

OBJECTHOOD: VISIONS IN CONTEMPORARY ART

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at Hardcore Contemporary Art Space

By Milagros Bello

'Presentness is grace
--Michael Fried'

The show is a survey on the function and the tactile power of objects in contemporary art. The exhibition presents tridimensional pieces, installations, and assemblages revealing the inner quality of the object, its ontological resonance and its metaphorical intensity on the latest trends in contemporary art. The show presents politically charged works that exist somewhere between the realms of fantasy and reality.

OBJECTHOOD reviews the object's condition in the art field, and examines its inner state as a perceived physical entity by the viewer. It focuses and valorizes the object by their nature and their inner properties. Each work presents an internal coherence that congregates polemical connotations. Each of its elements alludes to critical factors of the world that surrounds us. Each participating artist proposes a crucial interrogation of our society.

Objects are not merely materials or structures. They involve or gather behind their physical presence, a hidden quote or a hot statement. They are mediums to perception and understanding of the world. Usually they gather an aura (W. Benjamin) or they involve a meaningful syntax (M. Fried) from which the viewer can catch up a conscious and a purposeful idea. Metaphoric or metonymic conceptions derive from this conscious perception. The viewer will be confronted to the metaphysical power of the object or to the substance underlined under its structure. Beyond Modernism paraphernalia or any other form of traditional approach to art, the show proposes a synergic group of artists that exhale a passionate enthusiasm for meta- narratives through an exhilarating and oblique vision of the contextual political, sociological world.

More than twenty artists, through the use of, or their manipulation of objects, apprehend crucial segments of micro or macrocosmic situations of our society. There is a great variety of materials, often using what is to hand, industrial material, fabrics and found objects to sophisticated and meticulous creations in which the object becomes axial protagonist. Aisen Chacin recounts on her journey to the Favelas in Brazil; in an organized tourist visit she did to this crucial world of social confrontation and poverty. Her installation, The Secluded, 2007 configures a sewer-like drainage under which one discovers photographs of smiling children of this micro world, showing their blue or brown eyes, as an ironic allusion to the multi-ethnic diversity of Latin America. Adriana Carvalho proposes: Frida, 2006, a sculpture made out of recycled items, and assembling unexpected domestic materials in a hot allusion to this strong feminine icon. Aleksandra Ska proposes redNIM, 2007, somewhat a beautiful baby sleeping bag over which one finds embroidered erotic drawings in an ironic allusion to what lies behind appearances. Alette Simmons-Jimenez with "The Compelling Forces of Celestial Objects", 2006 is a four piece installation hanging from the ceiling; a sort of a ready made composing elaborate and intermingled web of collected elements as a sharp allegory to the meticulous and hard labor of women. Andres

Michelena's peculiar work is an acrylic box containing a self-sustained aquatic habitat with Einstein's formula crafted over the surface of the acrylic; it is an idealistic vision of a self-sustained society through invisible action and energy. Angela Dicosola's "The Clay Menagerie", 2007 is multi-unit installation presenting a gallery of human characters casted in ceramics. Animalistic forms morph out social stereotypes of our current times. Carl Pascuzzi's sculpture/object "Big Bang", 2007 from his Sugar Buddies Series deals with sex and pop culture; the sharp-to touch and razor edge parts of the piece conveys excessiveness and lush, pleasure and pain, in a kind of orgasmic explosion of suggestive sensual images. Carolina Sanllehi's Autism Series, 2007 shows three small pieces made out of miniature toys, contained inside visual narratives of the stages of autism; a baby reposing under his crib shows already the early symptoms of this irreversible illness.

Ena Marrero's "So Far, So Near" 2007 is a peculiar installation on global environmental issues; a pony and a deer calmly exchange in a familiar beauty but their bodies present disturbing contrasts: kitchen Glad wrap and cellophane form their skin, animal fur grows disorderly on their bodies strongly alluding to the unpredictable changes on DNA in contemporary genetic manipulation. Grimanesa Amoros's "King Me, Dominate Me" 2007 is a sculptural piece strongly connected to her autobiography, and as a reflection of the cycles of the feminine body; the work shows her nipples at the time of her pregnancy casted out in hype realistic latex material; strongly interplaying between artistic expression and everyday life experience. Hye Rim Lee's "Mini TOKI", 2003-2007 is a plastic blowup dolls installation that conveys status as a mass-produced ready made feminine icon: Toki is a cyborg / computer generated creature in which Lee explores gender politics and women's sexuality. "Glue Pain Ghost", 2007 music performance and video by the artistic duo Jane Hsu (visual artist) & Juan Calderon (composer) shows a found popcorn maker with a video inside presenting eerie images, -such as a colossal corpse-smelling flower that blooms in the dark. The musicians react to the random images that light up from the popcorn maker. JLo's anonymous work comes from Graffiti and street art; it is a gallery intervention with drawings of anthropomorphic figures, made out anonymously during night time in the facade of the gallery. Nobody knows her identity! The three piece sculpture installation "Everyone Wants a Piece of Collection" 2007 by Jonathan Stein shows pop celebrities icons over pewter platters. "Everyone Wants A Piece of Britney" shows Britney's naked body as a large three dimensional parody cake with a piece cut in her vaginal area. Stein reflects with sharp irony over the addiction for celebrities' lives and gossip.

Juan-Si's "In the name of God: Odios, Oh Dios!" 2007 performance and object installation conveys a reflection on authority and power through objectified symbols such as the American uniform and other strong social paraphernalia. Leszek Knaflewski's Spirit, 2007 proposes a sculptural life-size fictional soldier, all dressed in black with a camera in hand showing incisive political and war images; Milcho's installation "A Tribute to Beauty" 2007 presents a video projected over a bath tub filled with water, showing a naked pregnant woman surrounded by half eaten apples, and reciting a poetry as a tribute to woman's vital cycle of giving life. Nina Dotti's installation reflects on the stereotypes of contemporary families in the world of global consumerism. Pepe Lopez presents us his "Terrorist travel kit", 2005, a hilarious camping container with various kinds of consumer gadgets and objects as an incisive reflection on addiction and consumerism. Rafael Gonzalez Moreno's installation presents two toy-like war ships casted out in synthetic material, replicating the current war scenarios, in a childlike manner. Rochi Llana's "Domestic Projection", 2007 is a trepidation house of invasive and eroded forms as a manifestation and mirror of the house as metaphor of disruption and troubles, happiness and sadness. Rogelio

Baez-Vega's Object Bearer of Spiritual Values No. 4 is a tire rim of a luxurious automobile questioning social status and hierarchy in a high ranked culture of fake social values.

The object as a ready-made also inquires on the power of its pure aesthetic physicality. Stephanie Jaffe Werner's "Shoe Fly Pie" in a humorous play of words signals cultural references to the traditional Pennsylvania Dutch dessert "Shoo Fly Pie". Jaffe Werner's piece has broken the linguistics of this tradition to another visual construct in which the sugar or spice have been changed for glass or sass. It is also an allusion to the triumph over oppression of Cinderella's glass slipper. Suzanne Scherer & Pavel Ouporov artistic duo's installation "Glossolalia", 2007 explores the relationship between language and nature through hundreds of transparent words in diverse languages hand printed and suspended in front of an immense photographic image of a banyan tree, symbolizing mother, moon, womb, home, sea night darkness and death. Combining visual and written linguistics the artists undergo to the roots of human civilization.

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