

Queries - artist statements



Thomas Gartside

There is a wealth of meaning in the objects in our lives. With use and familiarity, however, the meanings of the objects evolve and the original meanings are sometimes forgotten. Seeing and photographing the objects allows me to rediscover the power of their original meanings. But even the meaning of these photographs changes over time, adding yet another layer of complexity.

Most of this body of work is based on collections that I have assembled. The most recent pieces, though, included in this exhibition, are based on objects collected by my late mother. Specifically, they are religious objects, and the imagery they embody is highly charged.

There are many queries at the core of my collections work. How does the act of photographing an object change its meaning and, more specifically, what happens when the conventions of portraiture are employed to aggrandize and glorify an object? What part of the effect on meaning comes from the translation from three- to two-dimensionality? How are the roles of collector and representing artist similar and different? How do the renderings of individual objects in a collection create and support a system of ideas?



Daniel Loewenstein

My work is, essentially, a quirky look at everyday things. Through unexpected combinations of various familiar objects and surfaces, I attempt to transform the mundane into the wondrous. I want the work to be edgy, while maintaining a formal elegance. I add to the mix humor and physical sensuality, to engage and beguile the viewer. I am fascinated by the potentially multi-faceted readings of symbols and metaphors and, in particular, how an everyday object can be transformed into an archetype.

I am interested in how language affects our perception and, specifically, how naming a thing can change its meaning. Does calling a shovel *The Shovel With Which We Buried Our Father* somehow change how we see that shovel, all shovels? Is our experience of 'shovel' now bound to our perception of *its* past and potential future or *our* past and potential future? When we see a shovel again, are we reminded of our fathers? Has the shovel become an expression of filial devotion?

For most of my career I focused on sculptural installation, much of it ephemeral and transient. During this time the work would start with everyday objects like a typewriter, brick, shovel, suitcase, or plastic bag. For the last five years I have focused on printmaking, mostly etching and photo-etching. This has given me an opportunity to turn to the bits of two-dimensional ephemera I have collected over the years. My conceptual practice hasn't significantly changed in my foray into two-dimensionality. The work starts with something found: a wing carcass, doodle, fist print, clock hand, license plate. The "found thing" is the thread that links all of my work.

I use titles to play with these ideas; sometimes they get very long, drawing attention to the language itself. There is an interesting duality when an image of an old bird-wing carcass can be literally *Something the Cats Dragged In* and, simultaneously, part of a built fiction: *Flying Guiltboy's Wing*. I am also interested in taxonomy—how a thing is named. In the "Tripedal Wingless Leatherbird" series, some of the images acquire a long list of attributes that become their name, such as *Green Crested Tripedal Wingless Leatherbird with a Warted Homunculus*. The title is whimsical but it embodies the authority of a taxonomic system. Even the list of materials can be an opportunity for play: this series includes *Sculpey* lips and store-bought eyelashes.



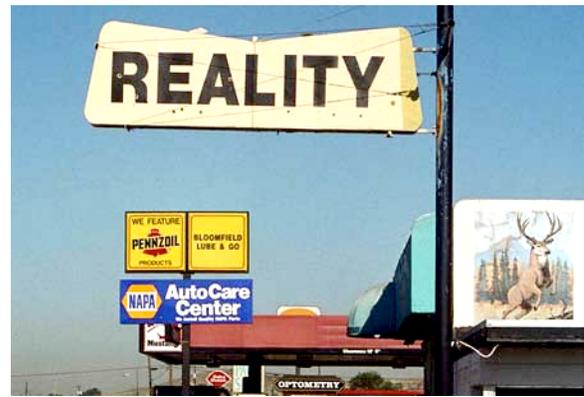
Virginia Maksymowicz

My sculpture attempts to examine the phenomenon of Bullwinkle as a metaphorical interpretation of Maurizio Cattelan within the context of critical thinking. And, what began as a personal journey of *wowism* has translated into images of *kielbasa* and nipples that resonate with the *Lemko* people, who question their own redness.

My mixed-media plasters embody an idiosyncratic view of the Dalai Lama, yet the familiar imagery allows for a connection between Patrick McGoohan, random objects and *pierogi*.

My work is in the private collection of Gavin MacLeod who said "Geez!, that's some real conceptual art."

I am a recipient of a grant from the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women, where I served time for stealing mugs and tie clips from the gift shop at MoMA. I have exhibited in group shows at In-N-Out Burger and Amos Eno Gallery, though not simultaneously. I currently spend my time between my bedroom and Berlin.



Blaise Tobia

My work being shown in “Queries” comes from an ongoing series, “Observations and Interventions.” While, in some sense, all photography engages in these two activities, these pieces are particular *observations*—of bits of text found in the world, and several of them are literally *interventions*—in that they have been significantly “photoshopped” (to use a recently coined verb). With many of these pieces, the title is part of the work, shaping the way in which the viewer may perceive it.

Verbal/visual relationships have been a central concern for me, all the way back to grad school. How is a photograph “read” by the human mind; how far can words be pushed into *visuality* before they stop functioning as normal linguistic signifiers? I don’t believe that there is a great gulf between pictures and words; they interact; they even substitute for each other. We see one through the agency of the other; we understand the other through the agency of the one. Recent physiological studies show that we literally “think” in words; that is, our little inner voice is just that, a voice, even when we aren’t actually speaking out loud. So any critical engagement with an image involves language. We can’t, in fact, observe without intervening.



John Woodin

I hold a strong belief in photography’s ability to analyze the world around us. As a documentary photographer, I use the photographic process to deepen my understanding of the world and my place in it. My most successful photographs tell visual stories and utilize highly specific subjects as a way to pose universal questions about the meaning of human existence.

My photographs were made over the course of the last six years in my hometown, New Orleans, as I’ve sought to compare the city pre- and post-Katrina. A selection of these images makes up my exhibition and recent book, *City of Memory*. The photographs chosen for “Queries” are distinct from those in the book, less about comparison and more about idiosyncrasies. They fall into two broad categories: disturbed places and compelling objects.