation, it evokes a beast of burden. As a cousin of the *sawhorse*, the workbench exhibits its zoomorphology as mule –the mindless nonhuman servant carrying the load of the work. The vice, among the most common and lasting of fixtures, is often the bench's first defining trait. In a chapter on the vice, Scott Landis observes that "without some way of holding the work, the workbench is hardly more than a table" (121). The vice acts as a surrogate hand, freeing the hands of the worker to take on more complex tasks. As the bench increases in complexity, its zoomorphic character

begins to shift into the anthropomorphic, first having legs, then hands. But it mimics the simplest of hands: the claws of lobsters, or the rudimentary robots of early science fiction. Alternately phrased, its “jaws” evoke the mandibles of insects and birds, an oral clutch in the absence of articulated digits. A monstrous scenario is thus conjured wherein the furniture literally reaches up to grab the work.

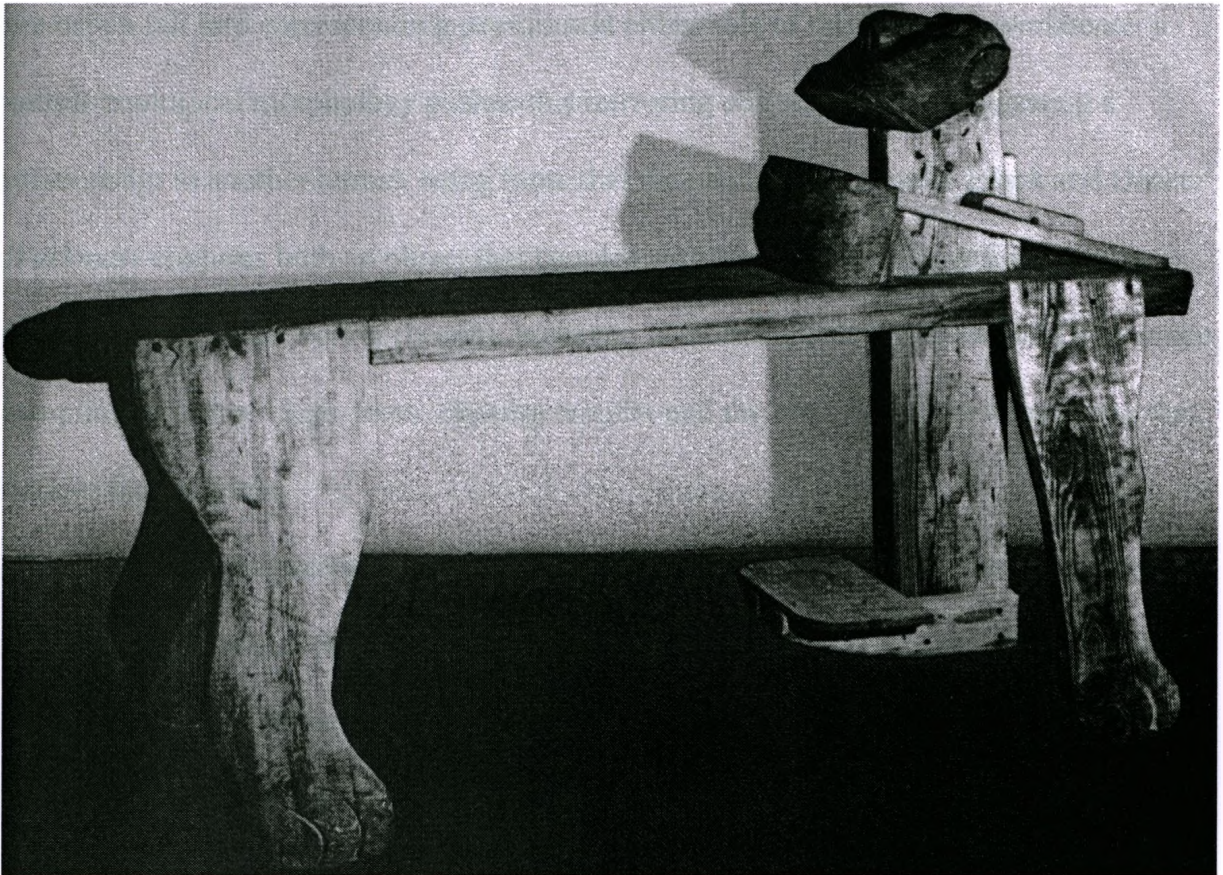


Fig. 12. German “dumbhead” type shaving horse, date unknown.

This increase in complexity through the addition of fixtures shifts the user’s bodily relationship to the bench from one that is general to one that is specific. The use of most furniture entails only the encounter of respective masses (the body as a whole entity, moving around it, leaning over it, etc.), whereas the body’s articulated relationship to a tool is highly specified. One holds handles in the hand, and presses pedals with the

feet. When a device is added to the workbench, such as a vice, the hands may be engaged directly, integrating the general and the specific into a system of simultaneous actions.

In approaching the work, the bench approaches the worker. In this encounter of forces, a horizontal axis lies between the tool and the work; the workbench bears the work upward to the tool and the worker bears the tool down on the work. The worker and the bench fall into corresponding positions at either side of this line. The workbench's anthro-zoological morphology pushes this mirroring one step further, suggesting a relationship to another human being (note that the name of the popular Black and Decker *Workmate* conjures both an object that couples with the worker, and conforms to the work.) The mirrored worker (bench), however, is monstrous. It is defined only by a crude sampling of terms – legs, torso, clawing mouth– and the omission of the complexity that defines human form.

There is the potential for a imagining the workbench and the pedestal collapsed into each other, where the site of construction is also the site of display. Edith Balas has quoted Constantin Brancusi expressing an idea of a sculpture that emerges from its base: “the theory of the luminous, living pedestal as a starting point of the sculpture – sculpture which is conceived from the floor or earth upward.” (Balas 44) Brancusi's suggestion implies a pedestal as the generative site of the work. Keeping in mind that the monster is a living thing, the idea of a living workbench layers a metaphor of production with a metaphor of generation; the mechanical with the organic. Brancusi's endless column read in light of the quotation above becomes the living pedestal producing its own double in a recursive generative loop, multiplying itself to infinity.

At the end of the 1950s Jasper Johns began a series of paintings that explored the surface of a painting as the site and tool of its own creation. Beginning with *Device Circle* (1959) (fig.x), Johns produced a body of paintings that incorporated a slat of wood (typically a stretcher bar or a ruler) that was used like a compass to produce circles of smeared paint. By fixing the compass to the work surface, the works make the painting process explicit through a mechanical cause-and-effect demonstration. In the *Device* paintings, we see not only the demonstrated narrative of production in the form of accumulated marks characteristic of Abstract Expressionism, but the apparatus that produced the marks built into the painting itself. The paintings are machines for their own production.

In 1980 the Vancouver Art Gallery exhibited a body of then-recent work by Liz Magor work that explored labour, process, production and identity. These sculptures consisted primarily of simple machines –compression moulds– that cast rectilinear slabs in fabric, plaster, organic materials and paper. There is an immediacy and matter-of-factness to the presentation; the machines are exhibited along with their product, with only subtle narrative or metaphoric constructions implied. The last work, *Production*, 1980, presents its bricks of pressed paper stacked into two large walls, and it is arguably the most explicitly process-based and self-referential. While *Production* is also the most ambitious and culminating work of the series, it is the earlier pieces that are most directly relevant to my study because of their integration of the machine into the display of the product, and for their explicit references to the body. These three works are *Four Boys and a Girl*, 1979, *Schist*, 1979, and *Double Scarp*, 1980.



Fig. 13. Liz Magor, *Four Boys and a Girl*, 1979

Four Boys and a Girl, consists of a large coffin-like mould, lying on the floor, from which five slabs have been produced by pressing clothing, grass clippings and glue (fig. 11). The slabs are displayed on low beds, which were built initially as drying racks, but now serve to elevate the forms from the ground. Each slab has roughly the dimensions of a human form, which the title makes explicit. *Schist*, has the appearance of obsolete medical or institutional shelving; a six-foot-high tubular metal framework, with chipping paint, set on casters (fig. 14). There are two identical mechanisms stacked vertically, each consisting of a metal shelf affixed to the outer frame and a press that bears down upon it. The lower shelf supports two wrinkled slabs of fabric and plaster that have been pressed in the device. The slabs lie dormant, displayed at the site of their

production. In *Double Scarp*, the machine and the cast slabs are integrated. Here, Magor dispenses with legs, casters and shelves; the machine and the product share the same space and are unified into a compact form. No extraneous apparatus clutters the mechanism and the frame of the press remains attached to the material within it.



Fig. 14. Liz Magor, *Schist*, 1979

In sculptural and industrial applications the *cast* is the product of the interior of a *mould*; the original object being reproduced is often referred to as the *pattern*. Various methods permit a range of results, but casting is generally understood as a process that makes multiple reproductions of an object possible. Conversely, in the bandaging of broken bones, a *cast* refers to the shell of plaster and fabric that is applied to the *exterior* of the patient's body. These sculptural and medical registers are enacted simultaneously in Magor's work of this period, which evokes both the artist's studio and the mending of

bones. They are about human scale, but their furrowed topology denies the presence of bodies cast within them. Strangely, the products of these machines are *all cast* in both senses of the word. In the sculptural/industrial sense the slabs are without pattern, as all that is reproduced is the interior of the machines. In the medical sense, these fabric-reinforced plaster or glue objects contain no limbs, only the folded densities of their outsides turned inside.

This work by Liz Magor has a haunting quality that offsets its potential as purely literal, and process-based, sculpture. Reproduced in the Vancouver Art Gallery catalogue, *Schist*, sits alone in the cold light of a nearby window, recalling deserted furniture found in decaying institutional ruins (fig. 15). Likewise, *Four Boys and a Girl* has an undeniable funereal air. The unease arises in part because we are able imagine a protagonist who appears to have abandoned the work in the middle of a task, the details of which are unclear. This fictional narrative of abandonment is matched by the reality that the (actual) sculptor has suspended her work. No effort has been made to isolate the products from the process of their making. Avis Lang Rosenberg observes that Magor's work of this period often seems orphaned in a gallery setting, a context that typically arrests production (22). A third-person narrative is not possible in the studio, where Magor is the sole creator. It is the gallery that produces the narrative by introducing the possibility of a fictional third-person agent responsible for the work. This function of the gallery is, as we have seen, distinctly theatrical, staging a relationship between the viewer, the work, and the conditions of the work's unfolding.



Fig. 15. Abandoned examination table, Riverside Hospital morgue, North Brother Island, Bronx, New York.

An uncanny quality in Magor's work under consideration here results from the presence of *bodies* throughout, not only as demonstrated within the (paradoxical) absence of an artist-protagonist, but in the various bodies implied by the human-sized slabs. As noted, this is made most explicit in the title of *Four Boys and Girl*, and via the corresponding figures lying on low beds on the gallery floor. The implication of death is inescapable, but it sits in juxtaposition with the equally evident implications of life, as the coffin-mould functions as the matrix for the five "children". The title *Four Boys and a Girl* also plays on the same anxieties explored in Mike Kelley's work: that of the objective vulnerability of children, but also that of subjective resurfacing of that vulnerability in the beholder. Again we see a doubling of the viewer in the work

prompted by the simplicity of the forms, as anthropomorphic vessels without identity, like the *Body Snatchers* monsters awaiting the absorption of the host.

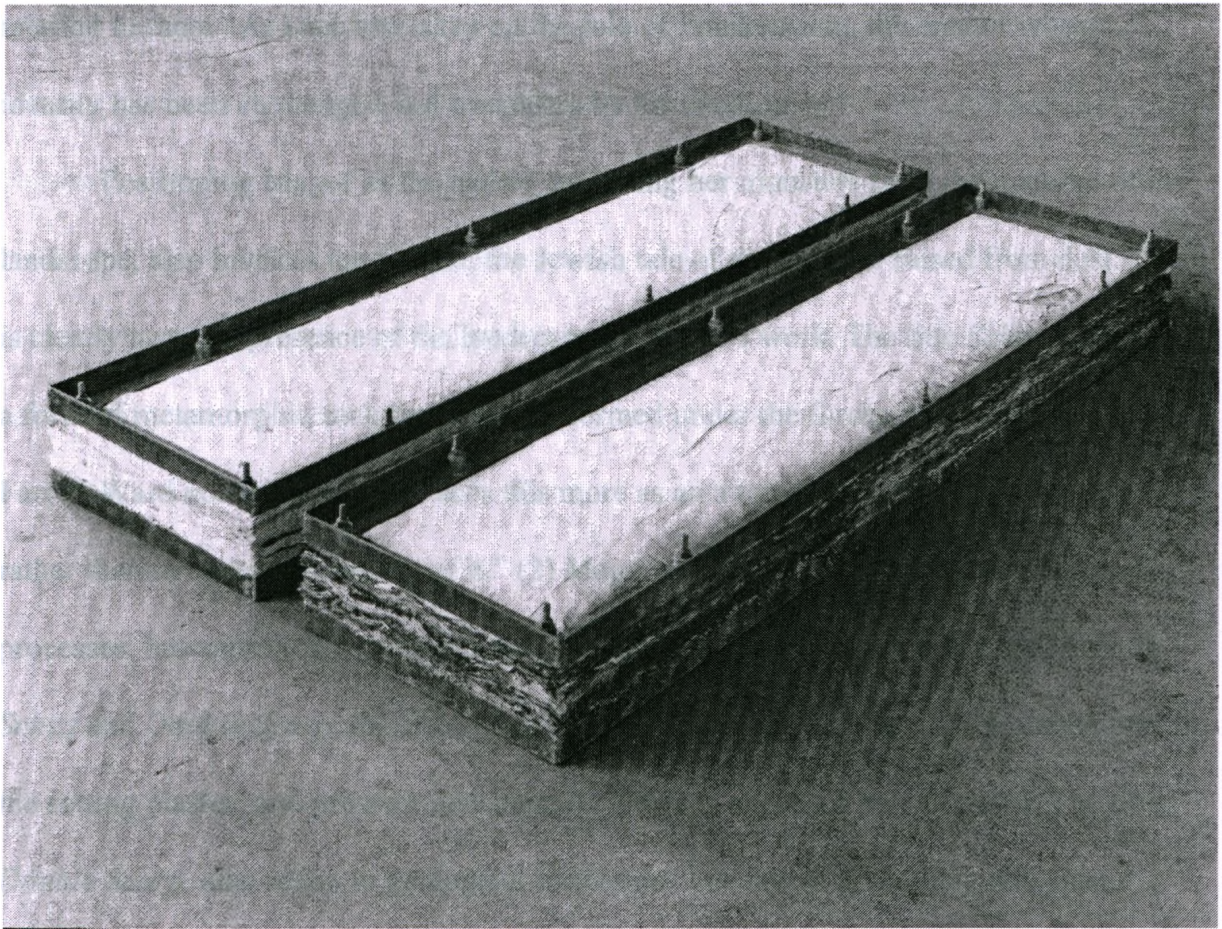


Fig. 16. Liz Magor, *Double Scarp*, 1980

Artist, Liz Magor is, however, also the *maker* of these entities; she has built the apparatus that formed them and she has given them their gendered designations. In her text included in the catalogue for the Vancouver Art Gallery exhibition, Magor writes, “I find I have...manufactured my own competition as the pieces themselves take the opportunity to manifest their history, their own generation and transformation. The stories I have assigned become accessory, and what is more, my ability to alter form appears in itself merely a parallel of how I too, am altered.” (5)

Magor admits to feeling that the works hold doppelganger positions, as doubles that match her and eventually supplant her, after which her own identity is seen only in relation to them. As such she takes on the role of Frankenstein, the creator whose identity has been challenged and overtaken by his creation.

Positioning Magor as the maker, moulding her monsters from the material of the landscape, also invokes the Golem, the Jewish tale of the monster raised from dust. There is clearly a strong presence of the landscape in Magor's work. The title *Schist* refers to a form of metamorphic rock that is (trans)formed under the forces of pressure and heat. Farrell-Ward notes that Magor "sees this more as an attempt to parallel a physical event rather than to make a metaphor of it." (2) Magor is not making pictures of geological processes, but approximating them. An actual change has occurred in her materials; in *Schist* and *Double Scarp*, the slabs have been formed by the chemically-produced heat in the setting plaster, and pressed mechanically between sheets or bars of metal. The title, *Double Scarp*, also refers to geological formation. The layers of clothing and plaster pressed within its frame have been trimmed around the edges to reveal the strata that fill its interior, like the sedimentary layers revealed in the upheaval of a land mass. The use of grass clippings in *Four Boys and a Girl* also points metonymically to the landscape, but the transformation is less heroic in this case; white glue binds the clothing together and the grass is not heated, but rather it decays. In each case, applied pressure to the clothing accelerates the force of gravity active in geological formation. These sculptures are landscape machines, mimicking the geological processes at a radically reduced scale, and a dramatically accelerated pace.

The bridged space of the body-landscape operates in two directions: a regressive downward movement that signals death and the decay of the body into compost; and an upward movement of the figure emerging from the landscape signals the Golem, the monster gathered up and given form from dust. *Four Boys and a Girl* occupies this threshold, the clothing is destroyed and enters into a process of decay, actualizing “the process of forces that transform and eventually reduce the body” (Farrell-Ward 3), but then compressed in crude representations on human forms. There is a fusing of the body to the landscape, mimicking the decay of the body in death.

CHAPTER 5

L'HOURLOUPE

In late July, 1962, Jean Dubuffet began a series of telephone doodles in ball-point pen, which would grow into a graphic repertoire of lines enclosing patches of solid colour and hatched halftones in red, blue and black, and white. These marks would be applied to the construction of dense visual fields of disruptive patterns while often retaining, embedded into their surface, figures similar to the distorted *art brut* characters he had developed in the previous decades. In the new work, to which he gave the collective title *Hourloupe*, his monstrous figures appear to emerge from the matrix of marks; very little is done to differentiate the depicted figure from its ground and in many cases it is not clear if there is anything depicted at all (fig 17). This body of work would occupy Dubuffet for a period of 12 years and would be applied to drawing, painting, sculpture, and eventually theatrical and architectural manifestations.

On his invention of the *Hourloupe* name, Dubuffet remarked, “In French it calls to mind some object or personage of fairytale-like or grotesque state and at the same time also something tragically growling and menacing. Both together.” (Franzke, 159) The name first evokes *hurl* (howl) and *loup* (wolf), but also *loup-garou* (werewolf) and *loupe*, a French word for the cankerous growths on trees – the latter two suggesting



Fig. 17. Jean Dubuffet, *Logos II*, 1966

metamorphic development. In this later part of his evolving career, Dubuffet (being in his early sixties to his mid seventies) moves from the raw formlessness of his early work (especially pieces such as the *Texturologies*) to a world of forms, developed according to open-ended play within a set of formal limitations. The *Hourloupe* strategy amounts to a kind of genesis, where characters, objects and landscapes are manifested according to the same basic codes. As Dubuffet remarks, “The cycle itself is conceived as the figuration of a world other than our own or, if you prefer, parallel to ours, and it is this world which bears the name *L'Hourloupe*.” (Dubuffet 1973, 35) He referred to his methodology as a “sausage machine run backwards” where he begins with the formless and arrives at a pig. (Rowell 27) The system of drawn outlines literally defines limits, providing the

possibility for difference, which accumulated in cellular masses, and results in the creation of a world.

It was in 1966 that Dubuffet began to extend his *Hourloupe* project into three dimensions. The original objects were carved in expanded polystyrene then painted in the *Hourloupe* motif. Carved with an electrically heated wire and a wooden bucksaw, the forms are somewhat crude despite the plasticity of the material, having the appearance of Neolithic stonework. However, the three-dimensional work has a curious character to it, never settling entirely into sculpture. The objects appear, rather, as three-dimensional paintings or drawings. The marking system covers the surface of things in a total mesh that adheres to a formal limitation – black, red and blue lines upon white surfaces. The graphic sensibility is retained in the shift, and the enveloping design is sustained. The sculpted supports utilized here consist of a series of planes, narrower in depth than height or width. The effect this has is that the sculptural (and eventually even the architectural) work is the product of the drawings in a generative or evolutionary sense.

The realization of an object from a drawing, and, inversely, the two-dimensional mapping of a three-dimensional thing, are operations that are usually understood through the logic of the diagram. A diagrammatic rendering offers a partial representation of an object by cutting a plane across it, shedding an entire dimension in the process. The relationship a map or plan has to its object is one of translation, whereas the *Hourloupe* objects open up as extensions, or continuations, of the work's graphic methodology, building outward according to the initial drawing's internal logic. Margit Rowell writes that Dubuffet's "red and blue, as used here, are neutral colors lacking in associative power; the function of color in the *Hourloupe* paintings is as unequivocal and non-

expressionistic as the continuum of ciphers –or visual equation– that graphically articulates their surface.” (31) But the colours are not entirely without “associative power”; their palette is that of notation, the colours of ballpoint pen on paper. It is the aesthetic language of jotting down (blue) and correcting (red). This notation was in fact the source of the motif, and the relationship the red and blue lines have to the aesthetic described is causal. Dubuffet’s doodles were made dense, lifted off the page, and brought into the space of the world, never having been notations for anything other than their own self-composition. Weaving the unvaried red and blue lines of ballpoint pens, like Frankenstein lacing the wiring of the circulatory and nervous system, Dubuffet constructed an entire monstrous cosmology. And even as the work would be taken beyond drawing into sculpture, event-based theatrical environments, and massive architectural monuments, it would always retain within it the encoding of the artist’s first telephone doodles.

Within the space of a few days Dubuffet produced two works, *Table with Decanter*, March 7, 1968 (fig. 18), and *Landscape with Tree*, March 12, 1968 (fig. 19), that are formally quite similar, despite the implication inherent to their titles. Both consist of a raised horizontal surface upon which smaller objects are displayed. Very little can be discerned regarding these amorphous items: only the decanter and tree in the two respective works, and what appears to be a plate and spoon that have been laid centrally upon the landscape. Everything is wrapped in a simplified, monochromatic *Hourloupe* treatment of black lines; an interference pattern that further disrupts the eye’s ability to make sense of the already distorted forms. The objects are camouflaged in their table-landscapes, disappearing into them. These works exemplify one of the most compelling



Fig. 18. Jean Dubuffet, *Table with Decanter*, March 7, 1968



Fig. 19. Jean Dubuffet, *Landscape with Tree*, March 12, 1968

functions of the *Hourloupe* method; namely, its ability to render all things equal, and thereby disrupt our ability to isolate and identify where and what a thing is.

In this work Dubuffet is also revisiting his earlier connections between the landscape and the planar surface of tables as sites. Both table and landscape are defined by a horizontal field within which elements are arranged, albeit at a dramatically different scale. This structural similarity is notable in a gallery where a bottle and a tree might appear juxtaposed in adjacent painting of similar size. Of the encounter of these fields Dubuffet writes, “any table can be for each of us a landscape as inexhaustible as the whole Andes range.” (Franzke 69-70) His effort thus resulted in the collapsing of two painting genres – landscape and still-life – while doing so from outside of the medium of painting. Like half-formed body snatchers whose identity is yet to be determined, what is represented in these sculptures can be nudged in either direction (landscape or still-life), according whichever designation is given to them. So the objects, in their ambiguity, demonstrate a destabilization of the table’s function as place for the construction of meaning.

Both of the March, 1968, works feature curious irregular planar elements that extend outward on the floor. Because of their asymmetrical relationship to the table forms, they do not read immediately as the bases of pedestals, but rather function as parcels of turf, carpet, or cast shadow. As pictorial elements, they provide the illusion of a setting, situating the *tables* into *tableaux*. These paintings-becoming-sculptures are thus folded once again towards painting, and retreat from the space of the world and into the space of the picture.

Inverting this movement from one of retreat to one of advance, that is, by imagining these elements around the base as growing out from sculptures, the works take on a more phantasmagoric character. In 1951, neuroscientist Macdonald Critchley published findings related to reported visuo-psychic symptoms, in patients with cerebral disease, he referred to as “visual perseveration.” (Critchley, 267) He separated the phenomena into two types: visual perseveration in time, and visual perseveration in space. The first he named *paliopsia*, and described it as the “reoccurrence of visual perceptions after the stimulus-object has been removed.” (267) The latter he called *illusory visual spread*, and it is described as “an illusory extension of the visual perception over an area greater than that which the stimulus-object would be expected to excite.” (267) The following excerpt from the case study of a 47-year-old woman provides a sense of the symptoms of the second type:

If she looked at anyone wearing a striped or chequered garment, the pattern would seem to extend over the person's face. The pattern of cretonne curtains would often seem to extend along the adjacent wall. When she came to the hospital by taxi, the iron railings enclosing the garden of Queen Square appeared to extend across the road and the taxi seemed to be charging, through this barrier. (273)

Reading this phenomenon against the bases of the sculptures of March, 1968, we might see these planar elements not as the retreat of the work into pictorial, but as a suggestion of the pattern projecting outward. They therefore become a creeping contamination of the *Hourloupe* into the space of the viewer, or alternately, the suggestion of a projected mental construction by the viewer, based on the information provided in the work.

Preceding the above works by a few weeks is Dubuffet's *Table holding things to be done, objects, and projects*, 11 January 1968. This work bears the full *Hourloupe* motif of red, blue, and black lines, solids and hatches. The degree of abstraction in the

objects displayed is more acute in this work, and as such their function as placeholders, rather than as representations, is amplified. Again, the surface treatment is dispersed across all elements and no pictorial, textural, or material logic distinguishes figure from ground, object from site. The result is that the surfaces become evasive, receding and advancing in the optical play of shallow depth. This shimmering of the surface lends an immateriality to the objects imparting to them a ghostlike quality.



Fig. 20. Jean Dubuffet, *Table holding things to be done, objects, and projects*, 11 January 1968.

Among the things said to be supported by the January table are the materially ambiguous “instances”; translated from the French as “things to be done,” it is a term designating one’s affairs, or *stuff* in a non-specific and abstract sense. The inclusion of a materially unspecified object aligns itself with Dubuffet’s desire that the *Hourloupe*

principle could extend into abstractions, that it be able to permeate not only objects and their supports but also the immaterial world of ideas. In a letter to his dealer, Arnold Glimcher, dated September 15, 1969, Dubuffet makes explicit reference to this function, describing his *Hourloupe* technique as:

An uninterrupted and resolutely uniform meandering script, (unifying all planes to the frontal plane, paying no heed to the particular space of the object described, neither its dimensions, nor its distance nor closeness) thereby abolishing all particularities, all categories (by which I mean the usual classifications adopted by our reflexive mind which makes distinctions between one notion and another: between the notion of *chair* for example and that of *tree*, that of *human figure*, *cloud*, *ground*, *landscape*, or *anything else*) so that this consistently uniform script indifferently applied to all things (and it should be emphasized, not only visible objects but also invisible inventions of our thoughts, imagination or fantasy; mixed together without discrimination) will reduce them all to the lowest common denominator and reconstitute a continuous undifferentiated universe: it will thereby dissolve the categories by which our mind habitually employs to decipher (better to say cipher) the facts and spectacles of the world. Herewith the circulation of the mind from one object to another, from one category to another will be liberated and its mobility greatly increased. (Rowell, 26. Emphasis in original)

One can imagine a literalized effect of the *Hourloupe* upon the mind, with visions of animated patterns enveloping one's "thoughts, imagination or fantasy." In this scenario the mind becomes clouded by the afterimage of Dubuffet's tangles, persisting like a catchy tune. Patterns are projected inward and outward, like the various forms of tessellated, or dendritic hallucinations associated with neurological disorders, psychosis, or drug use. (Blom 208) An effect is implied in Dubuffet's writing about the work that conjures the dissolution of boundaries between things in the physical work that might affectively produce a corresponding dissolution in the thoughts of the beholder.

Later in the letter to Arnold Glimcher, Dubuffet writes, “my operation is to erase all categories and regress toward an undifferentiated continuum.” (Rowell 26) It is notable, as we have seen, that Dubuffet’s effort is to extend beyond the beholder and his/her environment, beyond the work in its environment, and to spread, somewhat contagiously, into all things. Of particular interest is the characterizing of the *Hourloupe* motif as an “operation,” something that is *applied*. Among the various ways he characterizes the *Hourloupe* motif, Andreas Franzke refers to it as a “principle” (159), a “strategy” (164) and a “treatment” (164), all which suggest an active process. In its effort to “erase all categories” the operation fits the verb forms of *monster* proposed in this paper’s introduction. First, it monsters itself into being, and then it monsters all that it comes into contact with.

An important monstrous particularity should be noted here: many of the *Hourloupe* sculptures, including the tables of 1968, are not original objects but casts. The sculptures were first carved in polystyrene foam then transferred into more durable polyurethane for the final product. The polystyrene originals are lost in the process, in a way similar to lost wax bronzing, with the important distinction that the painted marks on the originals are retained, “In this process, the transfer is not, properly speaking, a copy or reproduction, because its colors are not copied but are those of the original grafted onto a more resistant support.” (Franzke 183) With a few exceptions, only one transfer was made for each work and the final casts bear Dubuffet’s original marks. Something is taken from the original in the process of destroying it, much in the way the invaders in *Body Snatchers*, absorb the minds of their victims once their duplication is complete.

Dubuffet's polyurethane casts duplicate and supplant their polystyrene hosts, stealing their blue and red neurovascular script.

Through this literal doubling of the form as a cast, we are reminded of the conceptual doubling of sculptural objects explored in previous chapters. The work doubles itself as object and representation, undermining the perception of its stability as an object through the optical play of an interference pattern. Dubuffet himself observes that these works "are endowed with an equivocal status, which produces a wavering in the mind between the function of material objects and that of immaterial figurations of objects." (Rowell 27) Importantly, this wavering is applicable to the featured object, that which is ostensibly on display, as much as it is to the ground upon which it is situated. While there is a formal distinction that can be made between what constitutes the raised planar surface of the "table" and the objects it supports, there is no discerning between those elements with respect to their absorption into the *Hourloupe* process. The table is a doppelganger as much as the bodies it supports.

The *Hourloupe* principle would intensify in the early 1970s with its application to theatrical performance. For a 1972 performance called *Coucou Bazar: Bal de l'Hourloupe*, billed as an "animated painting", Dubuffet constructed elaborate sets, props (which he referred to as *Praticables*), and costumes, all treated in the Hourloup motif. He describes his motivation in the programme accompanying the performance, "The overall concept of the spectacle is based on a feeling for the uninterrupted continuity of all objects in the visible world and in particular, the continuity and lack of differentiation between what are usually regarded as beings or objects and what a reconsidered sites and grounds for these objects." (Dubuffet 1972, 3) Everything was put into motion;

background panels and the *Praticables* were mechanically animated so as to dissolve the space between them and the costumed figures. What is posited as the premise for some of his simplest table pieces – the collapsing of figure and ground – is extended into a time-based animated tableau.

Dubuffet's effort simply directed itself towards making apparent the possibility that "These grounds, ostensibly undifferentiated, swarm with aspirations to being, [like] embryos and burgeonings." (1972, 3) Something here is reminiscent of Brancusi's concept of the living pedestal that gives life to the work, but rather than a generative vertical movement from base to product, what is implied is a field distinguished by varying densities and movements. This field includes the work, its site and the beholder. It therefore seems natural that the *Hourloupe* project would culminate in large-scale architectural environments where the viewer moves through the work, sharing the space with multiple viewing subjects.



Fig. 21. Jean Dubuffet, *Villa and Cloiserie Falbala*, 1971-1973

In the *Villa and Cloiserie Falbala*, 1971-1973, the massive concrete and resin construction inverts the dynamic of beholder and beheld; the viewer becomes the body on the monstrous site. (fig. 21) Reapplying Michael Fried's analysis of the theatricality of Minimalism, we see here the body *theatricalized* and put *endlessly on stage*. One could even say, as Fried did, that the body is made *uncanny*, (42) as the *Hourloupe* permeates the consciousness of the viewer to point of disorientation. What is not guaranteed with the *Villa and Cloiserie Falbala* is that the "monstrous condition" deadens the body's expressiveness. (ibid) Rather, it offers the possibility of a heightened level of engagement, as the participant is brought into the work and given the opportunity to perform within it in a state of pure expressivity.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The model I proposed at the beginning of this study offered a scene from the 1931 Frankenstein film to be used in developing a tool for examining various modern and contemporary sculptural practices. The scene depicts the authored creation and display of a monster upon a specialized form of table, and what I specifically proposed is that such a model might usefully correspond to the dynamic relationship between sculpture and the furniture associated with its production and presentation. The monster was shown to be a hybrid, having been constructed from unrelated fragments, each bearing their own histories and envelopments of meaning. It was also proposed that the monster was a double, an artificial creation that would take the name of its creator and then supplant that subject. The sculptural case studies I provided in support of my proposition consisted of works that are characterized by markedly distinct material and conceptual concerns, but each example can still be framed around the basic premise of a monstrous body's situation in relation to a table form.

There is in the interaction of the constitutive parts of this model a character of vertical dynamism, as each element performs its function upon the other. This form of dynamism hinges on the etymology, borrowed from Jacques Derrida, which demonstrates that “monster” and “demonstrate” share a root in *monstrare* – to show, or reveal. So on

the one hand, there is a force originating in the table that acts upon the monster, demonstrating the monstrous condition, and acting as a vehicle of meaning for the viewer. On the other hand, there is a corresponding force whereby the monster acts upon the table, spreading its monstrosity into it and beyond. It is important that these forces not be understood as being mutually exclusive, but are rather seen as two simultaneous conditions of a given work. Now, by way of a conclusion to this study, I want to devote some further space to engaging the dynamics of the forces with which I have thus far been preoccupied.

In my discussion of Rachel Harrison's *Centerpiece*, I briefly discussed Malcolm Baker's study of Eighteenth-century sculptors such as Roubiliac, who manipulated the functions of representation and non-representation through complex uses of the pedestal. While Baker makes no mention of monstrosity, there are a number of points where the monstrous condition as proposed here intersects with his thinking. Particularly relevant are the nuances I propose that the complex deployments of the pedestal serve to reveal, or demonstrate, the unique conditions of sculpture.

Baker makes reference to a quotation from Christopher Norris regarding the frame in painting as a "marker of limits." (62) In doing so, Baker establishes an analogy between the liminal role of the frame and the position of the pedestal with respect to sculpture: "demarcating the border between represented space and the viewer's space." (62) This marker of limits, it is shown, is ruptured through the strategies of the artists he discusses (such as Roubiliac, whose figures reach beyond the edges of the pedestal, and who utilized the motif of the sculpture within a sculpture). If the monster can be defined,

in its various morphologies, as the destroyer of limits, we might then readily see the monstrous character within the condition Baker is describing.

Part of Baker's analysis reveals that, given the mimetic function of figurative sculpture and its ability to produce an uncanny likeness in a space continuous with the viewer, the manipulated pedestal functions as something of a *wink*, signaling a degree of self-awareness to the viewer. He thus proposes that the play of representation in Roubilac's work operates on the assumption that the viewer is familiar with the conventions of the monument; a familiarity necessary for the play of forms and conventions to be recognized, "And with this consciousness on the part of the viewer or reader went an acknowledgement of the sculpture's interest not only as an image that functioned socially or politically in a public space but also as an autonomous aesthetic object." (69) Looking at one Roubilac example, Baker remarks that the pedestal, "seems to be saying 'despite all this illusionistic mastery, this really is just a sculpture.'" (68) The pedestal, Baker argues, becomes "thematized" in the work he addresses, "allowing it to alert the spectator to the fictive nature of the sculpture." (69) This alerting function paradoxically draws attention to, but undermines, the work's central conceit – that it is both a representation and a thing in the world.

In sculpture's theatrical doubling of the viewer in real space, and its ambiguous relationship to representation, it acquires a degree of autonomy not normally afforded regular objects. Compounded with the apparent self-awareness of the displayed object as it engages in a process of alerting itself to the viewer, this autonomy appears decidedly monstrous. The critic Jerry McGrath observes this function within contemporary sculpture, "In general terms, the sculptural object aims to go beyond the primacy of sight

in its engagement of the sense(s). In this ambition, it breaks out into the world and, at the same time, multiplies the number of places it is disjunctive from that continuum.” (3) A sculpture that presents itself as monstrous through the device of a pedestal, which is itself monstrous, not only performs its monstrosity, it *demonstrates* that monstrosity to the viewer. The device of self-referentiality opens up the possibility to viewer, that the sculpture is indeed watching, it is looking back.

Rosalind Krauss marks Rodin’s *Gates of Hell* (1880-1917) and his monument to *Balzac* (1897), as ushering in modernist sculpture. Particularly, she writes that, as failed commissions circulating in multiples to various locations, they signal the monument’s, “negative condition – a kind of sitelessness, or homelessness, an absolute loss of place.” (Krauss 1979, 34) She goes on to provide this evocative image, “The sculpture reaches downward to absorb the pedestal into itself and away from actual place; and through the representation of its own materials or the process of its construction, the sculpture depicts its own autonomy.” (1979, 34) As an agent no longer bound by the role as marker of site, modernist sculpture, and most sculptural production since, takes up its site and becomes nomadic. The monster at large is fundamentally evasive – “the monster always escapes” (Cohen 4)– as it cannot be contained by conventional or fixed mechanisms for the construction of meaning.

In Mike Kelley’s *Gussied Up*, the vice functions much like the female figure in Roubiliac’s *Monument to Sir Peter Warren*, which ruptures both the space of representation and the space of the viewer. If the pedestal functions as a ‘marker of limits’, then the vice, which rests in the conceptual space between the sculpture and the pedestal, opens up the possibility of a breach in the borders that separate ostensibly

understood categories. But this breach can be more than an intellectual exercise, or an investigation into meaning. This is the case for someone like Dubuffet, who sought in his *Hourloupe* cycle the possibility of a further dissolution of distinction that would reach into the psyche and question the separation of the self from the space one occupies. Here the monster is more than an autonomous agent: it is a permeating force, a condition which has the power to spread through all things, producing further monstrosity.

In *Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia*, Roger Caillois applies the phenomenon of insect mimicry and camouflage to the pathological loss of distinction between the space one occupies and a coherent sense of self. In a pseudo-scientific and metaphoric set of operations, he connects the “depersonalization by assimilation to space” as expressed by some schizophrenics to “what mimicry achieves morphologically in certain animal species.” (30) A subjective loss of distinction of the self in space and the objective appearance of the same are, of course, two distinct phenomena operating from opposite perspectives. Nonetheless, Caillois’ curious proposal provides some useful tools for understanding the affective potential of work such as Dubuffet’s *Hourloupe* cycle.

Caillois opens his study by stating that *distinction* is the most fundamental of problems in the understanding of things, and that “among distinctions, there is assuredly none more clear-cut than that between the organism and its surroundings; at least there is none in which the tangible experience of separation is more immediate.” (16) The collapse of this distinction, it would follow, is surely the most traumatic and unfamiliar of any lived experience. Yet it is an experience that is deeply alluring: a temptation to give oneself over (or is it *into*?) to the depths of one’s surrounding space. Caillois finds that

Flaubert understood this impulse, as reflected in the ecstatic final passages of *The Temptation of St. Anthony*.

In the moments before the dawn, having encountered a host of devils and monsters, St. Anthony's visions culminate in the appearance of tiny vibrating "globular bodies as large as pins' heads, and garnished all round with eyelashes." (Flaubert 169) He cries out:

O bliss! O Bliss! I have seen the birth of life; I have seen the beginning of motion. The blood beats so strongly in my veins that it seems about to burst them. I feel a longing to fly, to swim, to bark, to bellow, to howl. I would like to have wings, a tortoise-shell, a rind, to blow out smoke, to wear a trunk, to twist my body, to spread myself everywhere, to be in everything, to emanate with odours, to grow like plants, to flow like water, to vibrate like sound, to shine like light, to be outlined on every form, to penetrate every atom, to descend to the very depths of matter – to be matter! (169-170)

In this short passage St. Anthony's passion passes quickly through a transformational, yet self-effacing, set of desires. The first is directed towards becoming as an animal, to do as animals do, and to have their voice. Next, to be heterogeneously composed of animal parts like the monsters – sphinx, chimera, and griffin – he had encountered in the previous chapter. Then finally, he longs to be, as Foucault describes it, "reunited to the saintly stupidity of things" (1980, 109) in a total dispersion into matter at the level of the atom.

In *Fantasia of the Library*, Foucault writes that *The Temptation of St. Anthony* is constructed like the bodies of the monsters encountered within it. It has a hybridized structure incorporating heterogeneity within its pages; elaborate reconstructions of text, illustrations, and myth. It is, he writes, "not the product of dreams and rapture, but a monument to meticulous erudition." (1980, 89) The origins of *The Temptation* are in the

library rather than the imagination, and it is woven into the texts preceding it and those that follow it. Foucault describes its position in the library in a way that echoes St. Anthony's revelation, "It may appear as merely another new book to be shelved alongside all the others, but it serves, in actuality, to extend the space that existing books can occupy. It recovers other books; it hides and displays them and, in a single movement, it causes them to glitter and disappear." (1980, 91-92) Here the text is dispersed, without depletion, into those about it. There is an active principle implied in Foucault's language. Once again, like St. Anthony's vision, there is *movement*. The text is not simply positionally related to other texts, or superimposed upon them, but acts upon them.

Sculpture has the unique ability to not only perform intertextually, providing envelopments of meaning awaiting further developing encounters, but also to literalize this permeating force spatially and temporally, producing affective manifestations for the viewer. As discussed earlier, this affective condition can present itself even in the absence of the pedestal, where the gallery itself provides the situating field for the monstrous encounter. Though monsters populate St. Anthony's ecstasy, he desires communion with the "undifferentiated continuum," to reapply Jean Dubuffet's term (Rowell 26). Dubuffet expressed his ambiguous relationship to the attractive and repulsive qualities of the monstrous forces of doubt:

That very particular point (point in the mind I mean) where an equivocation between the imaginary and the real arises, that point between the domain of evocations and that of objects, posing the greatest threat of slipping from one to the other, that point produces in me uneasiness and discomfort but at the same time it exerts a fascination over me to the point of knowing if I fear it or seek it out and solicit it. (Rowell 29)

It is a force that is not bound to limits of interiority and exteriority. Here the monstrous acts as a contagion that threatens a subjective sense of space and the distinctions between things. We fear it, and yet we desire it, as evidenced by the contemporary popularity of vampires, zombies and aliens.

Discursively speaking, the monster embodies alterity and provides the model used to “reveal or make one aware of what normality is.” (Derrida 1995, 385) It presents itself as the inferior term to the human, which is ostensibly whole. Yet to desire the monstrous condition is not to hold it at a critical distance, but to invite it in and play host to it. Holly Lynn Baumgartner and Roger Davis unpack the word “host” to reveal its connections to “hostage” and “hostile,” noting that the word “contains an internal tension in that the host may be the one hospitably acting or the one parasitically acted upon, the one inviting or the one rejecting, an army or an entertainer.” (2) To play host to the monster, to be inhabited by it, is to become monstrous oneself. Derrida phrases it thus:

All experience open to the future is prepared or prepares itself to welcome the monstrous arrivant, to welcome it, that is, to accord hospitality to that which is absolutely foreign or strange, but also, one must add, to try to domesticate it, that is, to make it part of the household and have it assume the habits, to make us assume new habits. This is the movement of culture. (1995, 385)

The domestication of the monstrous happens on the condition that the domesticated is made monstrous in reciprocal adjustments. As such adjustments are compounded in sedimentary accumulation, normalcy is continually redefined.

There is a monstrous quality in much modernist and contemporary sculpture, which takes various morphological forms and operates in a range of aesthetic modes. The most notable of these presents the power of the monster to disrupt the construction of knowledge or meaning-making systems: systems that distinguish one thing from the

next. These qualities (or conditions) are demonstrated in the utilization of display furniture, which acts as a transition and a barrier, a facilitator and a complication. This furniture, which has for an extended period in art history, been operating in a quiet symbiosis with sculpture, having developed along with it over centuries, is itself monstrous. It provides the site and source of the monstrous work, yet it is itself informed (in form) by monstrous forces. It occupies a border region refusing to be pinned into position as being either *of sculpture* or *of the world*. One might even say that such furniture is the spawn of the sculpture monster, and is also its servant offspring. Sculpture's enduring relationship with furniture demonstrates the degree to which the forces of monstrosity are already present and await their unveiling.

PART TWO

DOSSIER OF STUDIO RESEARCH

... (faint text) ...

... (faint text) ...

... (faint text) ...

DESCRIPTION OF STUDIO RESEARCH

My studio-based practice is centered on the encounter and the ensuing complication of two operations: an engagement with sculptural process, and an engagement with the mechanics of display. In its simplest iterations, the work consists of tables, used to produce artifacts of cast paint. Troughs and trays are built onto the surface of the tables into which several gallons of acrylic-latex paint are poured. Once dry the paint casts are peeled to reveal that they have recorded the texture of the bench upon which they have been produced. These benches are then used as the display furniture in the context of an exhibition.

There is in this manoeuvre an ostensible revealing of the narrative of production, as workbench, pedestal, and product are integrated into single form. The sculptures become the sites for their own production. However there is a corruption of the narrative through temporal and spatial recursions. There are artifacts that are immediately recognizable as such, but there is also a legible salvaging of studio materials and an incorporation of waste. The form the work takes is determined by a negotiation with these fragments, in a struggle with the resistance of heterogeneous material to fit and be assembled. The sculptures are constructed, dismantled, and reconstructed, and a fragment may be reapplied dozens of times, leaping between unrelated works, or resurfacing after lying dormant for a period of months or years.

Further to this material manipulation is the fact that full-scale works may serve as maquettes for copies, which bear little or no trace of the material manipulations of the original. Each copy is then available to develop independently, resulting in new

flourishings of form. These formal anomalies, such as asymmetrical bulges, acute angles, and monstrous appendages, move each work along its own trajectory. The results are objects whose narratives of production cannot be read by working backwards. A discursive point of emphasis of the written thesis included here can be usefully applied to my studio work: that buried under *demonstration* is a root shared with *monster*. The process reveals itself, but it reveals itself to be corrupted, or even unknowable.

Included in this dossier are several images of the various iterations of this body of work as it has developed over the past four years. However, it is inappropriate to characterize the monstrous development as an evolutionary progression with each piece giving birth to the next over successive generations. Deleuze and Guattari offer *contagion*, as a template for ongoing outputs, in opposition to a hereditary model. Monsters, they observe, propagate by contagion: "Propagation by epidemic, by contagion, has nothing to do with filiation by heredity, even if the two terms intermingle and require each other. The vampire does not filiate, it infects. The difference is that contagion, epidemic, involves terms that are entirely heterogeneous." (241) Generational filiation is arborescent and mapped by a succession of binaries whereas contagion is rhizomatic and is connected to a process of becoming. Several sculptures are on-the-go at any given time and anything introduced to the work (a colour, a formal trait, or a process) can quickly spread through multiple objects. Parts are removed from some and added to others. The sculptural process is one of contamination. A body of work takes on the character of *pack* rather than a series; the works are structurally distinct, of more than a single species, but all are bearers of the same infections. (Deleuze and Guattari, 242)

If there can be said to be a limit to a body of work, it would be marked by the limit of a contagion, or set of contagions, to move through the pack. The influence of a particular bit of information, say, a certain shade of blue, will run its course and fade from use, while another bit may leap into a later body of work and infect an unrelated set of sculptures. Exhibitions schedules and opportunities cannot always accommodate or anticipate the state of potential completion of a body of work. In the context of an exhibition, the viewer encounters only a temporal cross section of a process of development.

Notes Regarding the Dossier

I have arranged this dossier in reverse-chronological order, beginning with my thesis exhibition at the McIntosh Gallery in 2011, and tracing back to the second half of 2007 when I entered into the PhD program. I have chosen to include images that show multiple iterations of some pieces to illustrate the points I have just made. One can track elements throughout the documentation as they are reapplied over several years.

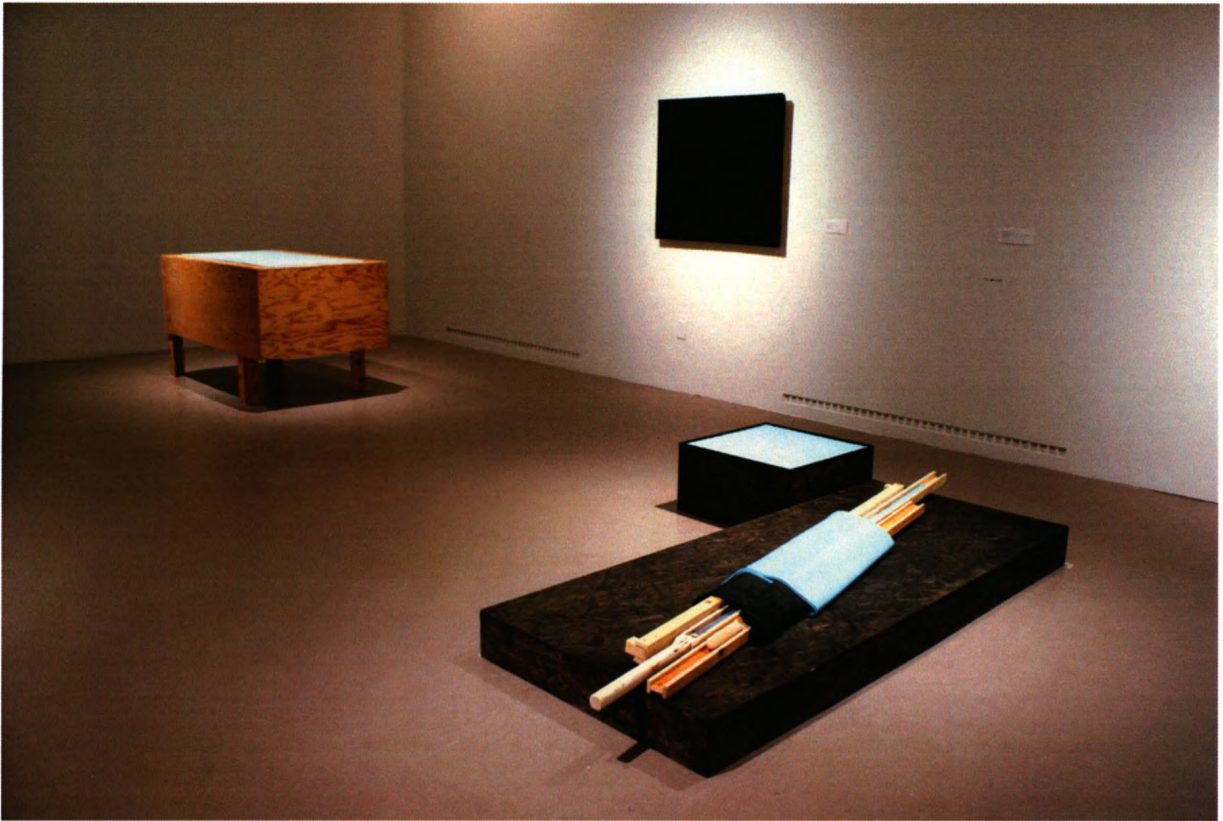
Also included, as an addendum, are images of a series of very small sculptures made as gifts. These objects represent a gathering up of the smallest fragments of my studio production, the entropic byproduct of the larger work. As such they bear the widest cross-temporal sampling of material in the most dense and compact of forms. Made hastily at no cost, they are given away casually to studio visitors, dispersing the enveloped material and content of my studio production across a wide field. Depicted here is a small sampling of hundreds I have made over the past couple of years.



THESIS EXHIBITION

MCINTOSH GALLERY

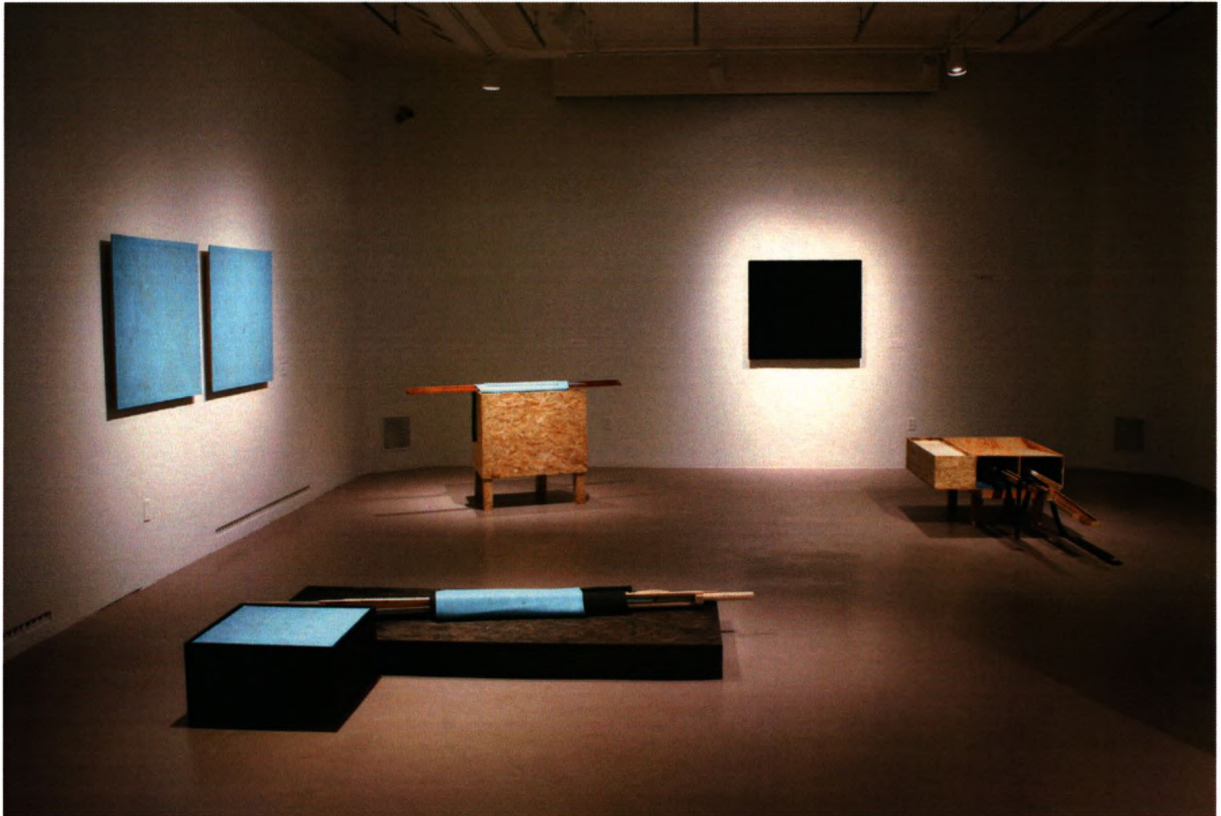
July 15 - August 12, 2011



McIntosh Gallery installation view, July 15 - August 12, 2011.



McIntosh Gallery installation view, July 15 - August 12, 2011.



McIntosh Gallery installation view, July 15 - August 12, 2011.



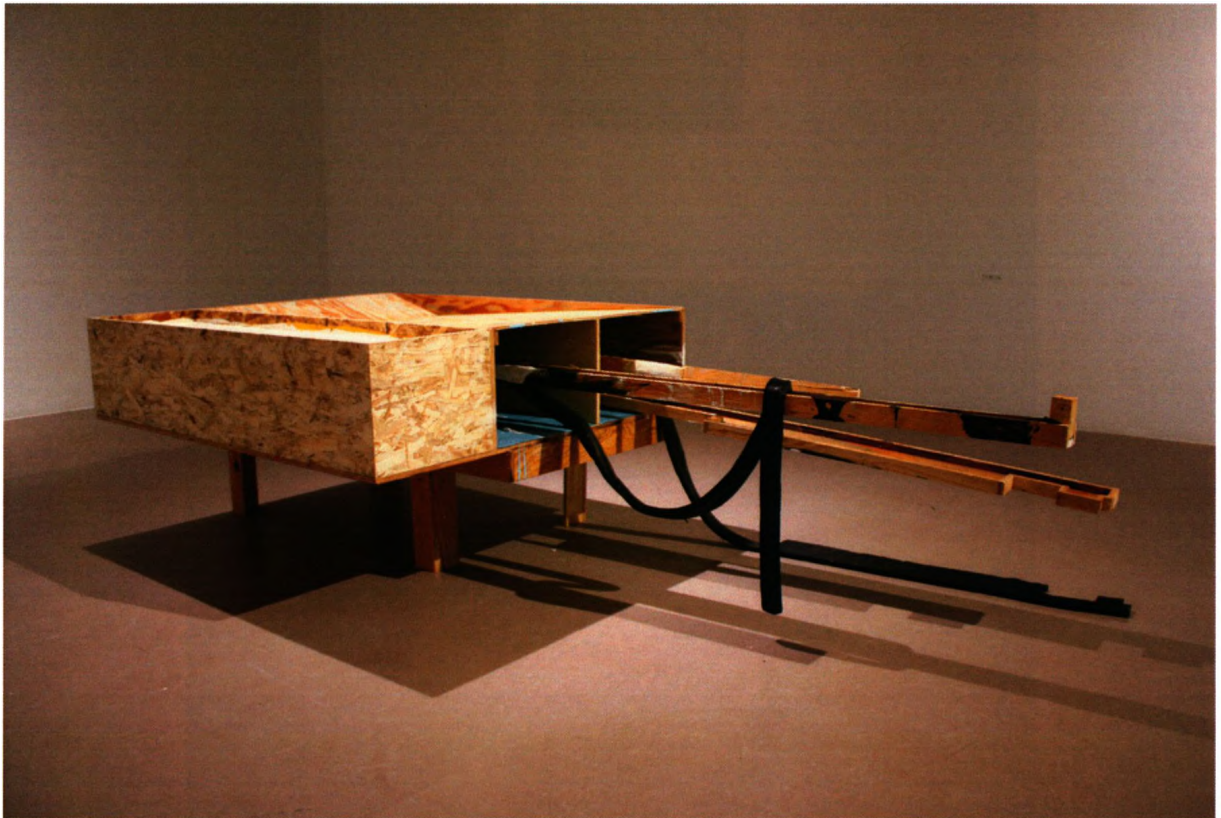
Elevator, 2011. OSB, spruce, canvas reinforced paint, 72" x 40" x 65"



Elevator, 2011. OSB, spruce, canvas reinforced paint, 72" x 40" x 65"



Elevator, 2011. OSB, spruce, canvas reinforced paint, 72" x 40" x 65"



Cthulhu (enfolding elements from *Tongue Trough 1*, *Level Trough*, and *Drooling Bench*, 2011), 2011. OSB, plywood, plaster, paint, 22" x 36" x 82"



Cihulhu (enfolding elements from *Tongue Trough 1*, *Level Trough*, and *Drooling Bench*, 2011), 2011. OSB, plywood, plaster, paint, 22" x 36" x 82"



Cthulhu (enfolding elements from Tongue Trough 1, Level Trough, and Drooling Bench, 2011) (detail), 2011. OSB, plywood, plaster, paint, 22" x 36" x 82"



Cthulhu (enfolding elements from Tongue Trough 1, Level Trough, and Drooling Bench, 2011), 2011.
OSB, plywood, plaster, paint, 22" x 36" x 82"



Castling (enfolding elements from Tongue Trough 1, Beast Bench, and Raccoon Bench), 2011. OSB, pine, paint. 38" x 29" x 72"



Castling (enfolding elements from Tongue Trough 1, Beast Bench, and Raccoon Bench) (detail), 2011. OSB, pine, paint. 38" x 29" x 72"



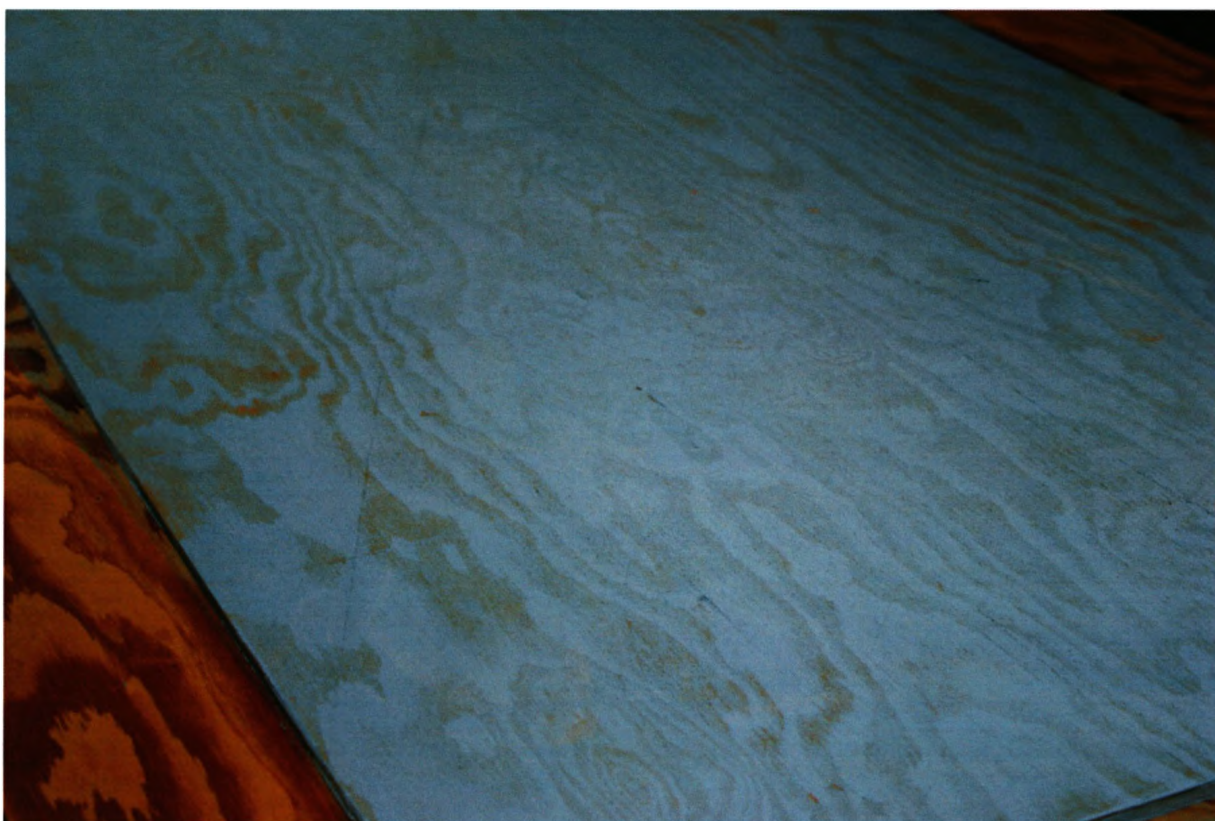
Castling (enfolding elements from Tongue Trough 1, Beast Bench, and Raccoon Bench), 2011. OSB, pine, paint. 38" x 29" x 72"



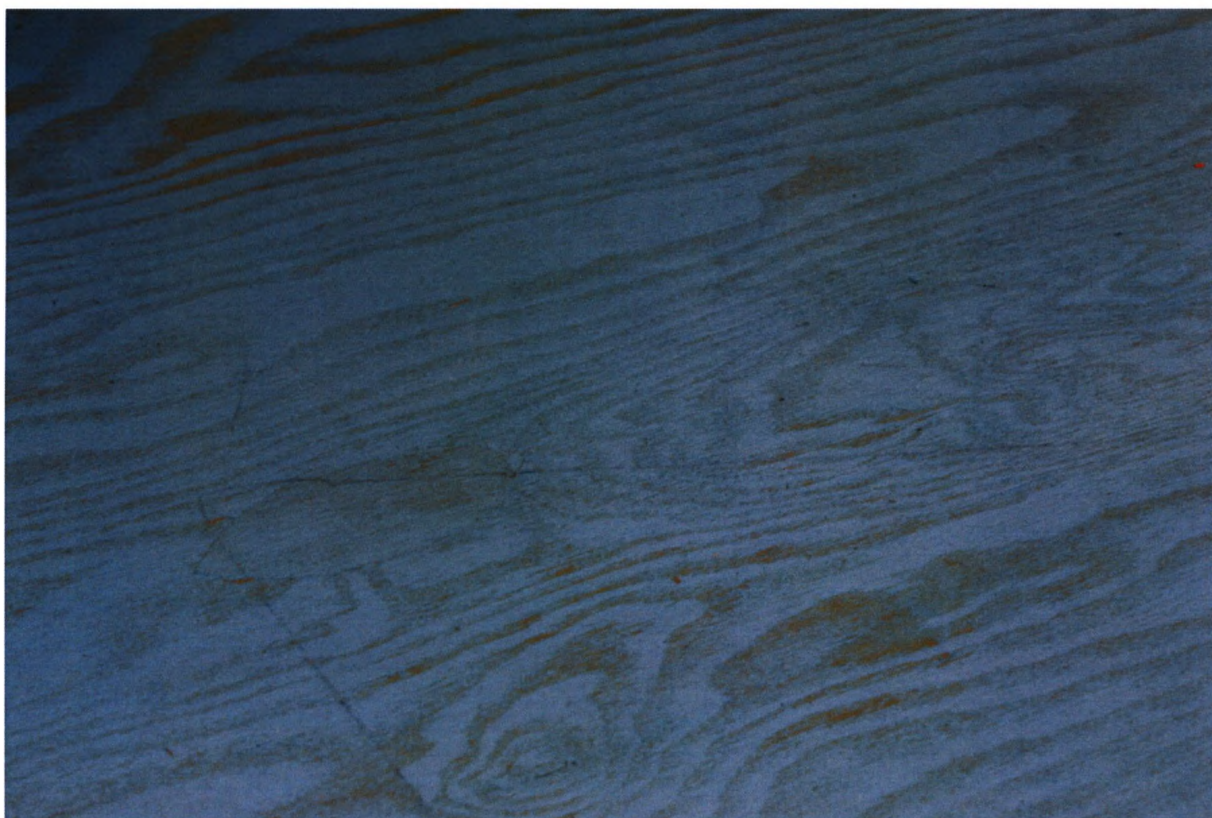
Beast Bench, 2010. Plywood, paint, 36" x 36" x 68"



Beast Bench, 2010. Plywood, paint, 36" x 36" x 68"



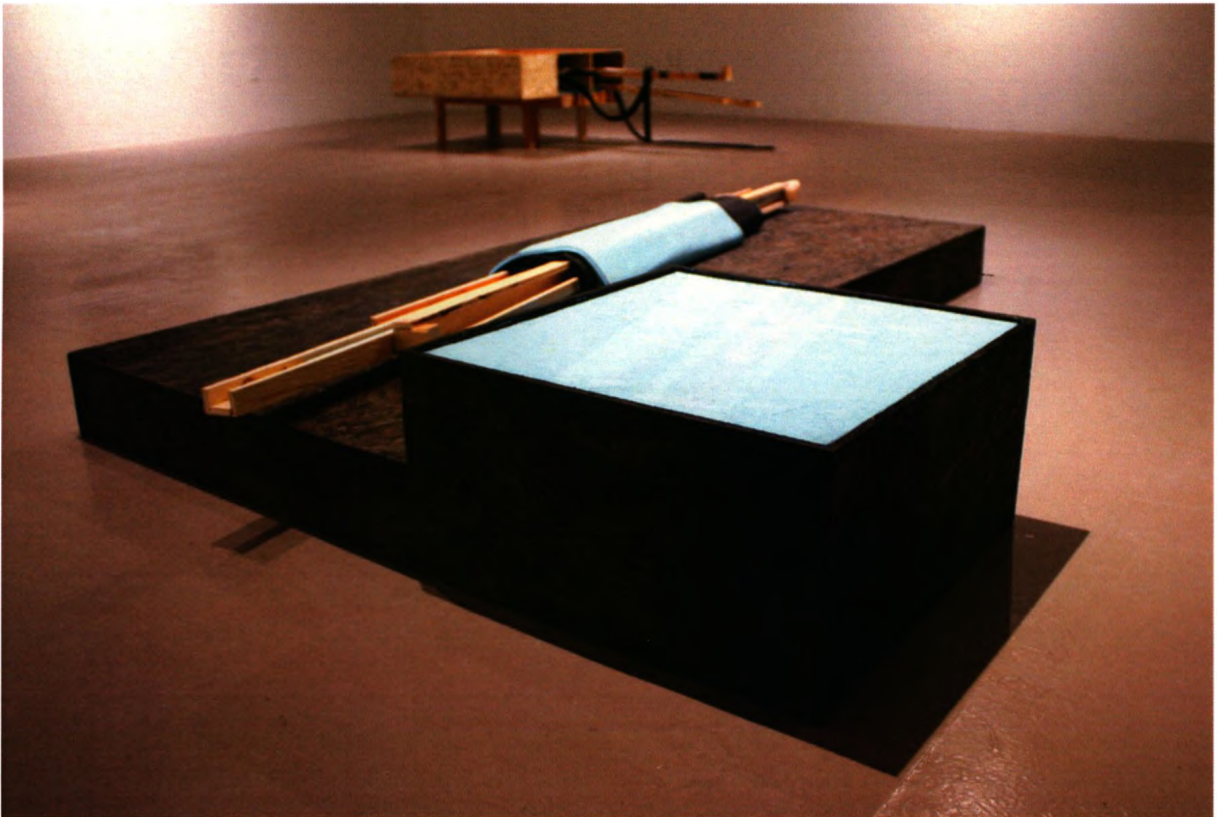
Beast Bench (Detail), 2010. Plywood, paint, 36" x 36" x 68"



Beast Bench (Detail), 2010. Plywood, paint, 36" x 36" x 68"



In foreground : *Tool Slab* (enfolding elements of *Stick*, *Cavity Bench*, *Horror Bench*, *Beast Bench*, and *Tongue Trough 2*), 2011. OSB, plywood, spruce, canvas, paint. 12" x 60" x 84"



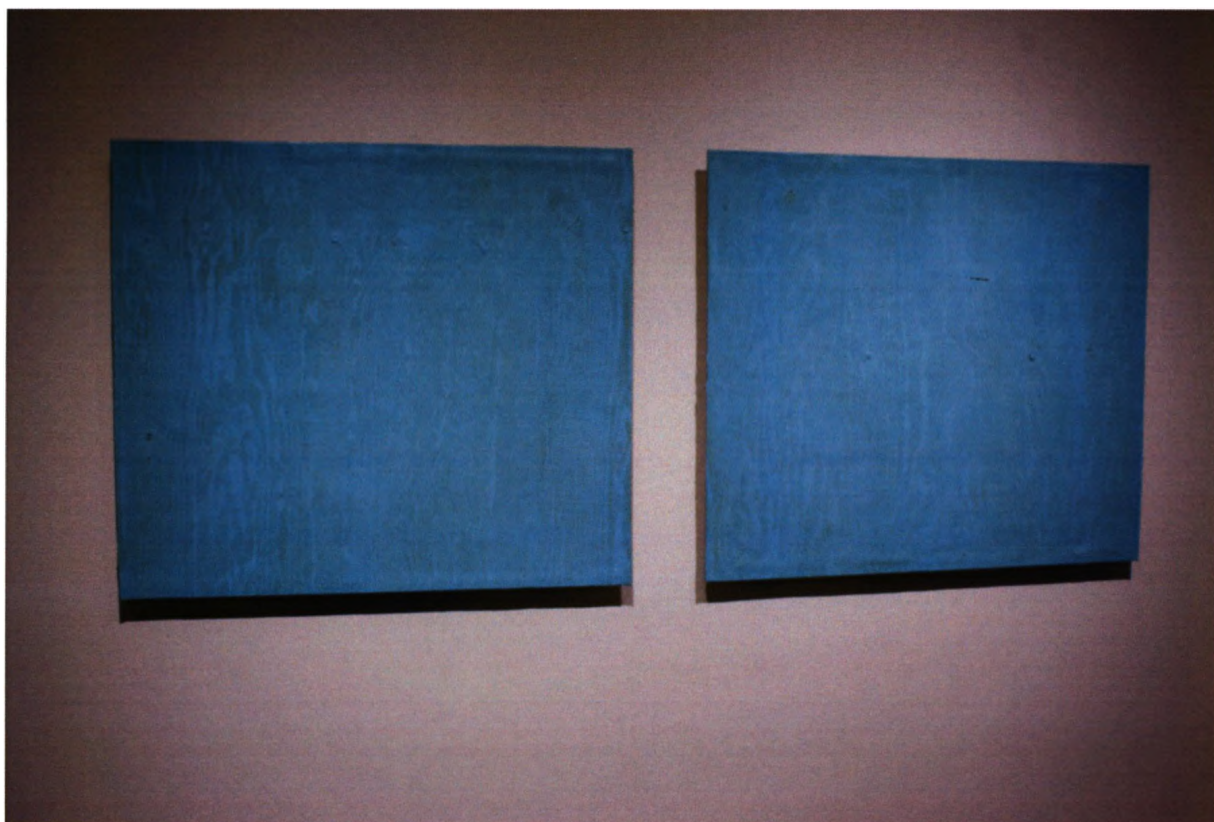
Tool Slab (enfolding elements of Stick, Cavity Bench, Horror Bench, Beast Bench, and Tongue Trough 2), 2011. OSB, plywood, spruce, canvas, paint. 12" x 60" x 84"



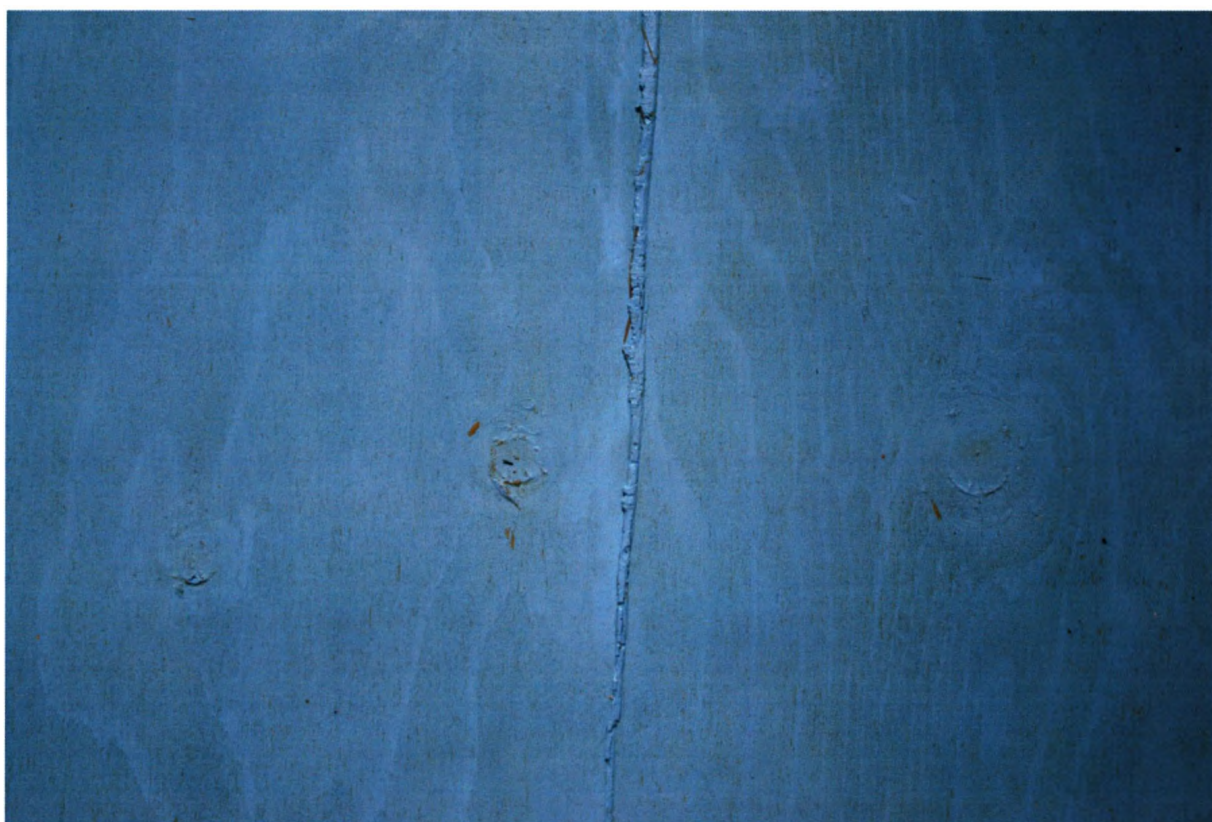
Tool Slab (enfolding elements of Stick, Cavity Bench, Horror Bench, Beast Bench, and Tongue Trough 2)
(detail), 2011. OSB, plywood, spruce, canvas, paint. 12" x 60" x 84"



Tool Slab (enfolding elements of Stick, Cavity Bench, Horror Bench, Beast Bench, and Tongue Trough 2) (detail), 2011. OSB, plywood, spruce, canvas, paint. 12" x 60" x 84"



Blue Apron 1, 2011, and *Blue Apron 2*, 2011 Canvas-reinforced paint mounted on plywood, each 40" x 32"



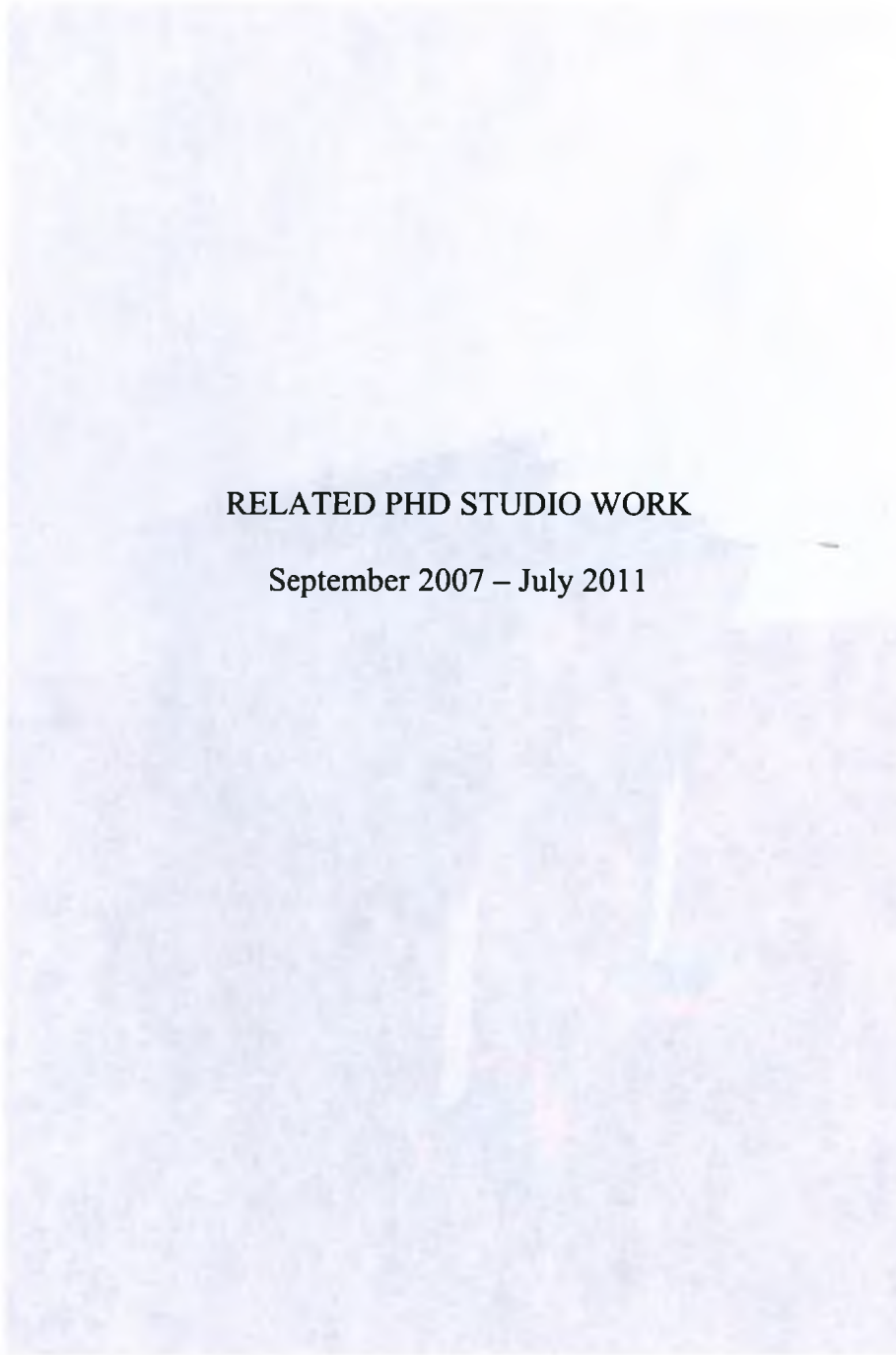
Blue Apron 3 (detail), 2011. Canvas-reinforced paint mounted on plywood, 40" x 32"



Black Apron 1, 2011. Canvas-reinforced paint mounted on plywood, 40" x 32"

RELATED PHD STUDIO WORK

September 2007 – July 2011





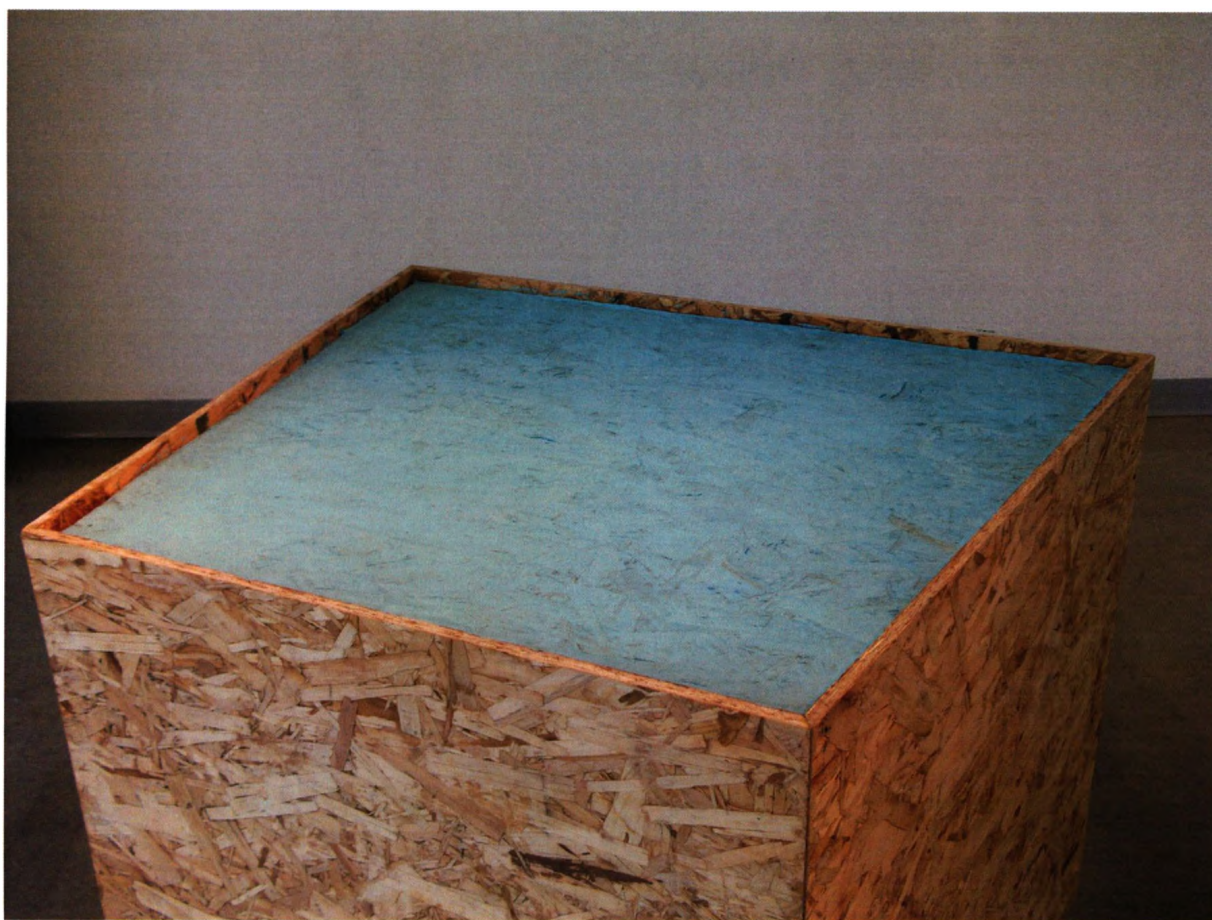
Spill Bench, 2011. Wood, metal, paint, 38" x 29" x 32"



Spill Bench (early state), 2010. Wood, paint, 38" x 29" x 40"



Raccoon Bench, 2011. OSB, paint. 38" x 29" x 56"



Raccoon Bench (detail), 2011. OSB, paint. 38" x 29" x 56"



Left: *Drooling Bench*, 2011. OSB, wood, paint. 22" x 36" x 25"

Right: *Raccoon Bench*, 2011. OSB, paint. 38" x 29" x 56"



Installation view. Left to right:

Beast Bench, 2011. Wood, Paint. 36" x 36" x 68"

Spill Bench (early state), 2010. Wood, paint, 38" x 29" x 40"

Trunk Bench, 2011. Wood, foam, canvas, paint. 27" x 30" x 40"



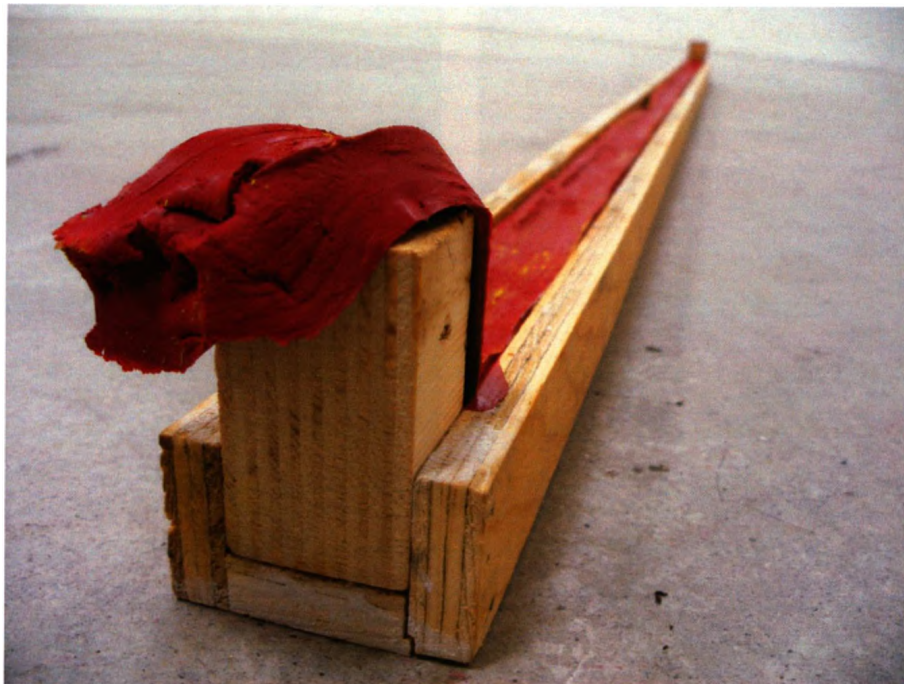
Studio critique, 2010



Top: *Pig Bench*, 2009 Wood, metal, plaster, 16" x 18" x 36"

Center: *Studio Critique*, 2010

Bottom: *Apron Bench*, 2009. Wood, apron. 30" x 30" x 25"



Tongue Trough, 2009. Wood, paint, 72" x 3" x 2.5"

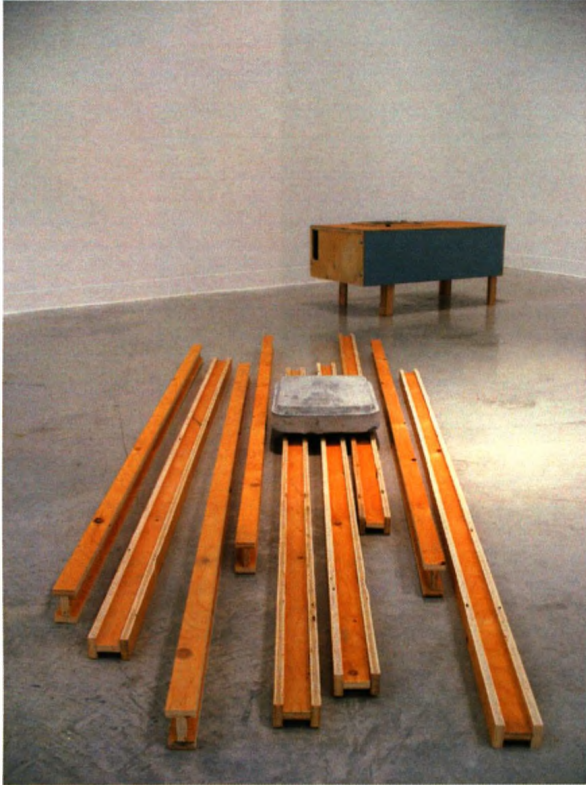
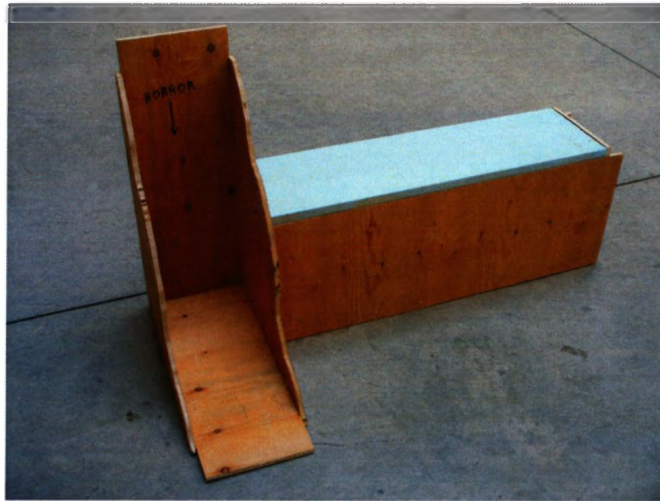


Fig Bench, 2009 Wood, metal, plaster, 16" x 18" x 36" (trusses 72" x 3" x 2.5")



Studio views, 2009



Banquet (two states), 2009. Wood, metal, plaster, 72" x 3" x 2.5"



Child Eater Table II, 2008. Wood, plaster, silicone, metal, vinyl, paint, with binoculars and mask. 45" x 30" x 60"



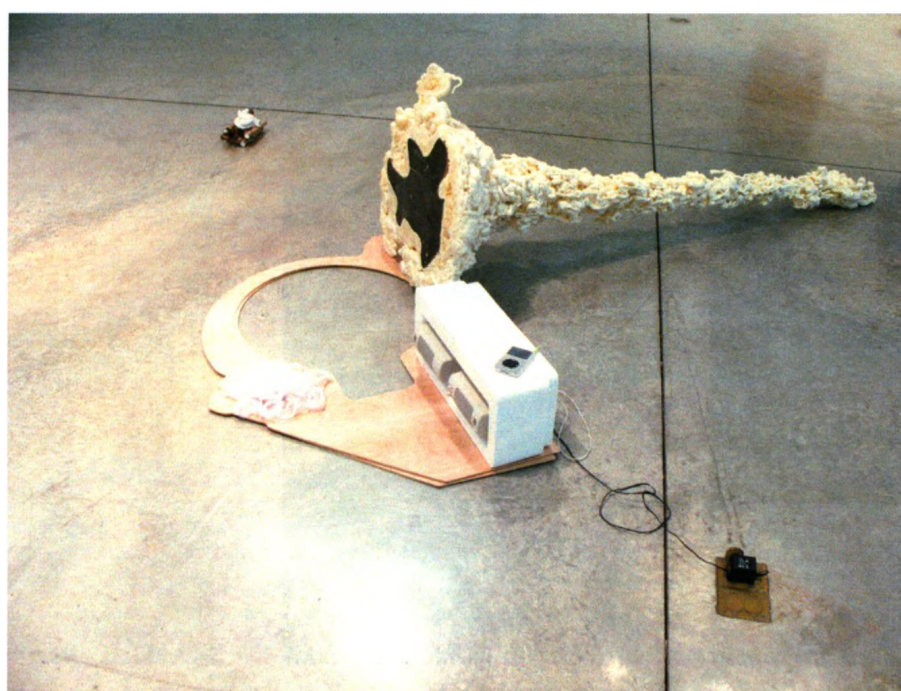
Child Eater Table II (detail)



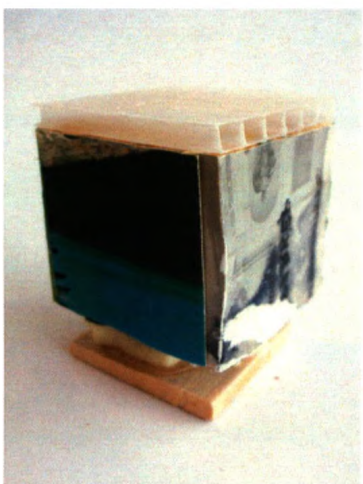
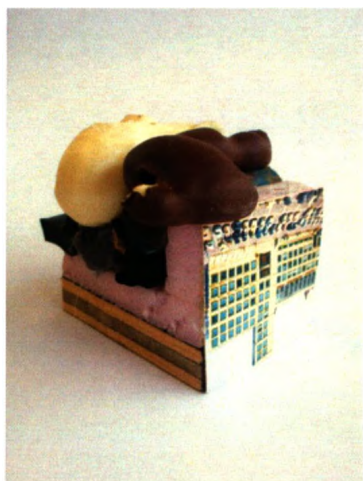
Child Eater Table II (detail)



Child Eater Objects, 2007-2008. Plaster, vinyl, silicone, artificial christmas tree branch, wood, compass and book. Dimensions variable.



Top: *Child Eater Table I*, 2007-2008, Dimensions variable.
 Bottom: *Snot Trunk and Schorgan Music*, 2007-2008. Insulation foam, vampire teeth, wood, audio. Dimensions variable.



Giftworks, 2010-ongoing. Mixed media. Each less than 2" x 2" x 2"

DOSSIER OF PARKER BRANCH PROJECT

PART THREE

DOSSIER OF PARKER BRANCH PROJECT

PARKER BRANCH: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Parker Branch is a collaborative project developed with Anna Madelska, that sits between a curatorial and a studio-based practice. As artists working primarily in sculpture we continue to be informed by material culture and Parker Branch is an extension of our investigation of *things* and their power to make meaning beyond their intended function. Parker Branch is essentially a small museum in a storefront space in London, Ontario, which features a rotating program of exhibitions of found objects and ephemera. Our curatorial emphasis is on objects that slip in and out of conventional value systems and aesthetic modes. An intuitive and associative method of collection and display is favoured over traditional taxonomies of difference. Exhibitions may centre on relatively homogeneous collections, thematic constellations of interconnected ideas, or humorous and shocking incongruities.

The primary ethos of the project has been to forgo the conventional criteria for determining value, relevance and historicity. Much of the material is salvaged from thrift stores and flea markets; though the patina of nostalgia is not the desired quality sought in the collection process, nor is it our intention to recoup or revalue otherwise overlooked things. Our primary interest is in the power of objects to produce meaning through their proximity with other things, which may not have followed similar narratives of origin. So, for example, the theme of palimpsests as DIY production emerged in a collection of defaced grade school textbooks, with their additions of juvenile humour and amateurish illustrations. They were contrasted with a devoted

scholar's copy of *Finnegans Wake* annotated with years of meticulously researched marginalia. In subsequent exhibitions, the collections have become increasingly heterogeneous. The heterogeneity of the objects in a given exhibition is matched by a constellation of ideas rather than a particular focused issue or problematic. The subtitle of *No. 3: Ray and Carl*, November 2008, was "meiosis, symmetry, palindromes, fission, doubles," and featured, among other things, a scuffed two-chambered thermos, two conjoined potatoes and an lp playing hotel lounge piano duets.

Increasingly we have been including artworks to further complicate the dynamic of the exhibitions. These artworks have generally have had a found-object basis and there has been some productive confusion as to which items in a given exhibition are authored and which are found. There is through this process a leveling of value and a reorientation of the diagrams of meaning that are possible for a given object. The intimacy of the space (it is under 200 square feet) affords a kind of heightened audience engagement where the results of particular tetherings and collisions of objects are worked through during opening receptions. The project provides a contextual ground for the play of images and things, and the production of ideas and experiences beyond what may be anticipated or familiar.

Project History

As of August, 2011, we have mounted 15 exhibitions. Four of these took place in our former space at 242 Wellington St. between December 2007 and November 2008. After a 16-month hiatus we reopened in a storefront on Stanley St. and have had 11 exhibitions since April 2010. All of the exhibitions were produced by Parker

Branch, with the exception of a guest project curated by Kevin Rogers. We also have worked with Taylor McKimens and Nicole Vogelzang, and Todd Tremeer, who have each contributed objects from their personal collections.

While the mandate of the project is to focus primarily on non-art objects, exhibitions have included work by the following artists: Josef Albers, Kim Adams, Michelle Allard, Robyn Collier, Liza Eurich, Gautam Garoo, Claire Greenshaw, Joel Herman, Jen Hutton, Nestor Kruger, Evelyn Lambart, Craig Leonard, Derek Liddington, Michelle McGeean, Norman McLaren, Ella Dawn McGeough, Christine Negus, and David Poolman.

The summer of 2010 saw the launch of Parker Branch Press with *OLM* a small bookwork printed in an edition of 200 copies, currently available through the gallery and at Art Metropole in Toronto. Future projects include: a print project for *Syphon*, (Modern Fuel, Kingston); a project for *Palimpsest* (Montreal); as well a series of letterpress broadsides beginning in 2011.

Exhibitions

No. 1: Shadow Pictures, December 2007

An exhibition featuring over two hundred found snapshots from the Parker Branch collection. Each image features a relationship between the photographed subject and the shadow of the photographer.

No. 2: Red Krayola Portal (feat. Craig Leonard), February 2008

A project guest-curated by Craig Leonard that maps networks and lines of movement among members of the rock and roll underground. Using Mayo Thompson's experimental rock outfit The Red Krayola, as a point of departure, Craig Leonard's RED KRAYOLA PORTAL, charts the complex networks and movements of individuals and bands in a 6' x 10' drawing and related research. The result functions as a

subcultural map that includes such far-flung groups as Big Black, The Anti Group and Throbbing Gristle. The exhibition also includes two exchange projects on the theme of music: Leonard's TIN SPEAKER<->1984 and a mixed-tape trade by Halifax's TASK FORCE (aka Selwyn Sharples).

No. 3: Ray and Carl (with work by David Poolman), November 2008

Meiosis, symmetry, palindromes, fission, doubles. Objects from the Parker Branch collection and work by David Poolman.

No. 4: No Don't Stab Me Please, November 2008

Academic and juvenile marginalia, scrapbooks, ephemera and found audio-visual material from the collections of Parker Branch, and Taylor McKimens.

No. 5: Solid Rock (including work by Michelle Allard), April 2010

Objects from the Parker Branch collection that orbit themes of mountains, caves, and cavities. Also featuring work by Michelle Allard.

No. 6: and the forces which mold them, May 2010

A Parker Branch exhibition featuring graphic work in print and film: album design by Josef Albers for Command Records; jacket design by J. Lloyd Dixon for Dover paperbacks; and experimental animation by Norman McLaren and Evelyn Lambart for the National Film Board of Canada. Also featuring a hand-drawn flipbook by Michelle McGeean, available in a limited edition of five.

No. 7: Y-Shaped Stick, June 2010

An exhibition of objects from the Parker Branch collection including a selection of divining rods courtesy of Scott McClintock. Based in Springfield Ontario, and a professional well driller by trade, McClintock has been dowsing for the family business since high school.

No. 8: Be Prepared, July 2010

An exhibition of objects from the Parker Branch collection that orbits themes of internationality and ambassadorship. Objects include a homemade traveling display for a collection of national

flags and a vintage quadruple amputee Action Man doll with custom wooden prosthetics.

No. 9: If Destroyed we should have to recreate from physical need,
September 2010

An exhibition guest curated by Kevin Rodgers, featuring work by Kim Adams, Robin Collyer, Claire Greenshaw, Joel Herman, Jen Hutton and Nestor Kruger.

"Narrow and unassuming is 99 1/2 Stanley Street. For this space I had a direct curatorial premise: to present simultaneously 1) the subtraction and division of matter and 2) the accumulation of meaning. I asked six artists to participate. To each of their works I brought the question of how interruption and division could compliment their project. "Do you want to feel me" (sans question mark) one work asks; another presents the opposite: "I will destroy ALL". The store front window reflects the street and trees and passersby. Two bicycles are locked up nearby. A ribbon ceremony has taken place. Words have a life, so has merchandise, so has work, and in each sensibility meanings assemble." - Kevin Rodgers

No. 10: Fun-Wig, October 2010

Objects from the Parker Branch collection with works by Christine Negus and Derek Liddington.

No. 11: Blue Raspberry Rock Crystal Candy, November 2010

Rocks from the collection of Nicole Vogelzang & Andrea Pinheiro, artwork by Ella McGeough, and related objects from the Parker Branch collection.

No. 12: and cheerleaders, December 2010

Stacking is vertical ascension without flight, by lifting the surface of the ground. Bricks and mortar give form to the most fragmented – humbly participating in the cycles of mountains and dust. Masonry, of both the practical and speculative sorts, shares in Kurt Schwitters' deceptively simple premise that 'stone upon stone is building'. Objects from the Parker Branch collection with work by Liza Eurich and Gautam Garoo.

No. 13: Muscle Tops, February 2011

Objects from the Parker Branch collection including a selection of hand-painted signs by Wayne Reuben for the Honest Ed's store, and the work of St. Thomas-based letterer Al Jewell on the storefront window.

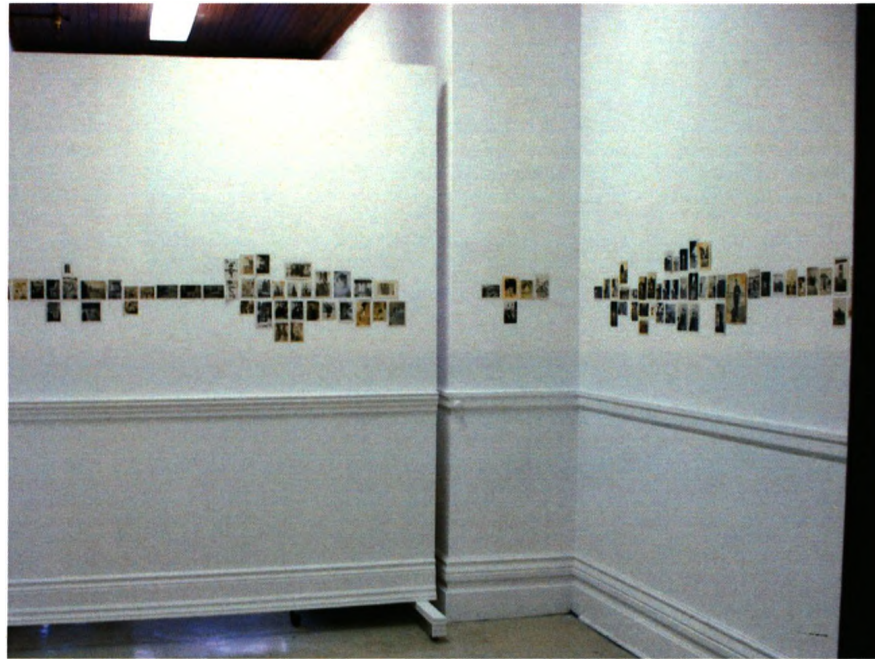
No. 14: Laurentian, Sierra, The Rushmore, April 2011

Objects collected for Parker Branch: Aluminum frame backpacks in primary colours; a production still from Mike Nichols' *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*; and a taxidermy coyote head courtesy of Kyle Morris.

No. 15 Tired Pigeons Tumble, July 2011

In 1931, the American typographer Frederic W. Goudy wrote and designed a broadside, which proclaimed in its final line, "I am the leaden army that conquers the world: I AM TYPE!"

Objects from the Parker Branch collection featuring idiosyncratic phrases drawn from type specimen books, paired with a collection of lead soldiers courtesy of Todd Tremeer.



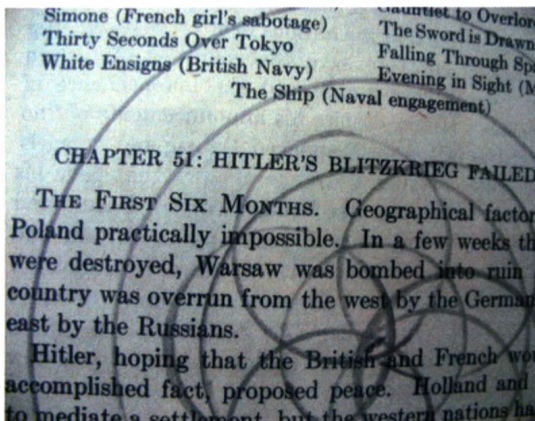
No. 1: Shadow Pictures, December 2007



No. 2. Red Krayola Portal, February 2008



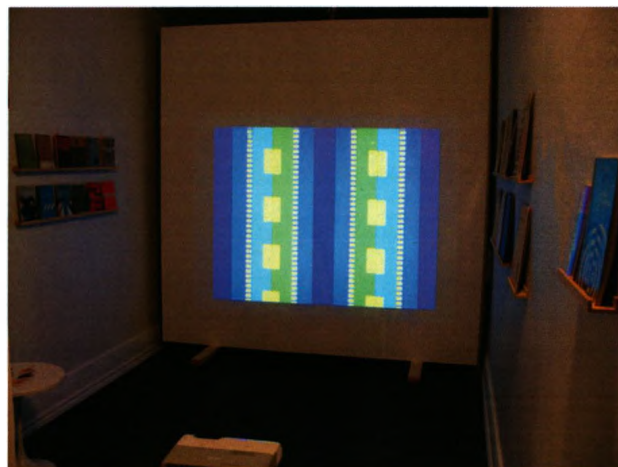
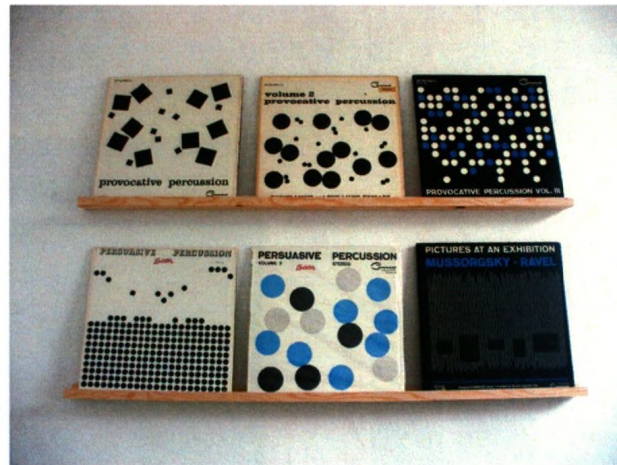
No. 3. Ray and Carl, November 2008



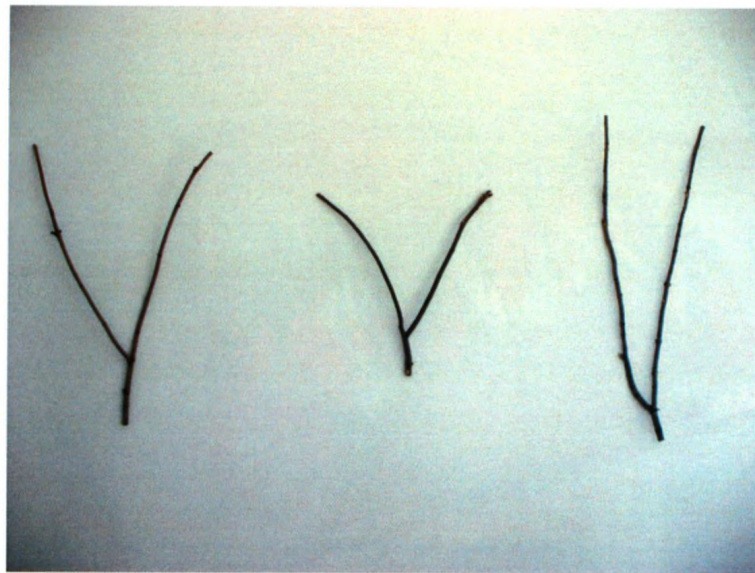
No. 4. No Don't Stab Me Please, November 2008



No. 5. Solid Rock, April 2010



No. 6. and the force which moulded them, May 2010



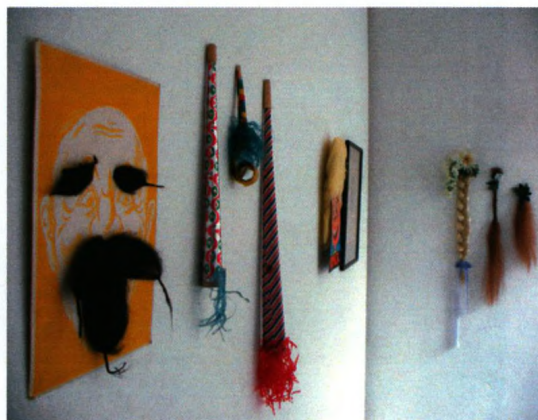
No. 7. Y-Shaped Stick, June 2010



No. 8. Be Prepared, July 2010



No. 9. If Destroyed We Should Have to Recreate from Physical Need, September 2010



No. 10. Fun Wig, October 2010



No. 11. Blue Raspberry Rock Crystal Candy, November 2010



No. 12. *And Cheerleaders*, December 2010



No. 13. Muscle Tops, February 2011



No. 14. *Laurentian*, *Sierra*, *The Rushmore*, April 2011



No. 15. Tired Pigeons Tumble, July 2011

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