

5-7-2016

# Incongruent Ilk

Derek W. Faust  
*Georgia State University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/art\\_design\\_theses](https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/art_design_theses)

---

## Recommended Citation

Faust, Derek W., "Incongruent Ilk." Thesis, Georgia State University, 2016.  
[https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/art\\_design\\_theses/200](https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/art_design_theses/200)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Art and Design Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@gsu.edu](mailto:scholarworks@gsu.edu).

# INCONGRUENT ILK

by

DEREK FAUST

Under the Direction of Ruth Stanford, MFA

## ABSTRACT

*incongruent ilk* is a thesis exhibition of formally and conceptually linked situations that by their distilled nature initiate deeper contemplation of topics that are often just examined superficially. For my thesis exhibition I set out to produce curated arrangements of objects and materials because I believe something important is revealed about ourselves when we engage with common and banal objects in the material world. The exchange between the human experience and the unique nature of specific objects can connect us to each other by highlighting shared, yet subjectively interpreted experiences. The linear connections in this body of work give way to incongruent and contradictory contexts. *incongruent ilk* has overtones of leisure, travel, and warning that are delivered by humor, subversion, and the formal arrangements of materials. There is an intersection between objects and images that drips with subjective judgment; this subjectivity is crucial to *incongruent ilk*. The audience excavates the depth of potential metaphor, analogy, or concept naturally and artificially existing in the work by how deeply they are willing to consider what is presented.

INDEX WORDS: Sculpture, Installation, Contemporary, Objects, Arrangements, Space

INCONGRUENT ILK

by

DEREK FAUST

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2016

Copyright by  
Derek Wesley Faust  
2016

INCONGRUENT ILK

by

DEREK FAUST

Committee Chair: R Stanford

Committee: C Drennen

J Frank

S Richmond

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

May 2016

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this thesis and paper to my amazing wife, without her support, patience and love this would not have been possible. Thank you Stephanie.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thank you to my thesis committee members: Craig Drennen, Jill Frank, Susan Richmond and Ruth Stanford. Thank you to my gracious friend Ellen Gough for her edits.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 INFLUENCES.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3 PROCESS: INTUITION &amp; ARRANGEMENT .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4 THE WORK: <i>incongruent ilk</i> .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>5 CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>31</b>



**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1 Jessica Stockholder, <i>On the Spending Money Tenderly</i> .....	4
Figure 2 Heim Steinbach, <i>tonkong rubbermaid I-1</i> .....	6
Figure 3 <i>incongruent ilk</i> , installation view .....	11
Figure 4 <i>incongruent ilk</i> , installation view .....	11
Figure 5 <i>crew only</i> .....	14
Figure 6 <i>shade</i> .....	16
Figure 7 <i>eyelet</i> .....	18
Figure 8 <i>dune</i> .....	20
Figure 9 <i>florida fall</i> .....	22
Figure 10 <i>trace</i> .....	24
Figure 11 <i>circumstance</i> .....	26
Figure 12 <i>greetings from</i> .....	28

## 1 INTRODUCTION

*“All material has history. All material has its own history built into it. There’s no such thing as ‘better’ material. It’s just as unnatural for people to use oil paint as it is to use anything else. An artist manufactures his materials out of his own existence-his own ignorance, familiarity or confidence.”<sup>1</sup> – Robert Rauschenberg*

My desire as an artist and traveler in this world is to focus my attention on visual arrangements of the everyday: rubble stacked on a broken door, a hood from a retired semi-tractor trailer leaning on a telephone pole, or colorful tchotchkes on a shelf at a gift shop at a touristy beach resort. Arrangements exist everywhere, and consciously and subconsciously I catalog these scenes constantly in my mind. When I use the word arrangement, what I mean is the result of objects and images being arranged and placed in space at varying proximities and in varying configurations and arranged as a whole or unit.

When I enter my studio, my observations and mental connections from things I have seen and collected in the outside world become foundational to my art-making, not necessarily in a direct or literal way, but through my mind’s filter and my reliance on memory. For instance, in 2015 when I was in Miami, Florida for Art Basel, I noticed a cruise ship setting off on a voyage as the sky was darkening and waves were beginning to white cap. Standing on the beach watching this massive ship make its way across the horizon, I documented it with my camera, thereby turning this moment into material to be explored later in my studio. There was an eerie and ominous nature to the moment that I found related to other materials I had gathered in my studio, like a deployed airbag, a blown-out tractor trailer tire, and a melted pool skimmer. For

---

<sup>1</sup> Barbara Rose, *Rauschenberg* (New York: Random House, 1987), 58.

me, this intuitive part of the process reveals relationships and meanings when investigating the nature of an object or image, and I want viewers of my work to also use their own intuitions to make these connections. For my thesis exhibition I set out to produce curated arrangements of objects and materials because I believe something important is revealed about ourselves when we engage with common and banal objects in the material world.

## 2 INFLUENCES

I work from cursory and intuitive understandings of how my work aligns with art history. Instead of studying the scholarly descriptions of historical and contemporary art practices, I immerse myself in looking at artists' works that seem relevant to my current thoughts and moods. My influences lodge in my subconscious and I don't always know where they originated from or how I have altered them through a fallible memory. With that said however, my research and making tends to fit into the definition of contemporary art as proposed by the art historian Terry Smith and further explained by the scholar Jeffrey J. Williams who writes that: "we are immersed in an infoscape capable of instant communication of all information and any image anywhere. That is a chief difference from previous eras, even postmodern. Postmodernism might have responded to media like TV, but the contemporary arose with the advent of personal computers, on every desk, beginning only in the 1980s and now in our pockets. Those change our sense of time, plugging us into our contemporaneity."<sup>2</sup>

It's probable that my process and work takes most of its influence from the austere formalism that is present in modernism and the notions in contemporary art that we have found ourselves in a world heavily layered with information both visual and otherwise. The output

---

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey J. Williams, "The 'Contemporary' Moment," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 61, no.15 (December 12, 2014): B14.

from these influences often tends to be sculptural arrangements of objects that have a distinct interaction and response to space and proximity. The use of space in my work makes it installation because a viewer is intended to navigate the space to access my work. Johanna Burton discusses in her essay “Sculpture: Not-Not-Not (or, Pretty Air)” that sculpture is not installation and that “installation has gradually surfaced, particularly in the last twenty years or so, as a kind of catch-all formulation, one that easily bends to accommodate all manner of work and practices that deal, however obliquely, with the spaces in which they are conceived to be experienced.”<sup>3</sup> I curate objects in a body of work as responses to the space the work is in. If a body of work were to be installed in a different location, the spacing and even editing of elements would be informed by that space.

In regards to incongruent ilk, the styles, material choices, and/or work of two artists in particular, Jessica Stockholder and Haim Steinbach, have been especially influential. Jessica Stockholder uses found and sourced materials and paint to create her large-scale installations. Sometimes Stockholder uses wire to give structure to her work and/or act as visual and literal connections between her assemblages and the gallery walls. I believe that we both operate under the hope that viewers will mentally and visually take parts and meaning from one moment in a piece and carry it with them to another piece in their minds. An explanation of her abilities to have her work engage in these ways is included in a catalogue essay by Giorgio Verzotti. He writes:

[A] key concept she [Stockholder] uses is “memory” - exercising the memory of what we have just seen when, by moving, we go on to look at something else, so as to mentally link together all the stimuli the installation induces. Using memory to create a virtual

---

<sup>3</sup> Johanna Burton, “Sculpture: Not-Not-Not (or, Pretty Air),” in *The Uncertainty of Objects and Ideas: Recent Sculptures* (Washington, D.C. : Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 2006. ), 14.

reconstruction of continuity in what appears discontinuous: here we find a sense of order. Here we find form. A formal value that is perceived through the senses - and not just that of sight.<sup>4</sup>



**Figure 1 Jessica Stockholder, *On the Spending Money Tenderly***  
Carpet, scaffolding, paint, linoleum, lights, 4 couches, tent, plastic fruit, real oranges  
and lemons, Christmas baubles, balls, boxes, tables, building materials. 2002.  
(Source: <http://jessicastockholder.info/projects/art/on-the-spending-money-tenderly/>)

<sup>4</sup> Giorgio Verzotti, "Walking In, Moving In," in Jessica Stockholder (Torino: Galleria d'Arte Moderna, 2005): 46.

The artist I am in closest dialog with, however, is Haim Steinbach. I see strong similarities with different delivery methods. We both use “found” or sourced everyday items with the clear objective that these items inherently have and exude meaning, but because they are recognizable and mostly banal items there is a deep sense of familiarity at first. In an interview, Steinbach explains, “My work always refers to a human presence. The objects I employ all have specific identities, derived as much from the needs and desires that produce them as from the uses and meanings they’ve accumulated over time.”<sup>5</sup> In my own work this familiarity is altered by slight modifications to the material or the use of images in proximity to the object. I think artist and writer Steel Stillman’s statement about Steinbach’s work resonates with my objectives: “To appreciate his [Steinbach’s] work is to become an etymologist of things, reading the objects as if they were words, in order to uncover sources and resonances. ... In Steinbach’s world, looking is a game of deciphering relationships. ... There are no explicit narratives or easy answers. But there are always connections - associations of form, color, memory and meaning - that emerge from his surprising juxtapositions.”<sup>6</sup>

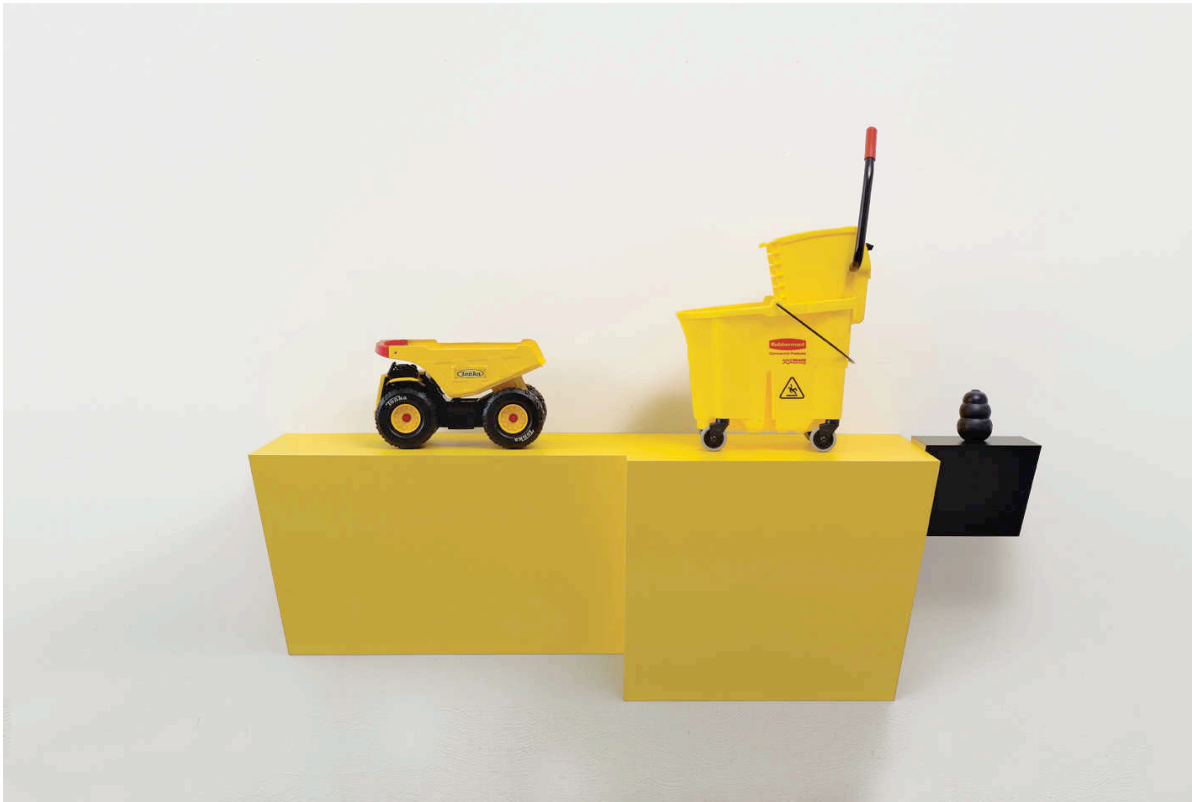
Steinbach creates meticulously crafted shelves to support his arrangements. This platform acts not only as a functional presentation tool but also adds a formal element. The shelves shapes and colors are in direct dialog with the work, they share similar colors and there is often a game played with color and quantity of color creating a formal hierarchy. My own work differs from his insofar as I use some of my found objects as the platforms to prop other images or objects on, like a mouse pad, sign stand, or banner. I also rely heavily on the floor and walls of a space to sustain an object’s presence, thereby also connecting it differently to space. I like to embrace the grainy quality of a low resolution photo printed on a mouse pad similarly to how

---

<sup>5</sup> Steel Stillman, “Haim Steinbach,” *Art in America* 100, no.1 (January 2012): 86.

<sup>6</sup> Stillman, “Haim Steinbach,” 82.

Heim sometimes allows the materials his shelves are made of to be seen on the ends. There is a rawness to allowing materials and pixilation to exist as a means to show its “materialness”. Another notable deviation between my work and Steinbach’s is in our use of titles. Whereas Steinbach sometimes uses titles that list the items on display, the titles in *incongruent ilk* are intended to add another layer to the work and nudge the viewer’s interpretation in an idiosyncratic direction.



**Figure 2 Heim Steinbach, *tonkong rubbermaid I-1*  
plastic laminated wood shelf, one plastic and steel Tonka toy truck,  
plastic and metal wring bucket, rubber dog chew. 2007.  
(Source: <http://www.haimsteinbach.info/works/caution-2007/>)**

My work is very similar to both Stockholder’s and Steinbach’s in its requirement for a level of rigor from viewers. Endurance, patience and one’s ability to allow for contemplation are keys to successfully engaging this kind of work. Artists use different mechanisms to encourage this labor of contemplation to decipher meaning from “things.”

### 3 PROCESS: INTUITION & ARRANGEMENT

*Artists have no choice but to express their lives. They have only, and that not always, a choice of process. This process does not change the essential content of their work in art, which can only be their life.*<sup>7</sup> – Anne Truitt

I subscribe to an artistic practice of remaining available. When I say “remaining available,” I mean that when I engage with objects, materials, and images and their locations, I am actively seeking possible functions of that item, material, or image. The goal is to be looking, considering, and acquiring as often as possible. I find materials during my daily commute, and by taking advantage of motorcycle rides to new areas with a camera. There are also many online sources for new and used materials that I use like Craigslist and Amazon. I am looking for things that have a variety of possible uses, ranging from formal to conceptual. There is also an added intrigue in an object when there is a presence for these formal or conceptual potentials while it also remains somewhat banal and neutral, like a generic bathroom towel rack or a mouse pad. These modes of acquisition are important and laden with potential for further resource materials. The place in which something is found becomes a catalyst and subliminally remains with the object through my memory.

After I collect materials, I store the items and images in pragmatic ways (large items get stored outside, digital images stored in a folder on a computer, etc.). Often I begin interacting with these found objects by pulling out various collected objects and cleaning them; sometimes I use a pressure washer to remove grime, dirt, and various unwanted residues and clues to the items’ former whereabouts, or other times I might crop an image to eliminate undesired information. For instance, I found a set of worn-out ATV tires illegally dumped on the side of a

---

<sup>7</sup> Anne Truitt, *Day Book: The Journal of an Artist* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), 24.



back road. I stored these tires outside of my studio until one day while working I sensed that I might be able to use them to explore ideas about travel through their material properties. So, I moved them onto a table outside and pressure washed the red Georgia clay off of them, which revealed their worn surface and history of tire plug repairs and gouges. The wash also revealed their flat black rubber surface and their very essence; they became objects without the residue that would reference a specific place or area from which they came.

It's after things have been collected and cleaned that I start to look for both obvious and unlikely moments and threads that connect the materials, images, and objects I have gathered. The intention at this point in the process is to work intuitively without a clear direction or desired outcome. My process then requires the fostering of an experimental mindset to translate thoughts, ideas, and aesthetic preferences through arrangement and subtle modification.

This part of the process is like playing a piano where all the keys have been scrambled: All the strewn-about stuff in my studio starts out as a cacophony. Freely pairing and arranging these found objects and images starts the associative process. This gathering process sometimes develops into mild obsessions with items from similar or congruent chords. There's typically a melody existing in the background, whether it is visual, or through the utilitarian or formal nature of the object. The exercise then becomes about activating various notes.

I do not have a particular desired outcome while working through my process, other than eventually knowing that something will arise after thoughtful investigation. This is to say that generally I don't have an initial idea of what an arrangement might be or what other arrangements I might pair with it. I tend towards exploring trends that develop unintentionally in my collecting and photographing processes and I investigate and consider those trends. For instance, for *incongruent ilk*, I began collecting items that eventually reminded me of leisure and

travel, both subjectively and objectively. This then led my attention to finding items or taking pictures that had connections to the concepts and materials that tie to leisure and travel.

I use this position of “remaining available” not just at the early stages of putting together a piece of work, but throughout my entire process. When curating and arranging, I allow myself to move fluidly and intuitively from one decision to the next. There is a proving ground formed within the studio. If certain things don’t function to initiate a visual, conceptual, or thoughtful experience, I reconsider their locations or remove them from the work. I am simultaneously reducing the quantity of pieces present as well as gauging the qualities of the arrangement. The crux of this method is a search for a metaphor, analogy, or visual interest. If I set a few things together, say a postcard with a cactus on it leaning inside a fishbowl centered on the fabric from an umbrella, I might consider the nature of water, our need for it, our desire to avoid it when unprepared, and a fish’s need to be surrounded by it. Maybe this assortment of materials leads to a consideration of our own need to conserve water, or it might remind us of a childhood memory of a goldfish that jumped out and died and dried out before we realized we had forgotten about it.

This chain of thoughts and experiences is the intended function of my work. The fact that this mixture of objective and subjective thought happens in one’s mind when presented with arrangements of objects in the gallery context is the very reason I find it important to encourage the audience to engage the work from their own life experiences and bear witness to how objects and images act as musical notes. The reason I use the music analogy is because music is experienced, maybe more so than words. In comparison to words, notes are less tethered to immediate and direct references to concepts or meanings. Music and rhythm can stimulate movement and represent time. Objects can stimulate memory and, a physical and visual presence in relation to our bodies, and they can be explored from varying perspectives. I am

interested in evoking thoughts the way an opera can evoke feelings. Objects can resonate with us strongly and deeply in unique ways, and I want to elevate and highlight that.

I use materials that I genuinely believe are important and revealing about who and how we are. There is a transition of a materials meaning or value when it is placed in an assemblage or in a situation near other materials. By reconfiguring the access to something visual and shifting or enhancing one's perception of it, I change the items' functions; I guide the thoughtful viewer to a deeper consideration of the nature of these items and their relationship to self and other tropes from the human experience. These relationships can be subtle, fragile, tedious, ephemeral, and visceral and have a slippery nature and sometimes a short shelf life. In effect, these threads and relationships between objects themselves or the viewer and the objects can be fleeting and dissipate once the eye moves onto the next thing, or they can linger and evolve in an additive fashion. The presence of ambiguity permits the viewer to journey through the work with a sense of discovery, both in themselves and in the work.

#### 4 THE WORK: *incongruent ilk*



Figure 3 *incongruent ilk*, installation view



Figure 4 *incongruent ilk*, installation view

Posted at the gallery's entrance was the following show description for *incongruent ilk*:

*incongruent ilk is a smattering of formally and conceptually linked situations. The obvious linear connections give way to incongruent and contradictory context. ilk alludes to a deeper underlying note, possibly something more weighted lurking under lighthearted, cursory connections.*

*There is an intersection between objects and image that drips with subjective judgment. What is reality; and where does object become image and vice versa? This subjectivity is crucial to incongruent ilk. The audience brings the breadth of metaphor, analogy or concept to the work in how far they are willing to engage their own preconceptions and perspectives.*

*incongruent ilk* requires sustained, thoughtful openness. I am truly interested in the experience the viewer has and what memories or meanings are conjured up when faced with navigating the various items below. I want the audience to be in dialog with the work; I want to let people be their own legend or key. The pieces rely on subjective perspectives in tandem with my own artistic decisions for connections to be made.

As a whole, the works in *incongruent ilk* are experienced and viewed in concert with each other as well as on their own. Each arrangement itself is a cluster of relationships that engage with objects in its own cluster. This acts as a prop for dialog with other objects or arrangements. The nature of the relationships and threads throughout the work are of differing qualities. There are many tones to these relationships: some reverent, some humorous, some poetic, some romantic, and some theatrical, as if these pieces were props in a play. Formally and visually, the pieces can also be linked through shape and color, or through a human action or gesture evoked in the piece, like the act of pruning a fake houseplant.

Concepts associated with leisure, travel, and the artifice of tourism underpins the entire exhibit. Because this body of work operates as an installation, the gallery space is an actual element to the work, not just a neutral vessel in which to display sculptural objects. In this case,

the gallery itself can be understood as a sort of tourist destination. Just like an art gallery, the tourist destination can be a simulacrum of a place, and many of the pieces in this work evoke these themes of the artifice of a simulated tourist experience. As an imitation of an adventure on the high seas, the cruise is a strong example of this simulated experience that becomes itself its own experience. While the advertisements for the cruise reference a unique, life-changing adventure, the tourist boards a ship with thousands of other people all destined for the same curated journey. Even a local's drive to the many beaches in Florida exposes this same curated experience. Restaurants with artificial or highly manicured palm trees and billboards with hyper-realistic photos of alligators and birds of paradise line the roads. There is an inundation of the experience awaiting you at the destination before you get there. The path there is laden with amateur and professional photos of the destination, taken at ideal times of the day and year, likely when we are not there. Setting the stage of an experience traveler fascinates me: Is that what makes a traveler a tourist? These expectations? I want to draw attention to the layers of these experiences.

I present this work to invite the viewer to be a traveler and to make the connections between the objects in the gallery themselves, rather than acting as a tourist and passively accepting the obvious narrative given to them in a particular artwork. Ultimately, however, I would like to leave the implied differences between a tourist and a traveler for you the reader to decipher and unpack.

Below is a description of the cursory and more in-depth relationships from *incongruent ilk*, arranged by each piece's image, title and list of materials.



**Figure 5 crew only**

**crew only** (*construction sign stand, photograph on aluminum*): A construction road sign is used as the stand for a highly glossy dye sublimation print (photo printed on aluminum) of a cruise ship under an ominously darkening sky and roughening sea. The print is cut in the shape of a square; the points of the square create the recognizable diamond-shaped “road construction ahead” motif. The image is displayed upside down. This is one of the more noticeable pieces when you enter the gallery space. Without much investigation, it is clearly a “sign.” There is a cruise ship, upside down, clinging to the water on which it was originally effortlessly floating. Typically, signage placed on these sign stands is meant to serve as a warning to a passersby, it alerts viewers that something ahead should be traversed with caution or to heed a specific warning. This sign, then, could be seen as a bit of a warning to use some form of caution—and perhaps patience—while navigating the layers of relationships and threads between the works in the gallery. The irreverence of displaying a large aluminum print on a construction sign stand pairs interestingly with the ominous nature of the image. This deadpan humor arises again in *florida fall and shade*.





**Figure 6 shade**

**shade** (*photograph on mouse pad, lighter, pool skimmer, windshield reflector*): A reflective blue anodized pool skimmer with an aluminum handle leans up against the wall, with a silver reflective car windshield sunshade in the net portion; the skimmer pole contacts the ground on top of a mouse pad with a photo of palm tree trunk printed on it. A cheap, bronze-colored lighter in the shape of a hand fist with the middle finger erect also sits on the mouse pad. This piece, similar to *florida fall*, uses some deadpan humor. The title, *shade*, is a threefold word play, referring to (1) the shade offered by the palm tree, whose trunk begins at the mousepad and is completed with the skimmer pole, (2) the shade referenced in the actual utility of the windshield sun shade, and (3) the lighter crassly flipping the bird, or “throwing shade.” These puns are not intended to be the end-all to the work, but they instead offer a lighthearted entry into it and a different doorway that can alter the viewing experience, and eventually fall away. In this way, humor encourages a letting down of our guard to expose more delicate and subtle moments present in the work. These exposed moments then reference the complexities discussed above with reference to the pool skimmer’s ties to leisure and tourism and its connection to labor.



Figure 7 eyelet

**eyelet** (*towel bar, rope, towel, grommets*): A green bath towel hangs from a generic store-bought towel rack. The towel has large, blue, two-inch-wide window curtain grommets, installed down one edge like holes punched in paper. A short length of green climbing rope also hangs from the towel rack beside the towel. Unlike the towel, the rope is gnarled and curled as if stored on a spool with a narrow diameter. Like *circumstance*, *eyelet* offers more formal links to the other works and fewer conceptual ones. Conceptually, the towel does play off the idea of leisure in the context of the pool, and the rope also references climbing or a nautical use that can be linked to the leisure related to a cruise ship. The formal links, however, may be more obvious: The pool skimmer of *shade*, and even the garden hose in *trace*, discussed below, are linked through color and line. A more interactive humor is at play with the tension between the rope and the eyelets: Persons of a certain temperament might find a slightly nagging desire to thread the rope through the eyelets, while others might notice that the towel itself is threaded through the towel bar, acting as its own eyelet. This play is deliberate, and more tactile in nature than some of the other pieces, holding onto its own incongruence.



Figure 8 *dune*

**dune** (*hatchback door, beach sand, battery*): The hatchback to a late-90s Acura Integra, complete with blistered window tint, sun-faded windshield wiper blade, and spoiler. It leans against the wall, almost precariously, in a vertical orientation. When your perspective shifts to the side profile of the hatchback, a motorcycle battery is visible and wired to the door. Underneath the spoiler is a pristine line of white sand; it runs perfectly parallel to the spoiler. There is a faint red light emitting from the spoiler's brake light, which illuminates one side of the neat sand pile. The red light subtly glows on the sand, reminiscent of heat or sunlight on a dune in an early or late part of the day.

The car is a symbol of mobility and freedom: Everyone remembers that feeling when they first had autonomy and could go wherever they wanted. The sand is a reference to place, the beach, the desert, or maybe a sandbox. The car hatchback, on the other hand, perhaps references a demographic or age group that might drive a car of this ilk. Formal elements are at play too. The lines of the defroster across the glass and the intersecting line of the windshield wiper blade reference the postcard stand in *greetings from*, with its wire structure and highly geometric lines.



**Figure 9** *florida fall*

**florida fall** (*artificial plants, machete*): Two identical, artificial but realistic-looking house plants, in their factory black plastic planters sit in the middle of the room, placed directly on the floor. One plant sits whole, unaltered, while the other has been pruned, leaves on the floor of the gallery, where they might have fallen if pruned off in the gallery space. A sun-faded pink-handled machete is vertically stabbed into the florist foam of the planter. The plants are the only organic presence in the room, containing the least visual geometry or simplicity. There are references to plants or vegetation in other works, but they lack the qualities of “plantness” that these imitation decorative kitschy articles have. The “nature” of this arrangement on the floor is to bring about a variance in materiality amongst the many rigid, metallic objects and surfaces. The two plants interrupt the harmony of the gallery, which is almost regimentally lined with the other works. Digging deeper into this piece, viewers might realize that the plant/machete combination brings the viewer’s eye to the center of the room after perusing the work at the perimeter. A deeper connotation here is the reference to navigating a jungle or other tropical vegetative places, falling in line with travel in an exotic locale. Humor is the strongest mechanism here; one can imagine the lost tourist hacking their way out of a jungle. In addition, the piece references forced autumnal changes in Florida, where vegetation remains lush year round. Though there is a sense of vulnerability here, the plant that remains unscathed might eventually succumb to the same fate as the forcibly pruned plant, should the wielder of the machete return. Similar to *crew only*, *florida fall* sets the “stage” in the gallery. Where *crew only* signals warning and potential hazard, *florida fall* signals humor and theatrics.





Figure 10 *trace*

**trace** (*hose, photograph on banner, galvanized pipe, ATV tire*): One of the more reverent arrangements in *incongruent ilk* is *trace*. *trace* is made up of galvanized water pipe, a short length of common garden hose with the male end fastened to the female end, a well-worn ATV tire, and a twelve-foot-long grommeted banner with a photograph of puddles in a north Texas landscape under an expansive blue sky. There is a stoic nature to how the items are arranged in this piece. The draping of the banner over the water pipe, the symbolism of the snake eating its own tail in the hose, and the tire carefully leaning against the water pipe as if it is some kind of important symbol. Like many of the other pieces there are also simple direct references. There is a reference to the water cycle here with sky, water, hose, and pipe all being references to water in nature and water for utility. The blue sky connects formally to the blue in *circumstance, shade*, and even the grommets in *eyelet*. The tire, used on the recreation vehicles known as four-wheelers or ATVs, is another connection to leisure, and the perhaps the people who might use these vehicles are a similar ilk to the passengers on a cruise ship? The title, *trace*, is used to conjure up the relationship between all the objects in this piece: The tire carves trails, and rough trails typically yield potholes, which eventually become puddles when it rains.



Figure 11 *circumstance*

**circumstance** (*sign, vinyl, sign post, temporary fence stand*): A blank road sign (much like a speed limit sign in shape, color, and size), hangs on the wall, with 1/3 of it wrapped in a transparent light blue vinyl. An orange chain link rental fence stand, often seen around construction sites, leans on the wall, and a short, bent section of a galvanized signpost sits on the floor with two bolts left in it from its previous use as a sign. This particular piece anchors the show's formal qualities. The sign, with rounded corners, is reminiscent of the rounded corners of the fence base, and the two bolts in the signpost are mirrored in the fence base as well. They are disjointedly arranged, occupying wall and floor space. This piece relates formally to the use of a construction sign stand in *crew only* and to the construction sign in *greetings from*. This piece is devoid of the underlying ominous tones found in some of the other pieces. Instead, it functions as an aesthetic formal moment linking materials of galvanized metal and the color blue while also anchoring the use of orange from the *greetings from* piece discussed below.

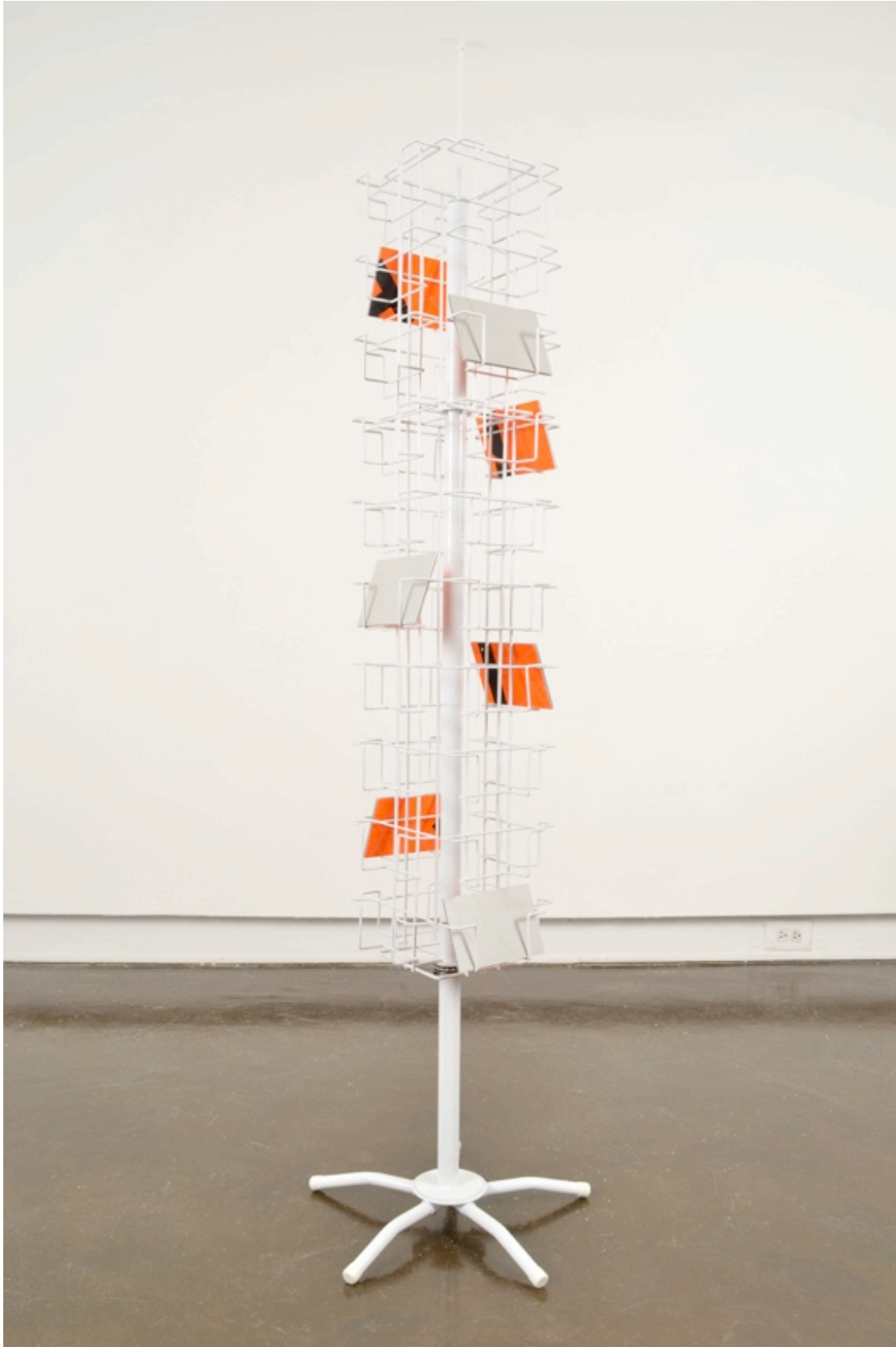


Figure 12 *greetings from*

**greetings from** (*construction sign, post card display*): A five-foot-tall white wire postcard rack supports postcard-sized rectangles of a dissected construction warning sign. This piece is intentionally placed near the entrance to the exhibition space as to nod to its true utility as a souvenir stand. After the viewer traverses the series of arrangements, they will again pass this stand as they leave the gallery space. At that point, this piece serves a different purpose than it did when the viewers entered the gallery. In duet with *crew only*, the orange construction sign becomes present as postcard-shaped tiles, facing inward towards the display but still readily visible. The viewer might mentally take one as a souvenir as a reminder to proceed in the real world with some semblance of caution, considering more carefully the objects and arrangements that surrounds us in our day-to-day lives.

## 5 CONCLUSION

Since *incongruent ilk* operates as an installation, the gallery space is an integral element to the work, and not just a vessel in which to display sculptural objects. The parallels between the audience in an art gallery and the traveler or tourist analogy are seminal; instead of a simulacrum, the work in the gallery space is intended to be the vehicle that transports you to an undisclosed destination. You are not taken there physically, but are meant to traverse it mentally and intuitively. The arrangements are comprised of objects and materials that, while remaining true representations of themselves, also act as symbols and triggers to one's own life experiences. Each titled work operates with its own pitch; this pitch is differentiated by the mode of gesture, modification, or context in which it is presented.

The cautionary, ominous, and darkly humorous tone that exists throughout the work is intended to reinforce the viewer's residual take away, like a postcard from a gift shop. This token is meant to serve as a subtle reminder that we can be tourists, or we can be travelers when exploring this world. Do you explore and investigate new worlds, or do you take things at face value? The hope is that by the mere act of participating in this work through consideration, these seemingly disparate objects will increase our ability to further contemplate and consider our outside interactions. I want to meet the art viewer in the middle; I want to give enough to start someone on a journey, but to let them take the risks associated with a less manicured experience. I am not interested in ferrying the viewer from one port to another, but instead providing them with a vessel and a set of keys. My hopeless optimism believes that we, humans, are capable of so much more than we might ever be able to conceive. *incongruent ilk* is not inaccessible, nor is it easily accessible. It is present.

## REFERENCES

Burton, Johanna. "Sculpture: Not-Not-Not (or, Pretty Air)." In *The Uncertainty of Objects and Ideas: Recent Sculptures*, 10-15. Washington, D.C. : Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, 2006.

Duchamp, Marcel. "The Creative Act." *Art News* 56, no.4 (1956): 28-29.

Fer, Briony. "Objects Beyond Objecthood." *Oxford Art Journal* 22, no.2 (1999): 27-36.

Fried, Michael. *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Review*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Iversen, Margaret. "Readymade, Found Object, Photograph." *Art Journal* 63, no.2 (2004): 45-57.

Rose, Barbara. *Rauschenberg*. New York: Random House, 1987.

Smith, Terry. "The State of Art History: Contemporary Art." *Art Bulletin* 92, no.4 (2010): 366-383.

Schwenger, Peter. "Haim Steinbach." *BOMB* 121 (2012): 34-43.

Stillman, Steel. "Haim Steinbach." *Art in America* 100, no.1 (2012): 82-91.

Truitt, Anne. *Daybook: The Journal of an Artist*. London: Penguin Books, 1984.

Verzotti, Giorgio. "Walking In, Moving In." In *Jessica Stockholder*, 45-49. Torino: Galleria d'Arte Moderna, 2005.



Varnedoe, Kirk. "Why Abstract Art." In *Abstraction: Documents of Contemporary Art*, 48-63. Cambridge: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT, 2013.

Williams, Jeffrey J. "The 'Contemporary' Moment." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 61, no.15 (2014): B13-15.