

Michael Carter: Doubting Thomas Artist's Statement

My work is a deliberate attempt at a personal sense of wrongness. I believe that encountering this wrongness is more sincere and revealing of myself and my audience than any attempt at correctness could be. I feel there is a vulnerability and exposure in being the first to speak up, to leap before looking, to react without thinking, analyze or process experience.

My work is an unresolved complexity. There's a tension, the parts all demand to keep their separate and distinct natures and there's a failure to achieve a minimal consensus of shared values. Nothing ever resolves or rests, neither is it a hybrid or a static pluralism of equals. I find the greatest value is in the strategically irrational and judiciously nonsensical. Perfection is consistently achievable — Serendipity is more effective than knowing and designing an outcome.

My research is not product of legitimate, proper or recognized science. My objects are aesthetically alchemical, mystical and mythological. They are willfully dumb, intentionally obtuse, difficult and stubborn. They are the products of the scientific and material approached from the irrational, non-scientific and spiritual. In my process, I've found that failure is often more valuable than success; There can be more to learn from the rationally malformed and logically erroneous.

Consumer and post-consumer objects appeal to me because they are deceptively familiar. I use synthetic in all of its manifestations – artificial flowers, wood laminates, fluorescent lights, plastics, simulated materials, fluorescent colors – because it's not what it appears to be. I frequently use apertures and voids in my work to attempt the connecting of closed ideological systems, to complicate the relationship between surface and structure, and to formalize absence.

Our relationship with objects and space is a clue to our relationship to the material and our speculation and conception of the immaterial. A system of value is concretized and re-enforced in objects. I'm making art that goes in a home, hangs on the wall above a sofa for a reality that doesn't exist yet, for people who don't exist yet. Art that is normal (aesthetically safe) in a world of different values and institutions. I'm interested in monuments to cyclical time, mutability, transience and interconnectedness, and the form of nothingness. I'm making portable sites of phenomenological experience, manifesting my aspirations for contemporary and future consciousness in an object.

The triumph of pluralism isn't to accept what we agree with (to level or render all the same in a post- way), but to accept what we disagree with, violently reject and oppose. In my objects and spaces, I can consider the incompatible, conflicting and un-synthesizable – Give it time to alchemize, reveal hidden correspondences, and move the marginal to the center before habit and rational discrimination re-asserts known and expected categorization.