

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

ScholarWorks@UARK

Graduate Theses and Dissertations

5-2019

Seeing Through Feeling

Christopher Mitchell Rodgers

University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd>



Part of the [Ceramic Arts Commons](#), [Interdisciplinary Arts and Media Commons](#), and the [Sculpture Commons](#)

Citation

Rodgers, C. M. (2019). Seeing Through Feeling. *Graduate Theses and Dissertations* Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/3221>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UARK. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UARK. For more information, please contact scholar@uark.edu.

Seeing Through Feeling

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Art

by

Christopher Mitchell Rodgers
West Virginia State University
Bachelor of Art in Art, 2013

May 2019
University of Arkansas

This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

Mathew McConnell, M.F.A.
Thesis Director

Adrienne Callander, M.F.A.
Committee Member

Eli Kessler, M.F.A.
Committee Member

Marc Mitchell, M.F.A.
Committee Member

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to describe both the inherent formal qualities and conceptual framework that are addressed within the exhibition, *Seeing Through Feeling*. The exhibition is centered around the methodology of making, collection, and display all through the one singular positioning, the object. The objects within the exhibition are either handmade or collected fragments that weave together around the singular position of craft and history under the pretense of how our understanding of time may not always be true. The thesis breaks down key components through specific themes into the categories of the hand, eye, symbol, object, value, display, and collection.

Table of Contents

Communication and Time.....	Pg. 1
Seeing Through Feeling.....	Pg. 6
The Hand.....	Pg. 10
The Eye.....	Pg. 11
The Tool.....	Pg. 12
The Value.....	Pg. 13
The Object.....	Pg. 14
The Display.....	Pg. 15
The Collection.....	Pg. 16
Conclusion.....	Pg. 17
Bibliography	Pg. 18
Figures.....	Pg. 19

Communication and Time

“An art object’s capacity for meaning is contingent upon a viewer’s capacity to believe. This is the fate of contemporary art, one predicated on an agreement between all parties to willingly suspend disbelief and enter in a transaction of ideas. ... What is it made from, is it real or facsimile, from where does it originate, what is its provenance, how did it arrive here, from what period of time was it extracted? These are the kinds of inquires that contribute to the process of meaning.”

Aram Moshayedi, Stores of Almost Everyone

“Visual Craft seems like an oxymoron; any fool can tell you that a craftsperson needs to touch his or her work. This Touch can be indirect - indeed no glassblower lays hands on molten material - but it must be physical and continual; and it must provide control of whole processes.”

Warren Wake, Writing on Tools

Humanity has continuously found the desire to create as a way of connecting to both people and places. It is through my own experience with making that I am searching to create connections to this vast expanse of human history. By weaving together time spent in the studio and personal experiences of travel, I begin to create my own narratives distilled into collections of objects. My practice is one firmly rooted in an act of searching through both material and history studies. There is obviously a large net that I have cast over these two themes, and it is within this thesis paper that I identify what and how I have arrived at the work within the exhibition, *Seeing Through Feeling*. And how I hope to use this framework as a structure to continue my art practice for the foreseeable future.

It is through writing, reading, and speaking that one may consider how we come to understand art, however what I am more concerned with is the visual communication that takes place between an individual and the art they are experiencing. What I am particularly expanding

on is the nonverbal form of communication that exists between a grouping of objects and how an individual experiences the collection. I have identified two main ways of understanding how this experience manifests within my practice. The first is based in the experience that one has in making. And the second is through experiencing the works of others.

The time and place in which we all live is filled with an endless amount of commodified objects. I find a sense of heaviness when considering the amount of everything that surrounds us all. But I believe there is value in the handmade, crafted, and cared for object; this value is one that is intrinsic, rather than relating to the market. The act of making is a way of relating to all those who made before, it is both a continuation and an examination of history. It is a way of seeing something new through the eyes, but also the hand.

The objects that I have handmade for *Seeing Through Feeling* stretch back into multiple histories that are attached to different places and times. I am borrowing formal characteristics and modes of production because of the value that I have in how others make. However, there are also found objects incorporated that further reinforce this stance in valuing other craftspeople that are significant to this history of making. The use of the found object is a way to further elevate the history of the maker. It is used to signify the value in the unique and specific object, however small it may appear. Some objects may seem to have less of a uniqueness to them, such as a rusty flattened steel can that is part of the work, "Untitled, (Collection)", but each object is carefully selected. This steel can is far removed from its original intent and purpose, and through history it continues to gain new context. What once was a round shiny cylinder has been distorted through force and time into something of rusted yellows, ochres, browns and greys. Its value as a singular commodified object is removed, and turned into waste. But by inserting it into the context of the work it gains a new value. It is transformed from the endless amounts of identical cans into a singularity, and in the process the value is shifted from commodified object to that of uniqueness in its own visual language of materiality and form.

I aim to question how this unspoken form of communication operates and to consider both its limitations and advantages. Because I must address my position within the opening segment of this paper I realize that the written word does not fully describe the physicality of visual communication. In an attempt to describe both the formal and conceptual elements, I am going against my own stance in framing the artwork. However, no amount of information attached to an object will ever be able to fully describe what it is and what it means. There is a sense of truth and beauty in the ambiguity that is some *thing* as well as the act of trying to make sense through description while realizing that the some *thing* can never be fully described.

This nonverbal form of communication is one wrapped up in the information of visual language. Once an object begins to be described either by being spoken of or written about, the object begins to lose its impact and uniqueness, or at least is experienced in a completely different way. Though I will address more of a formal analysis later in the paper, I want to provide an example of what I mean by nonverbal communication that is found within the artwork, "Untitled, (Crossed Paths Along the Way)". One of the objects that makes up this collection is a small blue and white porcelain fragment that is positioned among eight other objects similar in scale. Each object is positioned together on a low white plinth and held in place by its own thin vertical brass rod. As I continue to describe this object through a written language I create a frame for how it is being understood. This particular fragment was found while walking on the top of Gaoling Mountain near Jingdezhen, China. Gaoling Mountain is one of the original locations for where the beginning of kaolin mining took place, which is one of the main components of porcelain, as well as the origins of the name. This one small fragment becomes charged, relating its history to that of the other objects within the exhibition.

The exhibition borrows from the aura that I experience with museums such as The National Gallery of Art or The Metropolitan Museum of Art. When so much of the world is full of immediacy and abundance of the now and a constant upgrade for the new, there is value in experiencing a moment of time that is slowed down. This is not to say that it is about going back

in time, but rather creating a lightness within the exhibition space despite the density that could be unpacked through the amount of information that is actually present.

Time is central to my practice as a way of positioning myself in relation to the objects that I select. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's writing, "Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry" is centered on the categorization and limitation of two main types of art - those that exist in space and in time. It is often the human condition to affix some form of narration to any type of art. Unlike other forms of art, such as theatre, music, film, and cinema that do exist in time, objects exist in space and are not as clear with a fixed beginning and end. Lessing describes his stance on objects as almost like a frozen moment fixed to the few seconds before the climax of the narrative that is imbedded within them.

Lessing's writing is at its foundation addressing how the human spirit is fixed into the art object. I understand that arguing a position made in 1775 is not groundbreaking, but this way of seeing is how most people still experience art. It is rooted in the emotional sensation that people have when relating to a story, an art forum based in time. Rather, what I am questioning is the line that defines the difference between experiencing the narration present within the artwork and the narration of the artwork.

In "Six Memos for the Next Millennium", Italo Calvino writes that to "account for the density and continuity of the world around us, language is exposed as lacunose, fragmentary: it always says something less than the sum of what can be experienced." I believe this to be not only true for writing, but for the creation of any type of artwork. I am interested in how art objects are constantly re-contextualized by individuals throughout time. It is not the classical sculpture that is changing, but rather the ideas that society applies to the artwork. This in turn creates multiple histories that become intertwined when experiencing any art. When we enter into a museum and look at any ancient sculpture it is often perceived in the place and time in which we see it, or the idea of where it originated. I am interested in the layers of histories that a singular work has experienced. Imagine a Roman statue crafted thousands of years ago that became lost to time to be discovered and pulled from the coast by divers in the 15th Century. It

is studied by sculptors, painters, mathematicians, architects, poets, historians, geologists, anthropologists, and a slew of other specialists. The sculpture is cleaned and repaired, drawings are made, casts are pulled, debates are born, and poems are written. The sculpture is purchased by a collector, it is traded, and then traded again and again before setting sail traveling around the world to end up in the collection of a museum. The statue becomes so much more than its maker's original intent, its place in the museum becomes a fragment of all that is truly part of its essence.

To remove certain aspects of an object is to decide to see something not complete. I believe that there is so much more to be gained through observation of something from multiple perspectives, this includes through the lens of different timeframes. In *Abstracting Craft*, Malcolm McCullough writes, "if a scholar attempts to connect divergent aspects of a fundamental human activity, the result may not adhere to established standards of academic rigor. When such aspects range from the poetic to the technical, the social, and the theoretical; there may be no level at which all of the writing can work for every reader." It is through McCullough's statement that I want to address my frame of understanding for my own practice; or more accurately, that it may not be possible for me to fully state what information ebbs and flows into my practice.

Much in common to many of the objects within the exhibition, the title, *Seeing Through Feeling*, has multiple meanings and I want to identify the main two. The first is rather straightforward and is in reference to a sense of touch and the way that I approach working with clay. I often find myself not looking with my eyes, but rather feeling the material and "seeing" it through my hands. This is a very important factor for why I use this material. The second is more metaphorical to the way I approach my studio practice. I often find myself *feeling* my way through, allowing the space and time to almost take over me. Time in the studio is so significant to my practice, almost like some sort of frenzy dance movement. I know that to many artists studio practice is an important experience and I am not entirely sure how to identify why it is so

important or unique to me. I suppose that it is in line with my stance on visual communication; there is a nonverbal dialogue between myself and the aura of the studio.

Seeing Through Feeling

This section of the paper is to provide to the best ability of written language, a translation of the visual language that makes up the exhibition. There are four main artworks within the exhibition that each contain a vast collection of objects. These objects are grouped by a divide between the gallery floor, the space that the viewer inhabits, and that of where the objects exist. This is either through the use of the plinth, shelf, or table. Nothing exists on the wall within the exhibition to emphasize my stance on the objects and the ability to move around it on all sides. There is an intentionality to obscuring the line between what is made and what is found. This is done through treating the surfaces of new objects to appear weathered, as if a longer narrative of history is bound to them.

When a viewer enters the gallery space they are first encountered with a low plinth that floats several inches above the ground; it is about three by four feet wide and it has a selection of objects that are either handmade or found. The artwork, titled "Untitled (Collection)", contains various objects that vary in scale and materiality. They are all either handmade or found and each individual form is an accumulation of various histories. Of all the objects within "Untitled (Collection)" the viewer will most likely be drawn to the yellow canary perched on the weathered piece of grey wood that stands vertically and closest to the entrance of the gallery. The piece also contains a cool grey ceramic pedestal that is covered in mark making reminiscent of stone carving. On top of the pedestal is a miniature ceramic orange tree within a white vessel that is covered with dust. There are four smaller objects on the plinth; a photograph of a sailing boat, a dried orange, a flattened rusty steel can, and a grey wedge comb shape that is made from the same clay as the pedestal. Each of these objects are unique from the other and intentional space is created between them to create a sense of a visual pause. These objects are relatively

small and they call upon the viewer to step closer, bend down, and examine on a more intimate scale. The plinth creates a separation between the world that these objects exist within and our own.

“Untitled (Collection)” was the first completed piece within the exhibition and is the most personal. The canary is placed so that it greets the viewer as they enter into the gallery, and is sitting as if it could take flight at any moment. It is a symbol of myself, as well as my home state West Virginia. The use of the photograph of the boat on the open sea becomes a symbol on multiple levels. This photograph was gifted to me. This image was part of a larger collection that mean a great deal to the owner and this one stood out as a way that they identified me. The history of its origin is unknown, but in it there is a glimpse of a moment in time. The symbol of the boat alone on the sea could represent many ideas: movement, transit, discovery, isolation, freedom, adventure, the unknown, the power of nature, etc. The boat, sea, the photograph, and the gift are also symbols that are contained within this singular object. The comb wedge shape is an enlarged version of the tool that I handmade out of terra-cotta to create the repetitive markings on the surface of the pedestal. This act of making a sculpture of a tool heightens the significance of the act of making.

The largest artwork is also comprised of six larger works displayed on one singular plinth, this one is much larger and extends eight by twenty-four feet and floats several inches from the gallery floor. This piece covers the center of the gallery is titled, “Untitled (Seeing Through Feeling)”. The plinth is created to exist as a barrier between the space for where the artworks exist and that of the viewers. It also reinforces my positioning for seeing the sculptures as a group, rather than separate components. The scale of the plinth forces the viewers to experience the work from a distance and also makes the viewer navigate the gallery in a unique way.

Four of the sculptures are abstracted forms referencing classical busts that are all made from various ceramic clay-bodies. They have been stretched, pulled, and twisted to become almost unrecognizable from the original sculptures that they reference. Each piece originates

from an object that I selected from the British Museum. They were each selected from objects that have not been placed on display and have been instead held within the archives. I have reinforced my own value for their history and the makers through selecting, referencing, and uplifting their position. They are also not refined in a smooth and polished state, but are each rough and covered in a repetitive mark-making method that is reminiscent of stone carving techniques channeling the original material and methodology of making. Each sculpture is held up in place by either one or two steel rods that is extended from ceramic pedestals that are treated in similar mark-making techniques. Each individual object within “Untitled (Seeing Through Feeling)” is made of ceramic and not covered in glaze. The objects are made to created the sense of an inherent color that is the material, rather than an applied surface. There are two other forms that are within this grouping, a large sphere and the other is reminiscent of a Greco-Roman column. The sphere is a symbol of movement without a fixed beginning or end point. And the column symbolizes the idea of structure and support, but by it resting on its’ side it begins to disrupt this stance and falters on the history it represents.

To the left of “Untitled “Collection” is a tall table made out of ash wood with a series of smaller sculptures placed on it titled, “Untitled (Crossed Paths Along the Way)”. In addition to this object there are eight other fragments from different origins: pieces of coral, a green glass marble, a terra-cotta shard, and two other fragments from Gaoling Mountain. One of them is a piece of granite which was the byproduct of kaolin mining and the other is another porcelain shard. These pieces are each fragments of a particular place and time, moments that I have experienced.

This grouping contains two small bronze glazed ceramic objects with stairs going both up and down. Stairs going up are seen as a positive symbol of growth and achievement, while stairs going down are read as the negative counterpart. I am more interested in what the two together come to represent; an endless cycle of always moving in either direction, but the inability to ever stop this movement. This feels like a more accurate metaphor of what it is like to move through the world. There is an object made out of terra-cotta and it has a thin layer of dust

applied to its surface. It is a replica of an object within the private collection of the British Museum, and like many of the other objects within this exhibition the original has never been exhibited. It exists to the public only through images on their electronic database.

Behind the large plinth is a wooden shelf structure that is also made out of ash wood. This piece, "Untitled, (Memento to Making)" stands close to eight feet tall and has five shelves containing various objects. The largest of the three orange trees is on the top shelf, while in the other two groupings they are placed below the viewer. There is a desire to see what is positioned out of sight. In addition to this form, there are also several other small brass glazed stair sculptures and classical sculpture fragments. On one of the shelves there is a smaller version of a previous sculpture that I made in another body of work of a color sphere. The color sphere shifts in hue and value, but the idea of saturation is implied as what resides within the form. Within the whole exhibition color is used sparingly, either being inherent to the object or when applied it is often desaturated. This piece stands out as containing so much color, and even the idea of all color.

All of the artworks within *Seeing Through Feeling* exist away from the walls to bring focus to what resides within the gallery floor. The American abstract-expressionist painter Ad Reinhardt once stated that, "Sculpture is something you bump into when you back up to look at a painting." So, perhaps it is now the empty white walls that are bumped into while looking at sculpture. The work was intentionally created at various scales and dimensions to be at times both smaller and larger than the individual viewer. Though the artworks exist within the gallery floor they also exist within their own space either the plinths or wooden structures, an area that brings the viewer in, while also creating a barrier. One can imagine walking into or reaching their hand out into these spaces, but the viewer is also aware that this is not fully their world and are only here for a brief moment in time with these objects.

The Hand

The importance of the hand is crucial for this body of artwork and where I am within my practice right now. Hands do all the work and they are overlooked in their ability to do so much; push, pull, grab, type, write, grip, steer, and what I find to be most amazing of all, they see through touch. “By pointing, by pushing and pulling, by picking up tools, hands act as the conduits in the other direction: hands bring us knowledge of the world. Hands feel - probe - practice.” The hands are in direct contact with the act of making, and it is intimate. Both hands act together and are trained with practice. They often act within the subconscious through searching and seeing what is out of sight from one's eyes. It is even with the simplest activity that hands seem to act on their own.

There is consideration for the different roles that hands take on, their use shifts depending on what materials and scale they come into contact with. Hands capture an experience, a moment of contact when they act upon a material and can leave behind a trace of how one makes. Through action and movement the hand implies a form of clues that can be read. This knowledge is not only physical, but also, and perhaps more importantly, based in experience. McCullough later writes in *Abstracting Craft*, “The way of the hands is personal, contextual, and indescribable.” Talent is often attached to the idea of being inherent and natural, while skill is learned through activity and doing. Each person has their own understanding of what they do with their hands, what skills have been learned, refined, and practiced with time.

Touch is significant for how it is captured in material. There is a relation between the individual maker and the methodology in which they approach their respected craft. The material contains a record of this call and response. I believe that all makers are responsive to this relationship to some level, but it has become increasingly significant within my own practice. Clay is often at the forefront for my material selection because it is one of the most immediate materials in capturing an imprint of what it comes into contact with.

Skills beget more skills, and as I move around the studio there is play and discovery. Chances are taken, mistakes happen, and from all of this information a deeper understanding of skill is gained for a deeper art practice. This movement, action, and knowledge accumulation takes place throughout the body. But the hands are the best source because of the immediate contact that they are constantly undergoing. To insert form into material is to insert meaning; the hands are the conduit. Materiality exists immediately through physicality, surface, volume, density, and weight. This phenomenon is not only captured through the hand, but is also experienced through the eye.

The Eye

The hands see through feeling, seeing one thing at a time and at a close proximity. The eyes take in a larger amount of information, but only from one perspective. But, of course the hand and eye must be considered to exist in relation; hand-eye coordination is refined over time through practice and repetition until a way of moving becomes so much a part of the maker that it is natural.

While the eye sees only the surface, the hand can see into something. Often, the hand contributes to a different way of seeing, a sense of sight that is unique from seeing with the eye. Hands discover through feeling, they see what the eye cannot. But the eyes see at a distance to bring in a full picture. To understand something we move as close as we are permitted. We walk towards it, we want to touch it, hold it, and feel it so we can understand something on a more intimate level. The hands see better at a closer proximity, perhaps that is why people often have the desire to feel.

The Tool

Most forms of making require an extension of the body between the hand and the material that is being acted upon. There are exceptions of this, such as clay and weaving. These in-between extensions of the hand are tools which impact the forming of the object. The tool in the hand is an extension of the body and narrows the intent of the user. Tools are technologies that overcome the limitations of the body or lesson the requirements of the body. The hand-held tool is an object that requires some sort of skill, participation, engagement, imagination, and attention. Tools belong to sets with variations, each to serve specific purposes. The variations are important and slight variations in size and shape could be significant factors. It often takes practice to bring together the skill and intent that tools require. Tools are designed to serve purposes, they must be understood for this first and then one can begin to realize how to shift their use for a different intent. McCullough later writes “Practice produces the most lasting and satisfying form of knowing.” To feel the weight, shape, size, materiality, density, durability, and surface of a tool over time the user could begin to imagine what it is like to have it in their hand without seeing it.

There is satisfaction in using a tool on multiple levels. There is a direct sensation as one moves their body and uses the tool. The use of the tool is also a channel for creativity and a continuing refinement of practice. There is also a consideration of the specific tool relative to the history of all those that have used that type of tool previously. Users reflect through their making to alter the tools over time to become more accessible and efficient. The tool focuses the maker into the work, it is an act that may be unnoticed by the user. At a point, tools become more fluid, becoming not only an object in the hand but existing as part of the hand. This is when the hand feels the tool and its’ impact, or how the tool’s touch becomes that of the wielder.

To work with a tool is to leave an abstraction of information embedded in the material and form. This information is captured and can be read by focusing in on clues that the tools leave behind. The tool becomes part of the work and is captured within the artwork’s aura. Aram

Moshayedi writes in “Stories of Almost Everyone”, “This arresting power brought forth like an incantation, a summoning, or a conjuring - goes by many names. For some it is called the *aura*, for others it is know simply as the *object’s inner life*.”

The Value

The value of the crafted object is relevant to its abundance or scarcity. For most of the history of making the makers were considered lower class, and often enslaved. Most records of the makers are kept within the products that they created. From looking at how an object was crafted we can begin to see what not only the society valued, but also the individual maker. It is through the act of looking at a historical object that we are able to recontextualize it and see not its purpose, but rather a lens where the object has been stripped of its purpose, and only seeing it aesthetically.

Medieval time periods guilds were created to strengthen craftspeople through numbers. The abundance of many people working with the same skills in a condensed area became a shift where goods were not used for local use, but rather traded through large network of different people. This trade beget more trade and initiated a trend where it was not only crafted objects that were traded, but also the materials to craft as well. An example of this moment is lapis lazuli being traded out of Afghanistan during the Renaissance for blue pigment in paintings.

During my third semester of graduate school my work shifted towards focusing on the overabundant commodified objects that fill the 21st Century. I began to research the making of specific objects that I was surrounded by, and questioning their own independent histories and those that made them. Unlike the handcrafted objects of the past where you could gain a glimpse of the person that made it, the mass-produced objects of the now are made to remove the hand in favor of a clean identical standard. There is a quote that perfectly sums up the state of the commodified object from Milton Friedman’s 1980 PBS special, *Free to Choose*.

“Look at this lead pencil. There’s not a single person in the world who could make this pencil. Remarkable statement? Not at all. The wood from which it is made, for all I know, comes from a tree that was cut down in the state of Washington. To cut down that tree, it took a saw. To make the saw, it took steel. To make steel, it took iron ore. This black center—we call it lead but it’s really graphite, compressed graphite—I’m not sure where it comes from, but I think it comes from some mines in South America. This red top up here, this eraser, a bit of rubber, probably comes from Malaya, where the rubber tree isn’t even native! It was imported from South America by some businessmen with the help of the British government. This brass ferrule? [*Self-effacing laughter.*] I haven’t the slightest idea where it came from. Or the yellow paint! Or the paint that made the black lines. Or the glue that holds it together. Literally thousands of people co-operated to make this pencil. People who don’t speak the same language, who practice different religions, who might hate one another if they ever met! When you go down to the store and buy this pencil, you are in effect trading a few minutes of your time for a few seconds of the time of all those thousands of people. What brought them together and induced them to cooperate to make this pencil? There was no commissar sending ... out orders from some central office. It was the magic of the price system: the impersonal operation of prices that brought them together and got them to cooperate, to make this pencil, so you could have it for a trifling sum.”

My artwork shifted from centering on the overabundant objects. I realized that by focusing in on the hand crafted objects is to take a stance on a way of making that I value. It often feels that the world is speeding up and consuming more and with my artwork I have made the decision that there is importance in creating a moment of slowing down.

The Object

I find that to craft something, to bring an object into being through the use of my hands, eyes, mind, and tools is to relate to an expansive history of being human. There is an aura to

the crafted object, the essence that surrounds the object. That is not to say that it is not also present within the found object, but they are so vastly different. Objects are (often created) for purpose, over time this purpose may become less valued, or perhaps the value may be replaced for one that is anthropological, historical, or visual. When the aura fades the object's history and significance is to some degree lost with it. The object is one attached to a moment and as time moves on the aura shifts from function to artifact. Crafted objects for use lose their importance, they become more revered and appreciated for their appearance and become a bridge for understanding our collective past.

The Display

Display is such an important component for how I think about my work; I have created a methodology for individual components to become activated by existing as a group. The display of an object is not only about its role within the space, but also how the viewer experiences it. I assume that every artist thinks about display with their work, but it goes beyond the individual art piece. I am more interested in how the art objects exist within a framed space together. For me, display becomes a further act of making. The singular object is decided with other objects in mind; I see it is similar to the arrangement of characters in a play, or the multiple instruments that are needed to create a song. But, instead of this experience existing in time it is one that happens in space. Variations in visual language are considered and at a first glance obvious shifts are made such as material, color, value, and scale. But other factors are also decided such as variations of mark making, the visual weight of objects, and the spacing between groupings of objects.

The context of where individual works are placed and what they are placed on is relating to a history of viewing. Within *Seeing Through Feeling* I am considering the plinth, pedestal, table, and shelf as all acting as a stage for work to exist. No artworks are placed directly on the

floor or extend from the wall as a concuss effort to allow the viewer to move around the artworks, while also creating a firm stance on the divide between the viewers and the art.

There is a direct correlation for how I feel towards the act of experiencing sculpture to that of Constantin Brancusi's studio practice. The Romanian artist spent most of his artistic career in Paris where he used his studio as an exhibition space for his artworks. He considered the space occupied by his sculptures to often be more crucial than what the sculptures were. And he believed this relationship between the artworks and space to be crucial experience for understanding his artwork. Towards the end of his life he no longer created new sculptures, but rather focused on the relationships of already existing works as a way to search for unity.

The Collection

I have been considering the act of not only artist as maker, but how the role shifts as artist as collector. This has permitted an expansion of the framing for what I determine to included into my practice. However, I have created boundaries of what found objects are used within the work through personal connections, fragments relating to a history of making, or the mass-produced objects becoming unique over time. There is a moment that I am searching for where the collection of objects, found and handmade, begin to communicate together. It is with the collection that the objects become something more than the singular object. This expands the dialogue of nonverbal communication between various objects and the viewer. The conversation is one that weaves through different points of time and place, but is still contingent upon the act of making as subject. When I select the objects for display and arrange them in the specific way they are *complete* for only the moment. I am interested in how the objects will change over time; whether it is ten, twenty, a hundred, or a thousand years. I am excited for the possibilities of continuous change that objects go through and the time when these artworks will become fragments for the future. Time will take hold of each of these objects, and at a point each one will transition from art object to artifact.

Conclusion

The relationship between collecting and making are more intertwined for me now. I see collecting as a form of making and there are decisions that take over for what is collected. I have a deep love of craft, and respect for those that make. My own perspective towards my studio practice is not based solely on the role of the curator, collector, historian, theorist, or maker. It is rather how I can adapt each of these positions and borrow aspects of each of these methodologies. This is no singular approach that defines my practice, but rather the multiple key components that are constantly in conversation: hand, eye, symbol, object, value, display, and collection. These ways of seeing are always in flux, and I believe that is crucial. It is how I move through the world that shapes my practice.

Bibliography

- Archibald, Sasha. "Ways of Seeing". *Cabinet Magazine* , Issue 30. Summer, 2008.
- Baxandall, Michael. *Painting & Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*. Oxford Un. Press. 1955.
- Benjamin, Walter. "The Task of the Translator". *Selected Writings Volume 1, 1913-1926*. Harvard University Press. 1996.
- Calvino, Italo. "Lightness", "Exactitude", *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*. First Mariner Books. 2016.
- Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the 19th Century*. The MIT Press. 1992.
- Didi-Huberman, Georges. "The Order of Materials". Petra Lange-Berndt. *Materiality*. Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art. 2015.
- Geist, Sidney. *Brancusi: a Study of the Sculpture*. Hacker, 1983.
- ICA Boston, "The Artist's Voice: Carol Bove | The Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston", <https://www.icaboston.org/events/artist's-voice-carol-bov>. ICA Boston. 2017.
- Lessing, Gotthold. *Laocoon, An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*. The John Hopkins University Press, 1984.
- McCullough, Malcolm. *Abstracting Craft: the Practiced Digital Hand*. MIT Press, 1998.
- Obrist, Hans Ulrich. *Ways of Curating*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux Press. 2016.
- Preziosi, Donald. "Collecting and Museums". Nelson, Robert S., *Critical Terms for Art History*. The University of Chicago Press. 2003.
- Smith, Terry. "Production". Nelson, Robert S., *Critical Terms for Art History*. The University of Chicago Press. 2003.
- Wagner, Moika. "Material". Petra Lange-Berndt. *Materiality* . Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art. 2015.

Figures



Figure 1. "Untitled (Collection)" 2018. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.



Figure 2. "Untitled (Collection)" 2018. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.



Figure 3. "Untitled (Seeing Through Feeling)" 2019. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.



Figure 4. "Untitled (Seeing Through Feeling)" 2019. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.



Figure 5. "Untitled (Seeing Through Feeling)" 2019. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.

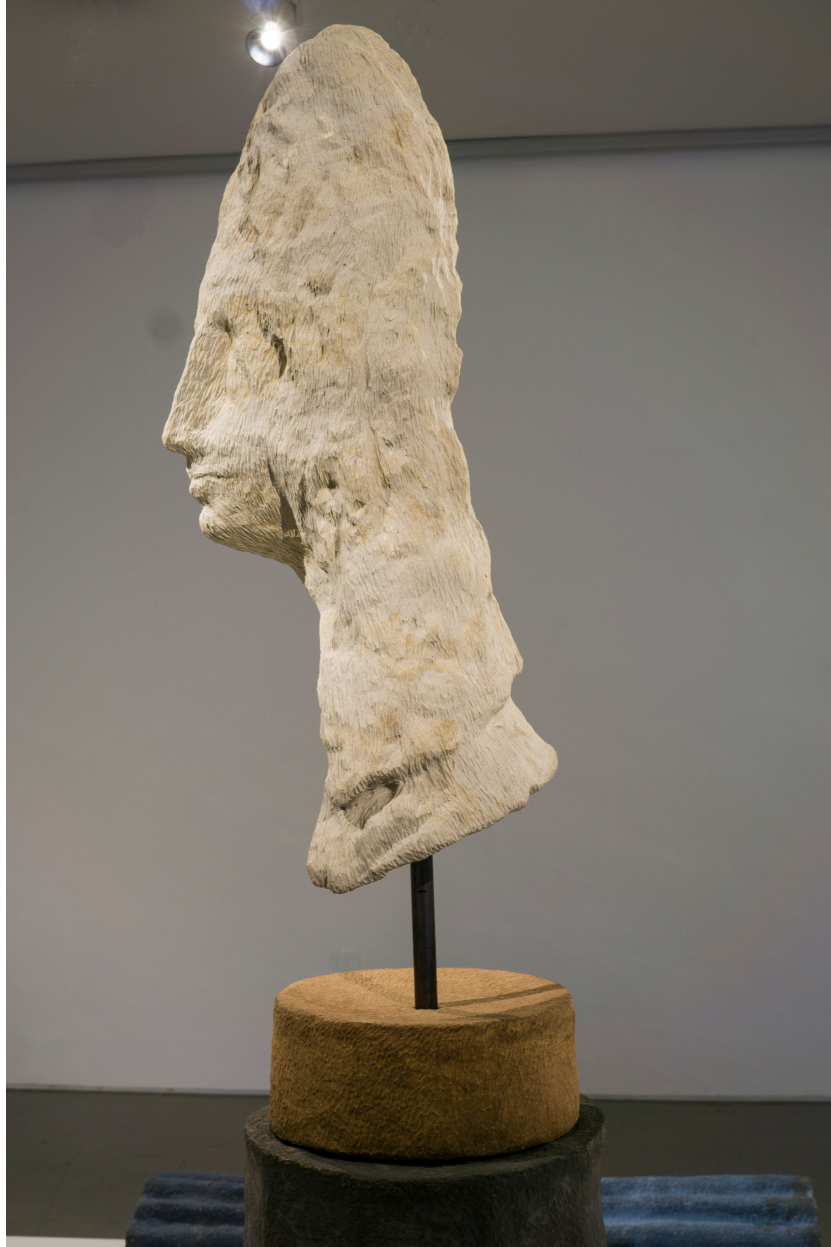


Figure 6. "Untitled (Seeing Through Feeling)" 2019. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.



Figure 7. "Untitled, (Crossed Paths Along the Way)" 2019. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.

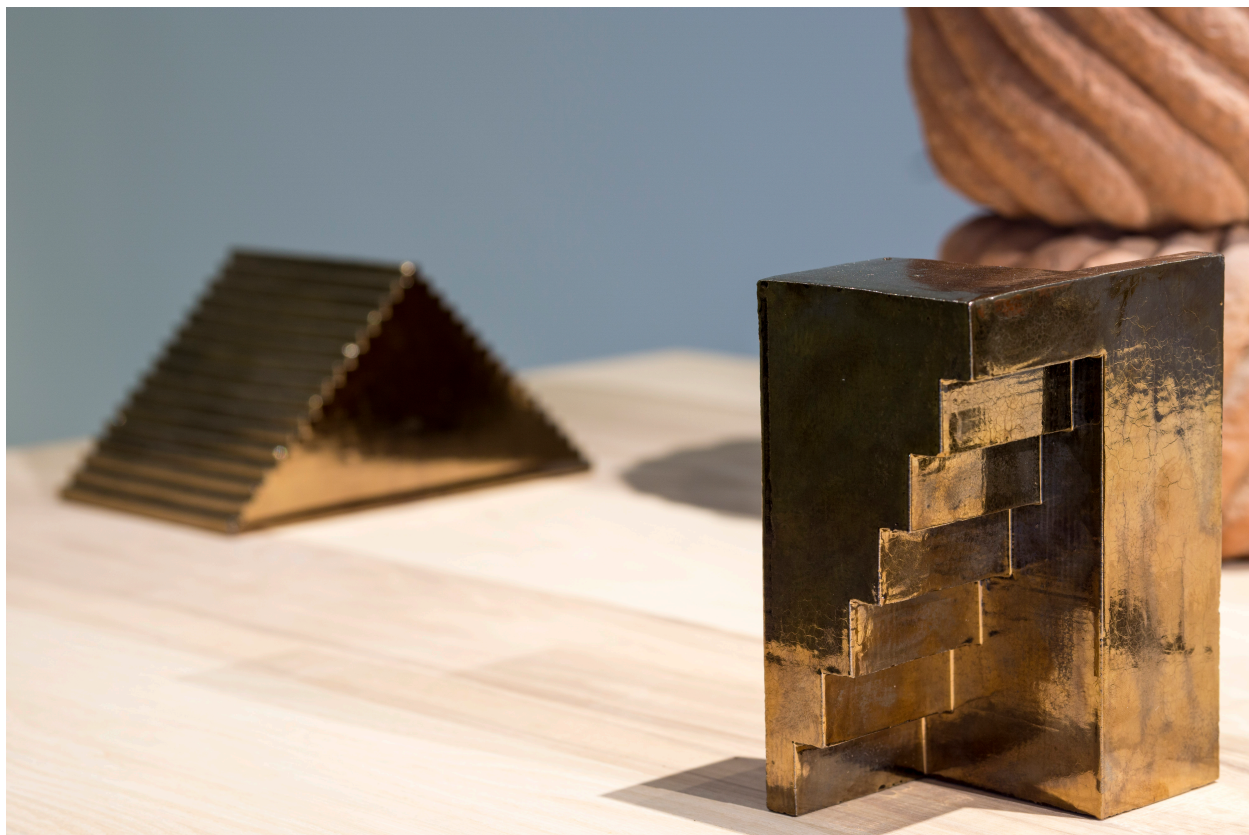


Figure 8. "Untitled, (Crossed Paths Along the Way)" 2019. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.

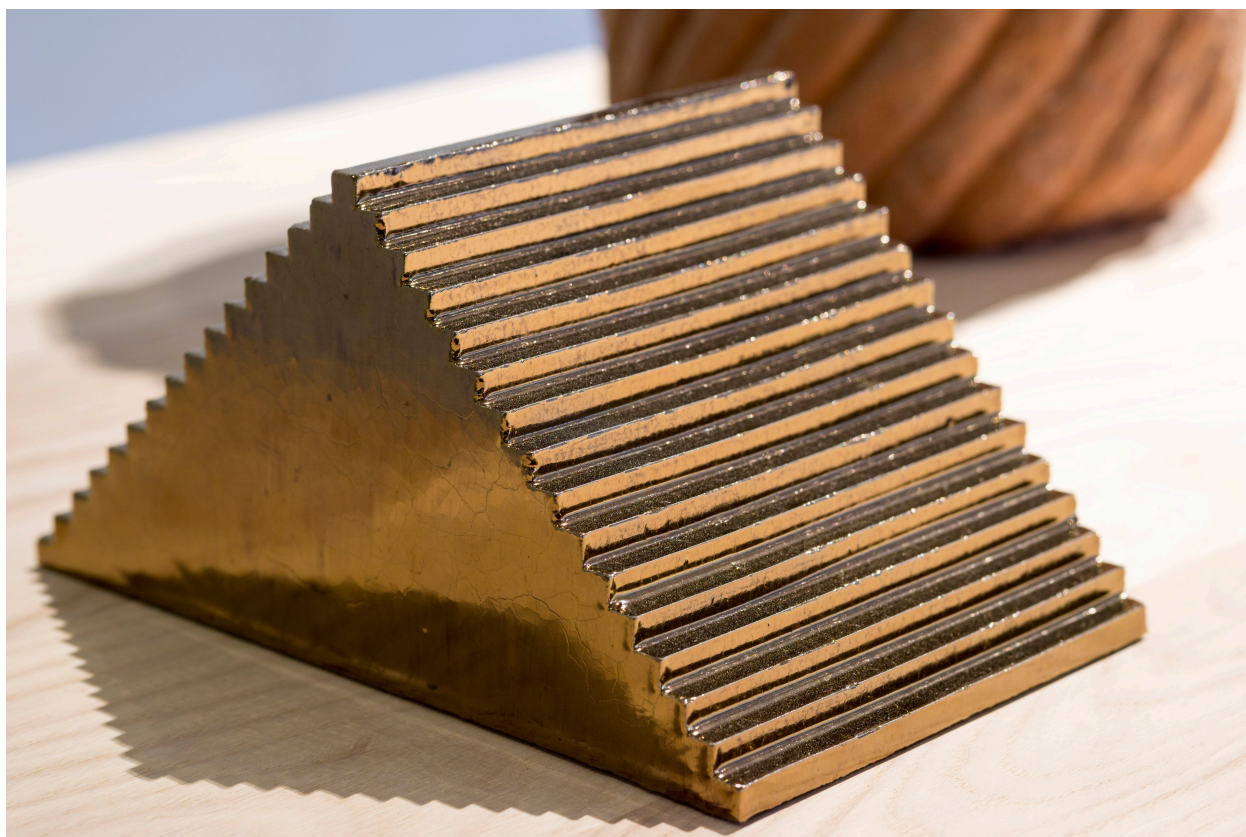


Figure 9. "Untitled, (Crossed Paths Along the Way)" 2019. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.



Figure 10. "Untitled, (Crossed Paths Along the Way)" 2019. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.



Figure 11. "Untitled, (Memento to Making)" 2019. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.



Figure 12. "Untitled, (Memento to Making)" 2019. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.



Figure 13. "Untitled, (Memento to Making)" 2019. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.



Figure 14. "Untitled, (Memento to Making)" 2019. Mixed media. Dimensions Variable. Photo by artist.