



**Project
Space**

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hows the words

Laura McCoy

March 8 – March 30, 2013

“Nothing can be more abstract, more unreal, then what we actually see. we know all we can see is the objective world, as human beings, never really exists as we understand it. Matter exists, of course, but with no intrinsic meaning of its own, such as meanings that we attach to it. We can only know that a cup is a cup, a tree is a tree”

- *giorgio morandi*

Laura McCoy's exhibition titled *hows the words* is a grouping of assemblages and painting specific to Xpace Cultural Centre's Project Space. As the exhibition's title suggests, this quasi statement/question stupefies the critical viewer. Rejecting a reasoned response, we are left with a question about the inadequacies of our own language. The failure of words to do what they do best: describe, express and interpret. We often convey our judgment in the form of a conceit, or in comparison, yet presence of a thing can be difficult to re-create within a syntactical framework.

Laura McCoy is a sculptor. She moves partials/fragments/bits, paints, leftover wood to form a lucid state of interaction. Poked, prodded, smooshed, skittled, skattled, courted, craddled, dotted, crinkled, washed, cleaned, cut, sliced, purged ...They are made specific to the site - often using the walls, floor and other elements of room as substrate. Sometimes they occur in a studio or an apartment, from which the image is recorded for later viewing. In short, they are made specific each moment they find a balance.

Similar evocations can be found in the still lives of Giorgio Morandi. The banality of these paintings subject matter and wistful choices of colour creates dream-like scenario. An 'in-between' state and willful abstraction of the ordinary. McCoy does not make 'pictures' per se. She adorns a position with painted shape, disregarded, overlooked scraps - blurring the intentional details with incident and chance occurrences. Never bound to limitations of aesthetic virtue, we are left with playful exercises.

These sorts of operations have been a recurring fascination for most of the 20th century. This is fairly well documented in Rosalind Krauss and Yve Alain Bois compendium of essays on the subject- "Formless". Echoing the critical works of George

Batille, the authors grouped works together that shared a similar veracity for operations that “brushed against the grain of modernism”. Works of art that oppose the form and content of a work in order to determine its value. Opting instead to celebrate operations that make previous judgments of taste and virtue null or void.

When developing a language, It can be difficult to resist the correct punctuation, spelling and grammar that symbolized by a sturdy, clear sentence. By developing a syntax that avoids or challenges these rules, McCoy allows for new words and interactions to exist, yet, points to the failure of the ‘style’ guides we use most commonly to create something legible or understandable. She wishes to desublimize these ‘normalized’ aesthetic value systems while investigating the vulnerability of her choices by creating unexplained, untested gestures to punctuate a space.

It’s also important to mention that the letters within Laura’s words can symbolically refer to the body, celebrating the unexplainable operations that persist within. As Melanie Klein has written: ‘a process of incorporation begins by taking food into the mouth and swallowing it triggers a chain of events within the body which we have no control ... the anxiety we feel about feces stands for the anxiety we feel about our insides, about the deconstructive drive that grips us’. Though I don’t want go too far into psychoanalytical aspects of Laura’s work, I think it’s important to be aware of it in regards to the operation of the formless. How the unconscious acts of ‘mark making’ inform the artists choice in what she wishes to convey, subsequently, the viewers understanding of the gestures being exhibited.

Laura’s ability to construct a rhythmical structure out of these moments is significant. The lack of control and/or enjoyment of unknown processes seem to reinforce Laura’s interest in material.

- Sebastian Butt

Bibliography

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