

NEGAR AZIMI

***DARREN BADER**

TESS EDMONSON

PETER ELEEY

BRUCE HAINLEY

KOENIG BOOKS, LONDON

LUCA LO PINTO

JESSE WILLENBRING

ANDREW NORMAN WILSON

DENA YAGO

*There is a horse's head rolling along the surface of the sky: it is the sun
There is a horse's head rolling across the earth: it is the receptacle of sweetness
There is a man's head rolling across the earth: it is the person who hasn't solved the enigma
of the horse's head -Roberto Calasso (Parks)*

*How useful an office one's friends perform when they recall us [yet how painful to be
recalled, to be mitigated, to...] -Virginia Woolf*

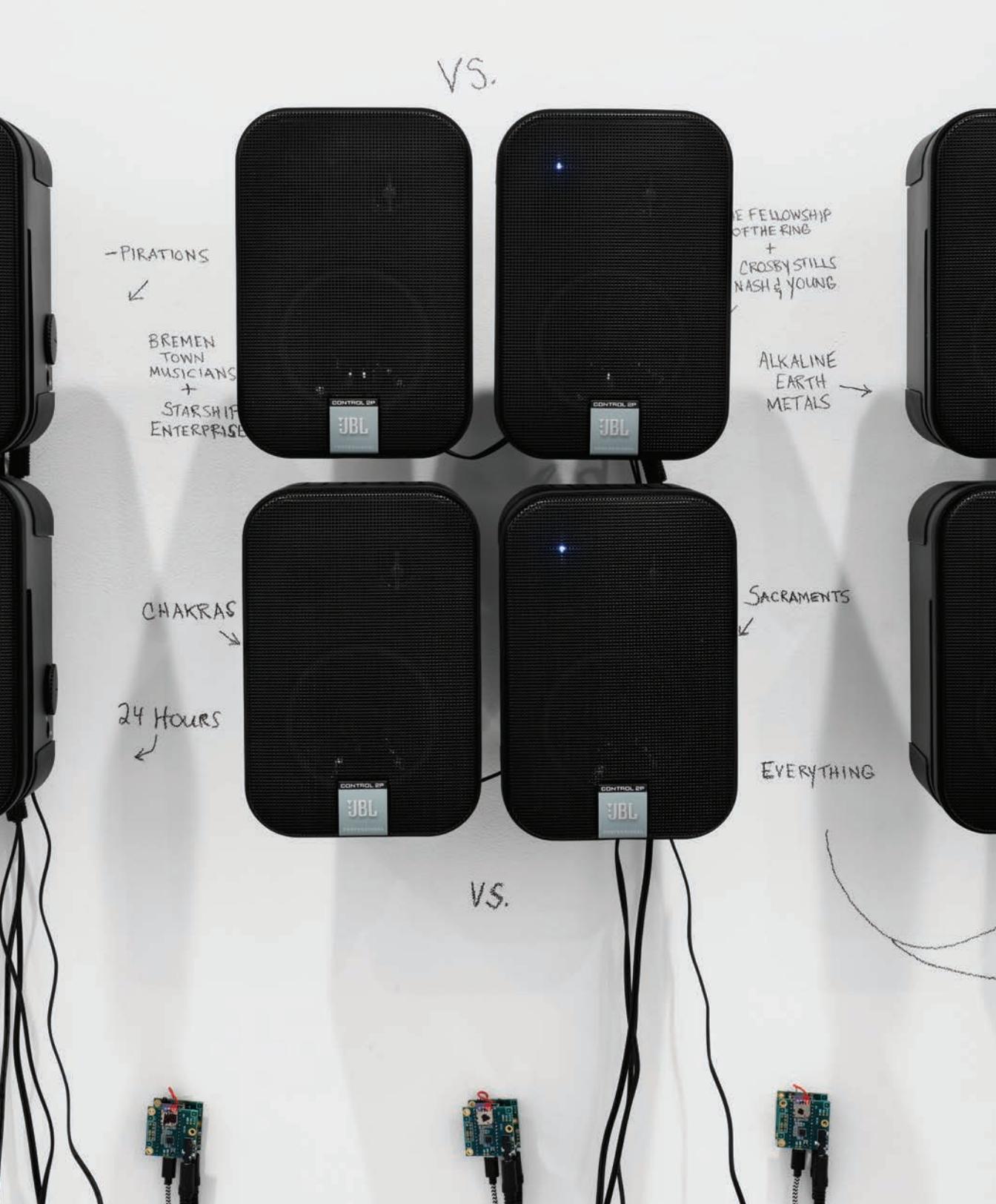
However, intellectual conviction is rarely stronger than self-interest -Eric Hobsbawm

Cows With Names Make More Milk



PETER ELEEY

BRUCE HAINLEY



PE:

I recently saw—or heard or read—Darren’s show *Forest/Trees* in New York, which may be best described as an installation composed of a series of sound works. The walls are filled all the way around the room with three staggered rows of black speakers (the middle of which is roughly head-height), wires dangling down to source equipment mounted lower on the wall, and power cables beneath on the floor. There are probably over a hundred speakers. On the wall next to each one is written some word, or phrase, in pencil, synopsising the search term(s) that Darren used to find the song that is playing. “LOCK STOCK + BARREL” with “FORM FIT + FUNCTION” and “ME MYSELF + I”; more apparently random juxtapositions like “FACE CARDS” and “THE APOSTLES.” Within this “forest” are individually composed groupings that form certain works, offered, as I recall, in editions of 1 plus an artist’s proof, which is an odd, if common, way of saying there are two; some are unique. When you enter, your primary experience is white noise, though you can make out the contours of songs when you get closer to each speaker. There is a bowl of earplugs (purple and orange varieties) at the front desk, along with the ever-important press release—here called “A ‘brief’ explanation of the show”—and a list of works. The release is signed “Darren Bader” and dated “5/17,” both of which can be considered somewhat unusual, in that Darren rarely dates his works and often confounds his name and authorship. The release concludes by drawing the reader’s attention to a work in the show (which is to say, proposed within the framework of its checklist) that asks the putative owner to create a perfume from at least thirty-seven other perfumes. One might imagine it being marketed as a scent called “Forest.” The work is offered as an edition of 3. Is Darren a pop artist? Or a pop lyricist? Or a lyrical popist (not that all writers need be lyricists)?

BH:

I have a different/similar question: Is he a writer manqué, whatever that might mean?

PE:

All those parentheticals, slashes, hyphens, italics, footnotes ... There are so many provisional accoutrements and modifiers, concomitant ironies/sincerities in tone and fact, essential explanation alongside irrelevance. I think that irrelevance (and associated banalities) is one of DB's major mediums. And in this he shares an awful lot with Douglas Huebler.

BH: Curious that you should mention Monsieur Huebler. Despite the early summer heat, which elbowed its way rudely through the perfect June gloom, and speaking of forests, I've been mulling over *A Forest of Signs: Art in the Crisis of Representation*, an exhibition organized at MoCA in Los Angeles by Ann Goldstein and Mary Jane Jacob in 1989. The following year, David Lynch would put Twin Peaks (population 51,201, soon discovered to be 51,200) on the map of our collective unconscious. DB would have been twelve years old. I know *A Forest of Signs* only through its catalogue, and I trot out this specific history to agree, very much, that Huebler is in da house (perhaps first and foremost through some of his students, artists who make their claims in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, many of them teaching at CalArts), before being smacked by the powerful reverberations,





still, of Mike Kelley's great essay on Huebler, "Shall We Kill Daddy?," especially its conclusion: "And now I will attempt the impossible by stating that the 'generation gap' (a term that makes your skin crawl just saying it) no longer exists. We now live in a paradoxical community of dialectical, brotherly love free from distinctions based solely on chronology." "Hooray!" he exclaims, adding one, final, crucial caveat, formatted as a single closing paragraph unto itself: "That's not to say that we are equals, however."

Larry Johnson once told me about going to Huebler's memorial. How few artists, or people at all, attended. Larry drove to CalArts for the service with Stephen Prina. Mike was the only artist to give a eulogy. Mike (via LJ): "Doug was a lousy teacher, but he was a really great artist, and that's a good combination for a school in some instances."

Sweat is accumulating under my dugs and dripping from my pits. I'm going to get a glass of water and flick the AC on. Be right back.

OK, cutting to the chase: sure, it's coincidence, but let's consider the coincidence in relation to DB. *A Forest of Signs* included Mike Kelley (not only his idea of equivalence—"just because something may look equal doesn't make it so"—but also, *The Uncanny*, his contribution to Sonsbeek 93, especially the resulting book); Sherrie Levine (her *taking* pictures, a choice mini-summa I steal from Craig Owens), and, perhaps most crucially, re DB, Haim Steinbach, who situated his endeavor as incorporating "a stronger sense of being complicit with the production of desire, what we traditionally call beautiful seductive objects, than being positioned somewhere outside of it."

But, of course, *A Forest of Signs* ... because of Baudelaire, the title for the show taken from his *Correspondances*, particularly the last two lines of its first quatrain:



L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.

The things, the symbols, aren't observed—they *observe*. Actively.

DB dares to have Courbet and Caravaggio in his dialectical squad, and, given the surround, why not?

When Haim sketched his procedures—it was 1986—there was still, I guess, an outside. The crisis—it's difficult for me not to hear "AIDS crisis" behind *A Forest's* subtitle—was one of representation. Now, the crisis is global, *viral* in a newfangled way; different representational platforms add to the havoc, like gasoline to a fire. I'm not sure there still is an outside. Is anything any longer outside (of) art? This might be a problem.

1986 is the year of David Hammons's *Selling Snowballs*, on St. Mark's Place; at least one of them ends up in his *Snowball Installation* at Just Above Midtown Gallery the same year. When Kellie Jones interviews him for *Real Life* soon after, he, not she, kicks the convo off: "I can't stand art actually. I've never, ever liked art, ever. I never took it in school."

Instead of snowballs, DB bakes up scones, James Earl scones, which might only ever be linguistic, a fiction.

I don't believe DB hates art. He's on record in a PPS near the close of *Life as a Readymade*: "Do I care? Probably."

Is he a pop artist? A pop lyricist?

One way I could respond would be to ask, "Is Justin Bieber a pop artist?"



Mike's ghost is piping up again. What's that, Mike?

"That's not to say that they are equals, however."

Right, Mike.

I'll doff my bucket hat, as his ghost floats off to dance with some goth girls, and put it this way: only if Courbet and Baudelaire are; only if Levine and Hammons are. They put the things observing them on notice and gave them a tune.

PE:

Notice and tune, check. So who is observing Darren, and how? Or I guess I would add, more specifically: *What* is observing Darren? Because all the looking and monitoring is mediated, omniscient/omnipresent and invisible, personal and impersonal. And those conditions are part of what makes me feel that his is an art acutely tuned to our time—an era of extreme exhibitionism and surveillance, of identity performance and coerced participation, of personal brands built around narrated visual "material" posted to the interwebs, of contingent authenticity and insistent sincerity. He is observing an unreliable observer with the requisite, um, unreliability?

Hence all the shifts and instabilities around naming—his own, and others. The way language drapes over people and objects and places and feelings, and its slippery suppleness. And the vital questions he raises around the value of (brand) names and social power. It is part of what surrounds his works that involve (or propose the involvement of) celebrities and charities, and the deployment of that surplus value for bigger ends. It won't surprise you that this makes me think of Sturtevant, and her name games from a different era. I'm reminded of a little newspaper comic prominently embedded into the encaustic white space in one of her *Johns Flag* paintings from 1967. A guy is on the phone saying, "Every one of those globs of paint hanging in the Freeman Galleries





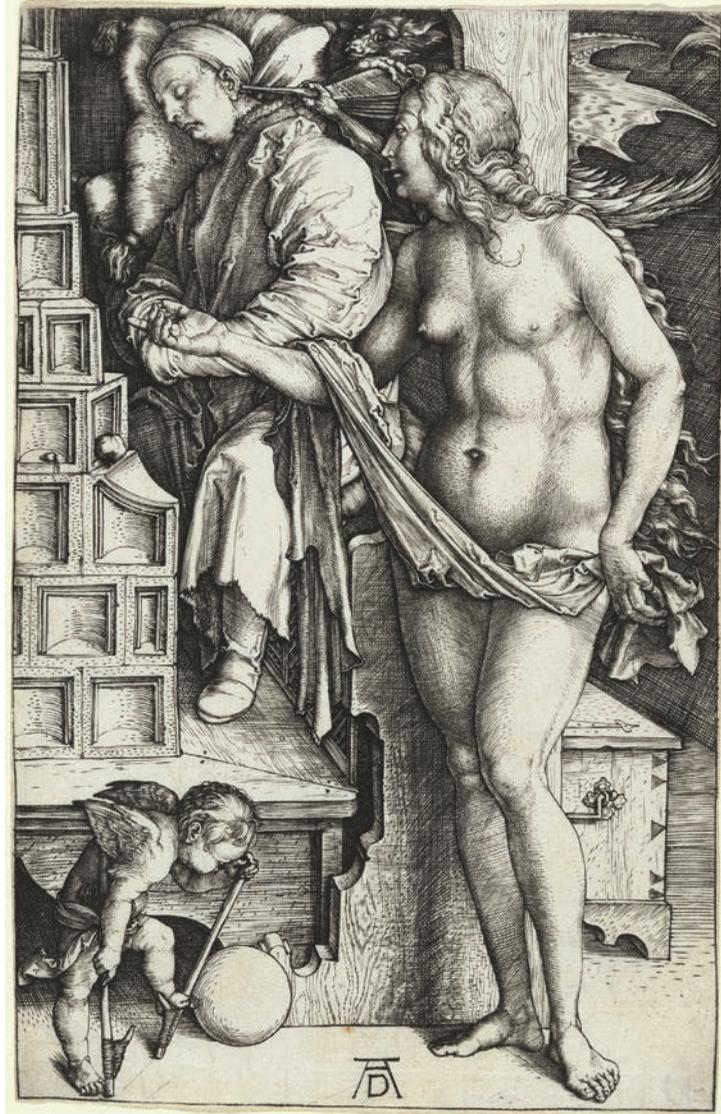
has been sold!" In the next cell: "That's great! The Everheart name shall live on down through ..."

Through history, I guess. Sturtevant surely had Lichtenstein in mind there as much as Mr. Johns—the classic 1962 "Why, Brad darling, this painting is a masterpiece! My, soon you'll have all of New York clamoring for your work!" As it happens, this painting belonged until recently to Agnes Gund, our board chair at MoMA PS1. She just sold it for \$165 million so that she could endow a new criminal justice program at the Ford Foundation. Like Sturtevant, there's a lady knows what's in a name, and what you can do with it. That whole scenario could almost have been a Darren piece, using art and its outsized value to different ends and more conscientious effects.

A bit like making cats into art so that people might be more likely to adopt them. But naturally insisting that they are made out of materials other than themselves, ludicrously naming them on the accompanying labels as cats made out of crab meat or orangutan flesh, for example. Albeit with the usual humility. "If you don't want your cat to be an artwork, I won't force it on you! (But please don't let the titles influence your decision—the cats didn't sign off on them.)"

Which takes us back to the name game.





Darren contributed a piece to a show I organized this year, and supplied the following biographical information about himself for publication:

“Darren Bader is an artist working in [some] place(s) [some] time(s). You might be able to find his work (/him) using ...” and then goes on to list URLs for Waze, Google, Google Maps, and concludes by saying, “Other apps may work as well.”

This pronounced combination of specificity and vagueness suffuses DB’s work and is also among those characteristics that most make him, uh, timely? He is exactly, perfectly honest, which is to say as honest as he can be in whatever setting. He makes work sometimes, and he lives somewhere but also moves around. As with all artists, his work can be conflated with him but must also be understood distinctly. He strictly controls this biographical information and its wording and punctuation, but admits that the information about him—and us—is collected, sorted, stored, and controlled elsewhere, by others. This biographical summary itself is its own kind of artwork, if we use profundity as a yardstick.

Related: for sure he doesn’t hate art, even if we can imagine him saying, “If you don’t want me to be an artist, I won’t force it on you!” He has gone to great lengths to tell us how much he believes in art, and about the struggles and questions he navigates in trying to hold on to that belief. The statement he used as the introductory text for our show at MoMA PS1 in 2012 made that quite clear. Near the end—“Art is a beautiful thing. I love it more than I’m able to express. Trying to find a home for it (or in it) is a strange thing nowadays.”—he gave voice to the feelings most of us have about art now, and our place in/around/alongside it.

BH:

It’s been a long day, a long day of a long week. I feel like throwing salt on the wound of your questions about who or *what* is observing Darren. Some *fleur de sel*. Mash it in so it stings.

I say *wound* because I fear no one really looks at anything anymore. Really looks. And the nominalism that Darren's project can seem to—and sometimes does—traffic in is paradigmatic of our moment because, well, look at the goon squad in the White House. Is there anything he can't say and then unsay?

It's 17:04 as I write this. The new so-called "travel ban" has just gone into effect, four minutes ago. In addition to being a Muslim ban, I'm convinced, with these additional "bona fides"—insidious—of what constitutes immediate family, that it's a pre-emptive anti-LGBTQ attack. No uncles or aunts are considered immediate family. Tell me when the first family with two mothers or fathers and kids shows up that it will be smooth entry. Wanting less government stops at the definition of family, when there are cruel new forms of policing what that term will mean.

Why do I bring any of this up? Why salt a wound in an already brutal world?

We've been commissioned to, what, provide a critical little *aperitivo*, whetting the appetite for the main event of DB's ... art. Mebbe? Right? The salting is to remind me to have some fun, remember Darren's laughter, and consider how he's made some of the most hilarious works of art—on a par with, oh, Fischli/Weiss and Adrian Piper (we forget her sense of humor, which isn't also to say that she hasn't gone out of her way, frequently, to make us forget her sense of humor).

As Darren put it early on, his is, frequently, "a project that subsists solely on conceptual rigor and a certain playfulness of tone."

Which began at some crossroads of appetite and aesthetic desire or chutzpah: letters to museum heads around the world for permission to realize his plans for actions or projects that often involved food or drugs and/or eating/ingesting and/or shitting (not always his own, a diaper-changing

station was to be put near *Il Cenacolo*) in proximity to specific works of art—creepy Leonardo, divine Giotto.

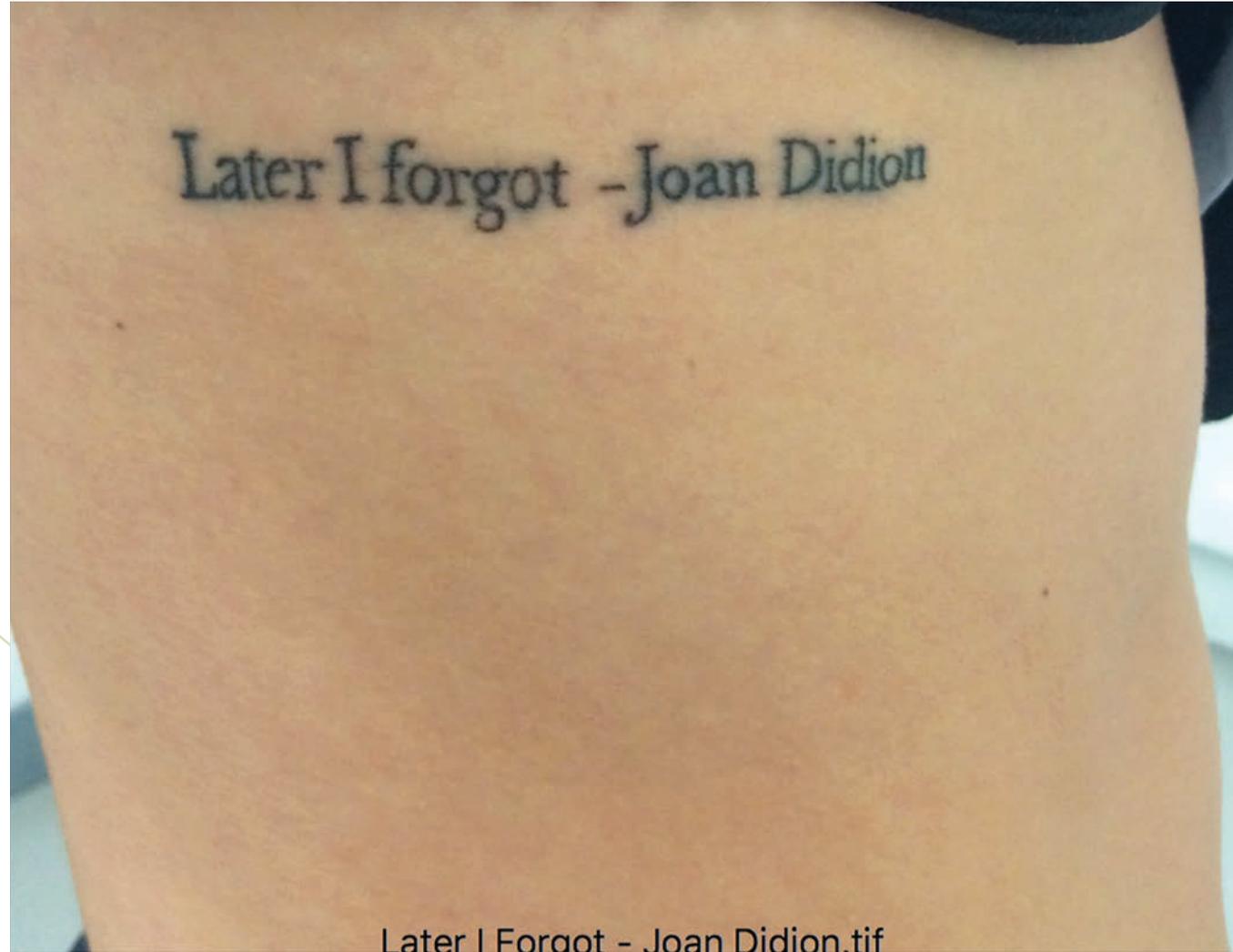
So that was one part of it: sustenance or pleasure, in a sense—and their relation to art. I would even say, maybe, metabolization.

But the other part—right away—was the issue of celebrity, the instant, micro-fame. *James Earl Scones* opens with a letter to Tom Cruise and NASA. That other Leonardo (DiCaprio) bros out on the cover of *oaint*.

Let me be honest: that sets up a struggle, and I'm not sure art's winning *right now*. I don't know what it would be for it to win. While I love that Gund did what she did, it's also revolting to me that art becomes important because of its supposed cash value. Is civics still something taught in schools? Too many of these hotshot collectors—and I'm not referring to your noble board chair, here—and their personal art foundations gut the notion of art as something that can have a relation to the civic. Public education has been similarly gutted.

Dreamed up by DB, the Lichtenstein–Gund scenario would have been a better piece, because the artist, I imagine, would have put into the script that the collector (and I choose not to name him) who bought it would immediately have had to give it to, I don't know, Rikers. To see it, you'd have to go there, and think about where you were going and where you are. And it would be owned by the people of the city of New York. Bader's piece would be called *clamoring for social justice*.

I've lost track of my thoughts and have flashed on his aubergine, quietly drinking, bovine, from the bank of Lac du Parc de la Tête d'Or.



Later I Forgot - Joan Didion.tif

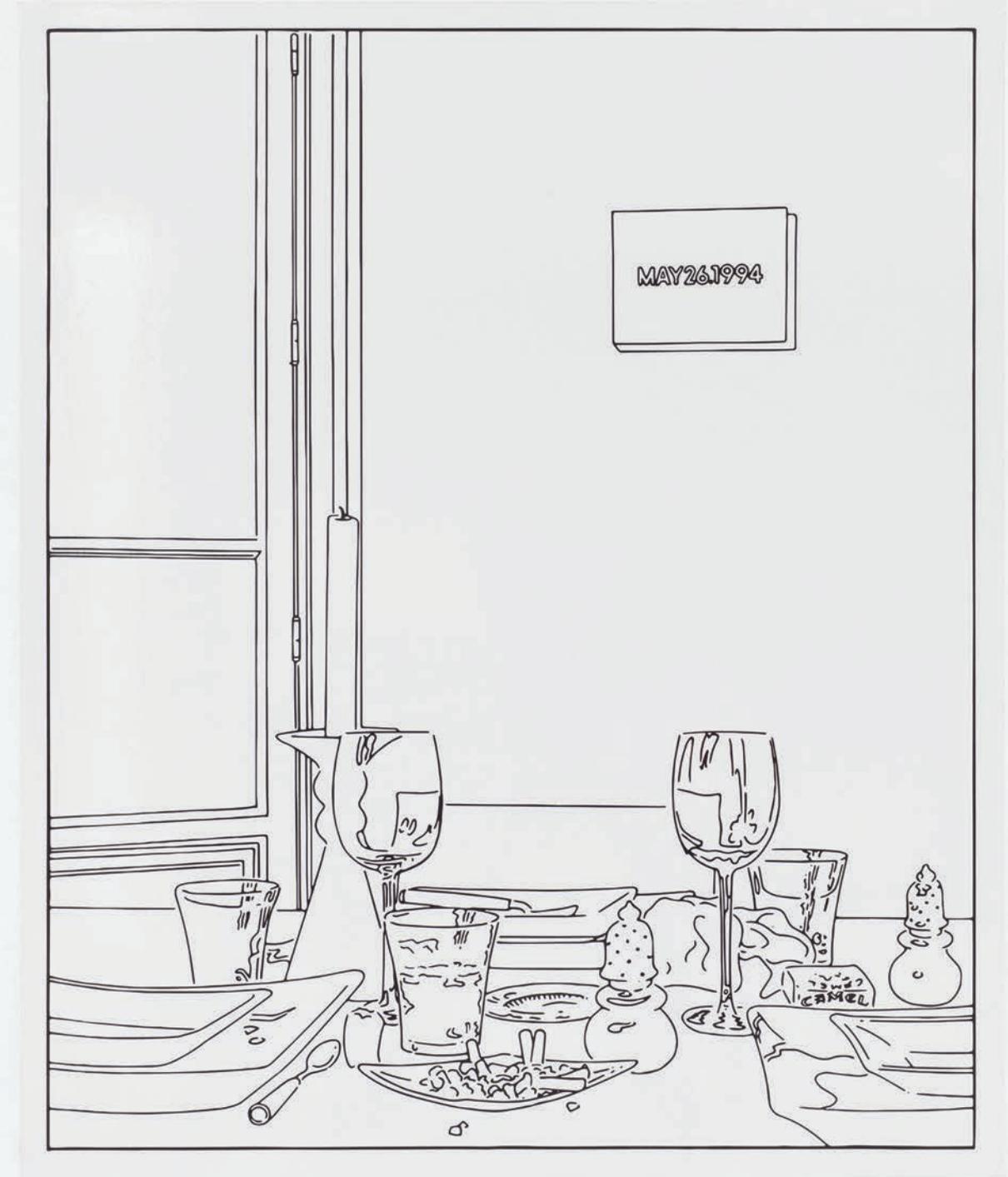
PE:

Yes, that hand-footed eggplant! Amidst all that conceptual rigor and those books, letters, and immodest proposals, people forget (*Later I forgot* – Joan Didion, as per a DB tattoo piece) that Bader makes some really good sculptures. And not just some guacamole in a French horn, some pizza in a dishwasher (or sporting a hoop earring through its crust), or lasagna on heroin, though I really do love those riffs. Nor the annexed cameos by the likes of John McCracken or Haim Steinbach, burnished with Badery bits.



Apropos forgetting, I recently forgot that Darren doesn't date his works, and had to be corrected. Funny, that dating bit, because the appearance of a year after a given phrase is one major hint that we might be talking about a work of art. There is a very nice piece

he showed in 2016 called *May 26, 1994*, which names the date that appears in the piece but is itself undated. In this case, the date arrives in the form of an On Kawara painting photographed after a dinner party (an artist, if ever there was one, for whom the dated appendage to artistic nomenclature is completely superfluous). The photograph was taken by Louise Lawler and later traced, at Lawler's request, by illustrator Jon Buller; Lawler then turned the tracing into a digital image that can be printed on an adhesive vinyl at any size, and mounted directly on the wall. Like DB, Lawler doesn't name the





artworks she annexes, in this case titling the piece *Still Life (Candle)*, adding (*traced*) to the vinyl version and modifying the date “2003/2013” to indicate the date of its first becoming an artwork and its second. We could annotate the work something like: (Bader[Lawler{Buller(Lawler[On Kawara])}], (2016 ?[2013{2013?(2003[1994])}])). I don’t know the price of the Bader, which is the vinyl, annexed wholesale. It doesn’t name Lawler, Buller, or On Kawara, but convention would suggest it costs a bit more than the Lawler. (By way of some background, it also matters that Lawler sells this work in both limited and unlimited editions.)

Two longer, necessary, conversations for some later moment: responsibility and economics. Which Bader demands we have. Anyone who forgets that part would be well served by a stack of Bader money that they bought for less, or more, than its face value ... Actuarial note for the moment: Lawler lets her collectors print these things at whatever scale they want, and they can hang them wherever they want. You could put one on your garage door, the same way the Tremaines stuffed their Delaunay behind the TV. In that way she makes her work both vulnerable to the same economics of care and class that she documents. Bader likewise leaves a lot up to us, which of course demands a lot from us. To show one piece a few months ago, I had to figure out the best form for a geranium in Los Angeles (watered outside his gallery? placed at your house?) and some tedium in New York. (For the latter, I settled on a subway station employee in their booth.) If you own a Bader money piece, as I understand it, you can exhibit the stack of bills (any denomination), the bank transfer document (printed out, or perhaps on a screen), maybe even a “live” monitor logged into an account you opened with the funds. Perfect for so many collections, in all its thrills and indictments. (I am reminded of what Alan Riding wrote after seeing the Damien Hirst diamond skull a decade ago: “Knowing its asking price adds to its wow factor: imagine opening a suitcase with a \$100 million worth of bills. Wow!”)

How do you show money? How do you play chess with shoes? Or, as Lawler names her shows, over and over, *No Drones*. Which is to say, both she and Bader are putting observers on notice. It is a lot of responsibility to surveil yourself.

BH:

A bit of self-surveillance? Okay, then, I should confess that I own what would, if Baders were dated, be a very early Bader work. It entails a reproduction of Dürer's self-portrait placed amidst a convenience store display of porn magazines. Darren gave the piece to me, long ago, before he moved to New York from Los Angeles, but its contract and parameters took years for him to finalize and deliver—over a decade. Why did he give me the piece? For many reasons: friendship, certainly, but also because, among other matters, after meeting with him for a studio visit at a picnic table in Griffith Park, I told him he shouldn't go to graduate school, didn't need to. He probably already knew that on his own. I also set up a few meetings with dealers in New York—one or two of whom were totally freaked out by what he was proposing, which, of course, delighted me.

When it was decided that the Dürer would be included in *The World as Will and Representation*, it was very much up to me to determine how it should be shown and how to engage its latent “performative” (not my favorite word) potential. I wrote the following directives to the curator and director of the Kölnischer Kunstverein:

1. When the Dürer reproduction is first placed in the shop, someone on the staff should take a picture of it among the magazines. That should be the first image posted on Twitter and Facebook, with the proper information about the specifics of the piece (however it will be listed on the checklist for the exhibition is the info that should be given).

In making the twice-weekly visits for the run of the exhibit:

A) The person should have a camera (mostly likely, a cell phone camera) with them, as well as a reproduction of the Dürer self-portrait.

A1) If the person arrives and the Dürer is still in place among the magazines, a picture should document its placement and that image should be posted on Twitter, with whatever other information the person making the visit would like to give.

A2) If the person arrives and the Dürer is completely missing (taken, disappeared, whatever), two pictures should be taken: one documenting the absence of the portrait and one after a replacement Dürer has been freshly put into place. Those two images should be posted on Twitter, with whatever other information the person making the visit would like to give.

If it's not too much of a burden, I think someone (a different person each visit, with anyone who wishes allowed to go again, but not consecutively) should go to the porn shop to check up on Dürer twice a week for the run of the show. I would suggest on Tuesdays and Saturdays, after the initial placement of the piece and its posting simultaneously on Twitter and Facebook (the only time of a simultaneous posting).

On the final day of the exhibition, a last visit to the porn shop should be made and an image posted, but no replacement made if the Dürer is gone. Whatever posting is made on the last day of the exhibit, there should also be a statement of thanks to and a list of all those who made the visit to the shop and posted pictures on

Twitter and Facebook simultaneously; obviously the proprietor(s) of the convenience store and/or porn shop should be thanked in this posting, too.

When I was asked for a little more clarity on how to finesse certain aspects that eluded easy translation, I added:

the more porn shops involved, the merrier—always—but i think we want to be very careful of not turning bilocation miracles into a media blitz.

i don't know how many porn shops there are in köln and its environs. i would think that no more than three porn stores should be involved in the piece: ideally, one close to the kunstverein, one in a lively nighttime part of town (near the train station?), and one in, if possible, a mostly middle eastern inhabited part of town (which might be far away from the usual circuits—i don't know; i've only been to köln once in my life).

what we want is some sort of rhythm of hajj or pilgrimage, visits to so-called stations of the cross to witness/check up on the dürer and some kind of instant documentation on his holding on or disappearance and then replacement. once the porn shops that are part of the project have been selected, they should not change for the run of the exhibit but should be visited by the various people participating in the piece's documentation.

Darren wrote me that he was happy with my contractual particulars, which tickled me. I never saw the piece installed, although I was sent pictures of it during its visitations.

I enjoyed the entire process—engaging with the work after having it in the back of my mind for years, never having framed and/or hung whatever might be considered its photographic instantiation. I believe the piece only really exists in such negotiation—and in its active 7-Eleven-ish situation. I admire that there is a lot of language and wrangling (kinds of thinking) behind the appearance of the work, which begins with Darren but ended up in my hands, but even more so I like that when *encountered*, no language is needed for the work to work. It observes you—Dürer eyes those who eye him—and “when” we are is time-traveled, flesh and flesh represented, representing.

PETER ELEEY is chief curator of MoMA PS1

BRUCE HAINLEY is a writer based in Los Angeles

Images (in order of appearance):

Forest/Trees

Douglas Huebler

Douglas Huebler, (Paul McCartney?), Mike Kelley

Haim Steinbach

David Hammons

Gustave Courbet

Sherrie Levine

Sturtevant

reincarnation of Ronald Reagan, cat made out of crab meat

Google Images search: “james earl jones” “cooking” “food”

Albrecht Dürer

Faith Ringgold painting from Rose M. Singer Center, Rikers Island

later I forgot – Joan Didion

Sculpture #1 [edition 1]

May 26, 1994

(*antipodes*): ciborium, niobium, geranium, tedium (detail)

Caravaggio



LUCA LO PINTO

La meraviglia di (). A volte anche [,] e . o ...

Nota ai lettori.

Il pezzo è strutturato in tre parti, ognuna delle quali è presentata in una colonna:

1. Un breve testo sulle attività artistiche di Darren Bader.
2. Una lista incompleta – in parte precisa, in parte generica – di cose che compaiono nei lavori in varie forme e/o modalità.
3. Una lista di fotografie che documentano mostre, soprattutto personali, nelle quali l'artista ha presentato il proprio lavoro tra il 2002 e il 2017.

Il testo è stato scritto in italiano, tradotto in inglese e quindi ritradotto in italiano.

Il formato delle immagini è stato convertito da .JPEG a .TIFF e poi da .TIFF a .JPEG.

Le tre colonne sono concepite come elementi di una stessa partitura: funzionano sulla base di correlazioni o, a volte, simultaneamente. Sebbene sia possibile leggere le colonne separatamente, data la premessa iniziale sarebbe come viaggiare su un'autostrada a tre corsie e sostenere che ne abbia solo una.

Nel 1947 Isamu Noguchi realizzò un modellino come proposta per una opera monumentale d'arte ambientale, intitolata *Sculpture to Be Seen From Mars* e concepita per essere osservata da Marte. Vista dallo spazio avrebbe ricordato un volto umano, ma sulla terra avrebbe avuto l'aspetto di altipiani con la forma di due coni e una piramide.

Spiel im Sand è un cortometraggio mai distribuito scritto e diretto da Werner Herzog nel 1964. La trama riguarda quattro bambini e un gallo dentro una scatola di cartone e include una scena in cui il pollo è sepolto nella sabbia fino al collo. Esistono pochissime informazioni sul film e sulla produzione. Il film non è mai uscito né mai è stato proiettato al pubblico e Herzog ha dichiarato che non lo farà mai vedere.

Nel 1969 Robert Morris fu invitato a presentare un'opera per "Anti-Illusion", una mostra collettiva organizzata al Whitney Museum di New York. Il lavoro – intitolato *Money* – era una performance dall'impronta concettuale nella quale Morris chiedeva al personale del museo di prendere in prestito \$50.000 e di investirli nel mercato azionario sforzandosi di produrre un profitto. Aveva stabilito che l'opera potesse essere esposta nella mostra tramite qualsiasi documentazione scelta dal

Carta igienica
Pinoli
Patate
Mele
Rotoli di nastri da imballaggio
Pezzo di meteorite
Legno
Parole
Immagini trovate
Contenitori di plastica
Crema di sesamo
Bottoni
Tessuto
Dvd
Carta da parati
Note di copertina
Fotocopie
Maionese
Fax spazzatura
Falso Max Ernst
Aceto bianco
Velluto a coste fatto con tintura alla depakote
Stoffa
Monitor
Cruciverba
Stephanie
Candy
Caroline
Lisa
Pietre
Specchi
Le nove sinfonie di Beethoven
Spago
Tortillas
Scheletro umano
Mensole Lack di Ikea
Bottiglia da 1 litro di Vita Coco
Testa d'aglio organico



Judas



installation views, Cat, Rivington Arms, New York, July 2004



installation view, Put It In Your Mouth / I'll see you on the dark side of the prune, Rivington Arms, New York, June-July 2005

Whitney. L'artista riuscì a far ottenere al Whitney un prestito con il 5% di interessi per la durata della mostra da un collezionista che lavorava come intermediario finanziario. I soldi furono successivamente investiti con Morgan Guarantee Trust per conto del Whitney con un ritorno del 5%. Al termine della mostra, il Whitney ritirò i soldi e gli interessi dalla banca restituendoli al collezionista, che in seguito effettuò una donazione soggetta a deduzione fiscale per un totale del 5% degli interessi, che il museo girò poi a Morris.

Nel 1970 in un pamphlet intitolato *Dubbing is Murder* il filmmaker Jean-Marie Straub – che, insieme alla moglie e partner professionale Danièle Huillet, usava solo suono registrato in presa diretta e preferiva che le tracce del dialogo fossero solo sporadicamente sottotitolate – cita una frase contro il doppiaggio pronunciata da Jean Renoir in un'intervista realizzata pochi anni prima: "Si tratta sempre di sorprendere la vita. Sorprendere la vita è anche sorprendere nell'istante la voce, il rumore... lo appartengo ancora alla vecchia scuola della gente che crede alla sorpresa della vita, al documentario, che crede che si avrebbe torto di trascurare il sospiro che una ragazza emette suo malgrado in una certa circostanza, e che non è riproducibile."

Neti Lota
16,937 Dollari
Facce carine
Misure
Box per le donazioni
Ciborium
Niobium
Geranium
Tedium
Arreis® SDF
Panini Salmone
313
58
19
195
Gomma da masticare alla menta
Biliardino
Clitoride
Pantaloni da pigiama
Cartoline
Pepe verde
Libri
Biscotti della fortuna
11,62 Euro
French toast
228 dollari in contanti
Uova
Babbo Natale in ceramica
Bastone di pelle non conciata
Costume da bagno
540
291
385
63
Orecchini
Un quadro di Michael Zahn
Corde
Cannella
Argilla



installation views, *as = poaching the poachers*, Rivington Arms, New York, March-April 2007



installation view, *No context*, Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo, June-July 2007



installation view, *Nic Cage: A Bridal Tour of Southern California Foundries*, 2nd Cannons Publications, Los Angeles, March-June 2008

Nel 1975, due anni prima della sua scomparsa, Charlie Chaplin partecipò ad un concorso di sosia di se stesso in Francia. Arrivò terzo. Chaplin non è stata l'unica celebrità ad aver perso una gara di sosia di se stessi: Dolly Parton una volta perse un concorso di drag queen con le sue sembianze.

In una scena del film *Hot Shots!* 2 il tenente Topper, per raggiungere la base dove sono rinchiusi i soldati rapiti, si imbarca con i suoi uomini su un battello e risalgono un fiume (come il Capt. Willard e la sua squadra in *Apocalypse Now*); ad un certo punto incrociano un altro battello su cui viaggia proprio Willard (interpretato da Martin Sheen, protagonista di *Apocalypse Now* nonché vero padre di Charlie Sheen, interprete di Topper). I due, salutandosi, si dicono reciprocamente "Sei stato grande in *Wall Street!*", citando il film di Oliver Stone di cui sono stati protagonisti assieme a Michael Douglas.

In occasione di una mostra promossa a Livorno nel 1984 per il centenario della nascita di Amedeo Modigliani e dedicata alle sue sculture, si decise di verificare se la diceria secondo la quale l'artista avrebbe gettato nel Fosso Reale delle sue sculture, fosse vera. Nel 1909 Modigliani aveva scolpito delle opere che aveva poi mostrato presso il Caffè Bardi ad

Multivitaminici
Acetone
Foto trovate
Mouse senza fili Apple
Tessuto
Buste di carta
Un testo di Heidegger
Guanti
Gallo di ceramica
Beauty case antico
Contenitore criogenico
Seltzer
Lettore musicale
Un pacchetto di Cool Ranch Doritos
Pennarello indelebile blu
Spille
Crema idratante
Sassi
Pomodoro canestrino
Taglia unghie
Albicocche
Catalogo di Art Basel Miami Beach
Lettore dvd
Zaino
Stamigna
Ventagli
Cartolina dell'Autoritratto con cane nero di Courbet
Carta nepalese
Preposizioni
Riviste
Divani
Materassi
Borsa da tennis
Carta assorbente
Muffin alla crusca
Un quadro di George Condo
Una fotografia di Roe Ethridge



installation view, *Nic Cage: A Bridal Tour of Southern California Foundries*, The Pauline Gallery, Los Angeles, March-June 2008



installation views, *T&S n' Kreps*, New York, January-February 2009

amici artisti, i quali lo avrebbero deriso consigliandogli di gettarle nel fosso. Cosa che l'artista, in uno scatto d'ira, avrebbe fatto di getto. Dragando il canale nei pressi della zona di piazza Cavour, dove si trovava il Caffè Bardi, furono effettivamente ritrovate tre teste, scolpite in uno stile che a prima vista richiamava quello del Modigliani di quegli anni. Un mese dopo il ritrovamento, tre studenti universitari livornesi si presentarono alla redazione del settimanale *Panorama* dichiarando la burla e presentando come prova della falsificazione una fotografia che li ritraeva nell'atto di scolpire una delle teste, ricevendo, come compenso per lo scoop, dieci milioni di lire.

Il 23 Agosto del 1994 la K Foundation (creata da Bill Drummond e Jimmy Cauty) ha bruciato del denaro in contante per il valore di un milione di sterline in una rimessa per le barche in disuso nella tenuta Ardfin sull'isola scozzese di Jura. Il denaro rappresentava buona parte dei fondi della K Foundation, guadagnati da Drummond e Cauty come KLF, una dei gruppi pop inglesi di maggior successo degli inizi degli anni '90.

Zaireeka è l'ottavo album registrato in studio dalla band di rock alternativo The Flaming Lips. Pubblicato il 28 Ottobre

- Una fotografia di Tom Burr
- Hamburger
- Lanterna cinese
- Pacchetto di sigarette
- Pennarello Sharpie nero
- Bottiglia di champagne
- Zuppa di pesce
- Piante
- Pentola elettrica per riso
- Armadietto per medicinali
- Una foto di Robert Adams
- Limitatore di sovratensione
- Brochure della Corbis
- Copri piumino
- Skateboard
- Tastiera 88 tasti
- Un'opera di Mateo Lopez
- Tappetino yoga
- Computer portatile
- Borsa verde
- Pollo
- Deodorante
- Bambole
- Macchine
- Busta della spesa
- Fiori
- Felpe
- Elenchi telefonici
- Pittura facciale
- Richiesta polizza assicurativa della macchina
- Limoni
- Canguro
- Aragoste
- Numeri
- Busta di terriccio
- Levapunti
- File mp3
- Boxer corti
- Falce taglia erba
- Busta di riso



installation view, Taka Ishii Gallery booth @ The Armory Show, New York, March 2009



proposal for Performa 2009

del 1997, l'album era composto da quattro cd. Ognuna delle otto canzoni consisteva in quattro tracce stereo, una per ciascun cd. L'album era concepito in modo che, riproducendolo contemporaneamente su quattro impianti audio separati, i quattro cd avrebbero prodotto un suono armonico o sovrapposto. I dischi potevano essere anche suonati in diverse combinazioni, escludendone uno, due o tre.

Alla fine del 2008 l'artista francese Michel François ha ricevuto carte *blanche* dallo S.M.A.K. di Ghent per scegliere il programma espositivo di due sale per più di un anno. François ha scelto due sale espositive identiche ed intitolato il suo progetto *Faux Jumeaux* (Gemelli Falsi). Ha chiesto a 15 persone di scegliere ognuna due opere d'arte che, seppur molto simili nella forma o nel materiale, fossero state create in modo indipendente. L'idea di esibire dei falsi gemelli era nata da una discussione alla quale François aveva assistito tra due direttori di musei riguardo l'evidente somiglianza tra un lavoro di Ann Veronica Janssens e uno di Michelangelo Pistoletto, nonostante fosse consapevole che l'opera della Janssens fosse stata realizzata indipendentemente da quella di Pistoletto.

Alla fiera d'arte Frieze del 2011, l'artista tedesco Christian

- Monografia di J.C. Leyendecker
- Caramella confezionata
- Distributore di acqua fredda
- Piedistalli
- Set di chiavi
- Banconote
- Certificati
- Cartone di sale Epsom
- Tote bag
- Bottiglie di olio d'oliva
- Becchime
- Adesivi da paraurti
- Crema ultra idratante viso Kiehl's
- Distributore di acqua Poland
- Bicchieri
- Tracce di Notorious B.I.G.
- Profilattici Jeff
- Pompelmi
- Ananas
- Couscous
- Capre
- Banane
- Avocado
- Kiwi
- DVD Blu-ray
- Acerato cerato
- Bicicletta
- Posto del passeggero in macchina
- Tubo florescente
- Baguette
- Gamberi
- Covers di dvd
- Crema per l'acne
- Motocicletta
- Pillole anticoncezionali
- Teschio di babbuino
- Patatine fritte
- Rasoio elettrico
- Pasta in brodo



installation view, Odeon, with Uri Aran and Ara Dymond, Ritter/Zamet, London, April-June 2009



installation view, New Work, 303 Gallery, New York, May-June 2009



installation views, Number[s], Eighth Veil, Los Angeles, February-March 2010

Jankowski ha presentato l'opera *The Finest Art on Water* che consisteva in un motoscafo Aquariva Cento di 10 metri e in un super yacht CRN da 65 metri, ciascuno con due prezzi di vendita diversi. Era possibile acquistarle come barche al prezzo di mercato, rispettivamente €500K e €65 milioni; o, in alternativa, comprarle in qualità di opere d'arte pagando per ciascuna €125K e €10 milioni in più. Secondo Jankowski, le barche non erano opere d'arte finché un certificato di autenticità non fosse stato consegnato al nuovo proprietario, il quale – da quel momento – aveva il diritto di chiamare l'imbarcazione "Christian" (il motoscafo) o "Jankowski" (per il superyacht).

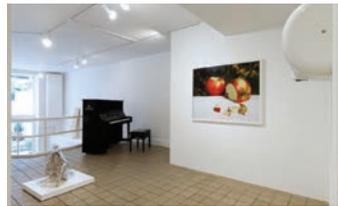
Il 15 aprile del 2012 un ologramma di Tupac Shakur fu proiettato su un palco del Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival all'Empire Polo Field di Indio, California.

Nell'estate del 2015, 1.000 fans italiani dei Foo Fighters si sono riuniti a Cesena per suonare insieme "Learn to Fly" per convincere Dave Grohl a suonare in città.

Tutti gli eventi o fatti sopra riportati – raccolti da internet e da libri – sono ordinati senza alcun criterio se non quello cronologico.

Alcuni sono associabili

Libri di Virginia Woolf
Lenti a contatto
Sapone
Tavoli
Tagliaerba
Marmo
Lampadine
Cupcakes
Pavimento del marciapiede
E-mails
Comunicati stampa
Bottiglia di soluzione per lenti a contatto
Carne di granchio
Carne umana
Acqua vitaminica
Carne di orangotango
Poster di Saw 5
Proposte scritte
Boomerang Chanel
Un'opera di Thomas Struth
Coda di cavallo
Felpa da bambino blu
Serpente a sonagli
Tavolino pieghevole da aereo
Arpa da concerto
Zucchero
Cesto di vimini
Ascia
Snowboard
Armadio
Ostriche
Burro di arachidi
Borscht
Omelette
Scudo antisommossa
Gomitolo
Buca
Scatola di scarpe
Patella



installation views, Alex Zachary, New York, May-June 2010



installation views, Chad Ochocinco, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, February-March 2011

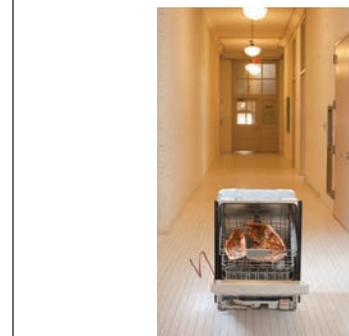
direttamente ad opere realizzate da Darren Bader, altri *inconsiamente*, altri ancora *erroneamente*.

Dinanzi a molte opere di Bader, capita spesso di interrogarsi sul come *qualcosa* (sia esso un oggetto, un'immagine o un'azione) possa essere intenzionale senza avere uno scopo definito.

Alberto Savinio – fratello di Giorgio de Chirico – definiva la metafisica come metà fisica e metà no. Bader sembra equiparare la conoscenza di ciò che è meramente possibile (l'arte) in ciò che accade veramente (la storia). Qualcuno troppo famoso per essere nominato sosteneva che l'arte può essere tutto in quanto non è un oggetto, né un'idea ma un'attività dello spirito.

Al contrario di altri artisti della sua generazione, Bader non adopera la finzione come strumento per generare realtà possibili, ma la realtà per costruire relazioni tanto concrete quanto immaginarie. Darren si definisce uno scultore. Mette insieme due elementi (qualche volta anche più di due) che possono essere complementari mentre agli occhi di molti sono incompatibili. La scelta può ricadere su oggetti di consumo, parole, immagini, animali, persone. Pianifica degli speed dates che talvolta si trasformano in matrimoni. Fa sbocciare l'amore tra due innamorati

Biglietti del teatro
Risciò
Bambola russa
Croda
Cima
SCOBY
Fumo
Mohel
Forchetta
Remo
Appunti
Orco
Profumo
Trapezio
Un'opera di Martin Boyce
Iguana
Un'opera di Matthias Merkel Hess
I Only Have Eyes For You dei Flamingos
Un'opera di Peter Regli
Sacco a pelo
Bryan Cranston
14
6
Scarpe a punta
Contenitore per la raccolta differenziata
Compositore
Parastinchi
Archivista
Mappamondo
Un finto quadro di Peter Halley
Paper Planes di MIA
Subwoofer
Altalena
Vano portaoggetti
Colombaia
Libro font
Insulina
Pene



installation views, *Images*, MoMA PS1, New York, January-May 2012



installation view, *Where Is a Bicycle's Vagina (and Other Enquiries), or Around the Samovar*, 1857, Oslo, April-June 2012

che non sanno di esserlo.

Non crea, edita. Seleziona, non produce. Mostra, non rappresenta. L'ispirazione può nascere da Google Images o da situazioni del quotidiano. "Il linguaggio è la casa nella quale abita l'uomo" sostiene Juliette Janson.

Darren è chiuso in quella casa ad interrogarsi non su ciò che è (*made*) o è stato (*already made*) ma su ciò che potrebbe accadere se... (*mayde*). Perché e in quali condizioni una certa cosa suscita un sentimento di ripudio o di attrazione; quando produce senso o è giudicata insignificante.

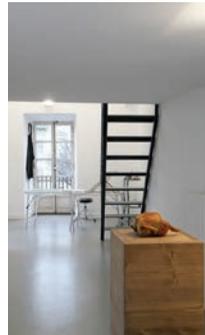
Molte opere di Bader appaiono assertive ma sono irresolute e, in quanto tali, profondamente generose nei confronti dello spettatore. Mette alla prova ogni definizione assoluta di arte e/o autorialità senza invocarne la morte ma sfruttandone la vitalità sopita. Confeziona opere omeopatiche. Inietta nell'arte lo stesso veleno che la crea.

Costruisce ossimori su più livelli tra loro comunicanti: linguistici, visuali, materiali e - nell'accezione retorica del termine - paradossali. Indicando idee nettamente contrarie, l'ossimoro è stato infatti anche definito, nella retorica francese, *paradossismo* (dal gr. *pará* «contro, contrario» e *dóksa* «idea, opinione»). Nel paradossismo come nell'ossimoro, due idee normalmente tenute disgiunte poichè inconciliabili

Film zombie
Seno
Macchina fotografica
Ano
Grigiastro
Testicoli
Weekend
4428 1/2
Uniciclo
Campana di vetro
Vedovo
Mail
Cesto regalo
Sirena da nebbia
Trepiede
Sous chef
Tappeto persiano
Nido di calabroni
Curcumina
Telefono a gettoni
Libro di fumetti
8
12
Magnesio
Braille
Kale
Costume
161
39
Blocchi in cemento
alleggerito
Diapason
Squalo (morto)
Palla di gomma
Lanterna di zucca
Sonda atmosferica
Patricia Arquette
Quadro di Giorgio
de Chirico
Pizza
Quadro di John Finneran
Burrito di pollo



installation view, *New Buildings About Songs and Food*, Sadie Coles HQ, London, September-October 2012



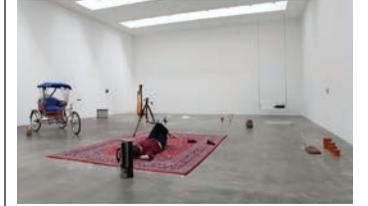
sono accostate per provocare un inatteso corto circuito che conferisce loro un'inattesa 'energia di senso' in grado di colpire l'ascoltatore o il lettore. L'eroina nella lasagna. Il burro di arachidi con le ostriche. Pizza con orecchino/i. La mucca e il letto. Bader testa la sua immaginazione in esperimenti condotti con rigore calvinista e spirito libertino. Disegna cerchi con la forma di linee rette. Imprigiona la libertà delle associazioni in codici binari che si concedono a molteplici interpretazioni. Sfugge alla linearità ponendo lo spettatore di fronte a proposizioni apparentemente ludiche e/o futili. A partire dall'osservazione del mondo che lo circonda, effettua un casting delle cose che gli interessano (musica, film, testi, immagini, oggetti, opere di altri artisti) e sfrutta il linguaggio come arma per farle viaggiare in montagne russe epistemologiche.

Picture and text are each entirely dear to me. They are what I gravitate towards most: word and image. Their intermix is becoming less and less important for me in any strict relationship to either one. I stand by my words here ... intermix was at times a strict relationship to both-as-each-one, now it is more an ascetic practice for me of trying to tap each one's lymph on its own terms. Word, image, audio, hyperlink: each are quantities that are fundamentally

Burrito di manzo
File audio
Verdure
Lettiera per gatti
Corno francese
Guacamole
Leone
Parmigiano reggiano
Sgabello pneumatico da ufficio
Sedia a dondolo
Briciole
Amplificatore
Istruzioni
Melone di cantalupo
Mucca
Letto
Flauto
Tamburello
Rullante
Lasagna
Calzini
Eroina
Zuppa di vongola
Trois Gnossiennes di Erik Satie
DJs
Tatuaggi
Pulsanti con domini web
Circuito elettrico
Cavi elettrici
I phone
Rogaine
Fossili
Immagini digitali
Nike Air Max
Donazioni
Libro *Villette* di Charlotte Bronte
Blue jeans
Borsa Celine
Libro *Contraband* di



installation views, *#I am just living to be dying by your side*, Galleria Franco Noero, Turin, February-April 2013



installation views, *Heaven and Earth*, Blum and Poe, Los Angeles, July-August 2013

interchangeable to me. They're all sculptural entities, each occupying space (sensory-cum-cognitive), cognitive/ aestheticizable space.

Queste sculture impossibili esistono spesso in un tempo+ contesto specifico contemplando le problematicità della loro presenza+sopravvivenza dentro i codici del sistema dell'arte.

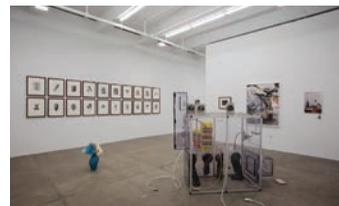
Ha realizzato opere, ha curato mostre, ha concepito opere come mostre, ha pubblicato libri, ha scritto testi. Fin dai suoi esordi, l'artista non ha mai smesso di interrogarsi sul come esporre, interpretare, definire, documentare, collezionare e conservare un qualcosa che, all'interno di uno specifico contesto, è definito opera d'arte. Condivide con lo spettatore le diverse possibilità gnoseologiche, epistemologiche e sintattiche che un determinato oggetto in un determinato spazio in un determinato tempo possa produrre.

Sonda le possibilità e i limiti dell'esperienza dell'oggetto artistico con un approccio ontologico. Propone verifiche di compatibilità tra due elementi apparentemente inconciliabili spinto dal desiderio di testare in modo empirico delle relazioni tra dei segni (siano essi immagini, oggetti, persone o animali). Lavora con il linguaggio evitando di fissare negli occhi la Medusa della metafora.

Taryn Simon
Pianisti
Chiave della cassetta della posta
Dito
Film documentario
Essiccante
Cavalieri di scacchi
Crocifisso
Rilevatore monossido di carbonio
Barca
Insalata
Barile
Palo
Pacco di gomme
Manganello
Performance artist
Cornice
Tavolo da ping-pong
Scovolino del mascarà
Azoto liquido



Garage Magazine #6



installation views, Andrew Kreps
Gallery, New York, May-June 2014

Sottopone proposizioni linguistiche animate in costruzioni visive temporanee. Sculture che si presentano, a seconda dei casi, quali immagini e/o oggetti in uno spazio, istruzioni che sta allo spettatore l'eventualità di attivare o semplici liste di parole.

E' attento e meticoloso nei confronti degli strumenti adoperati per la circolazione e veicolazione del proprio lavoro (dai titoli alle didascalie, dai comunicati stampa alle interviste fino ai -magnifici- testi da lui scritti).

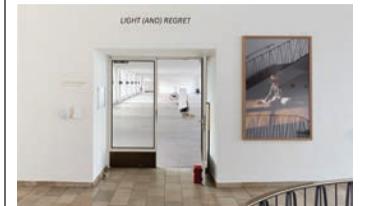
Odia l'autoreferenzialità della produzione artistica contemporanea preferendone i grandi classici della pittura e della letteratura moderna. Quando l'avanguardia non era definita avanguardia ma lo era. Oggi non esiste più ma si autodefinisce tale. Bader ama il bello. Probabilmente lo ritrova in cose in cui molte persone avrebbero difficoltà a concepirlo. Non dimentica mai che un'opera d'arte si espleta tanto su un piano linguistico-semantic quanto estetico. Un'idea di estetica più complessa di una semplice ricerca formalistica del bello, più intesa nell'accezione marxista ovvero quella proprietà che distingue l'uomo dall'animale. Estetica come spazio dove connettere forme, bisogni, piaceri, desideri. Il romanticismo della sua posizione



installation view, Atelier Calder, Saché,
November 2014



installation views, *The World as Will and Representation*, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, February-March 2015



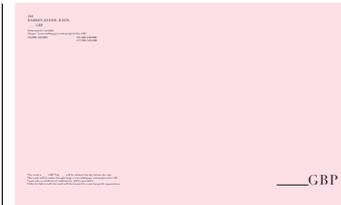
installation view, *light (and) regret*, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, February-March 2015

collide con il cinismo e superficialità del mondo dell'arte. Corre il rischio di essere frainteso o incompreso ma tale precarietà è un ingrediente chiave del suo lavoro.

Aldilà di ogni speculazione, la cosa più importante è che Darren Bader produce un lavoro rigoroso, generoso, romantico, metafisico, emotivo, ludico, polemico. Includerlo in una Storia o ingabbiarlo in un ventaglio di definizioni equivale al rifiuto di una persona in analisi di parlare con il suo psicanalista. Non serve. Sarebbe come tentare di scoprire il significato dei simboli accanto ai nomi degli artisti presenti nel *Manifesto* di Alighiero Boetti o aprire un barattolo di Merda d'artista di Piero Manzoni. Meglio esporre un quadro di Baselitz al contrario e comprendere in quali condizioni quello stesso oggetto può o meno produrre senso.

Post scriptum:

Nel 2015 l'artista ha partecipato alla Biennale di Lione con due opere. Insoddisfatto del testo della didascalia che accompagnava il suo lavoro, ha aggiunto a penna "some of this is untrue". Lo stesso vale per questo testo.



Christie's London, Post-War and Contemporary day sale, February 12, 2015



installation view, *The Visitors*, Governors Island, New York, Summer 2015



installation views, *Reading Writing Arithmetic*, Radio Athènes, Athens, September-October 2015



installation view, *rocks and mirrors*, Galleria Franco Noero, Turin, November 2015 - January 2016



installation views, *proposta per le 9 sinfonie*, Galleria Franco Noero, Turin, November 2015 - January 2016



installation views, *such are promises*, Sadie Coles HQ, London, January-February 2016



installation views, *Meaning and Difference*, The Power Station, Dallas, February-March 2017



installation view, *Forest/Trees*, Greenspon, New York, May-July 2017

The miracle of ().
Sometimes also [,]
and . or ...

Note to readers.

The piece is structured in three parts, each of which is presented in one column:

1. A brief text on Darren Bader's artistic activities.
2. An incomplete list—sometimes precise, sometimes generic—of things that appear in the works in various different forms and/or modes.
3. A list of photographs documenting exhibitions—primarily solo shows—where the artist presented his work between 2002 and 2017.

The text was written in Italian, translated into English, and subsequently re-translated into Italian.

The images were converted from .JPEG format to .TIFF format, and subsequently converted from .TIFF to .JPEG again.

The three columns are conceived as elements in the same score. They therefore function on the basis of correlations, or at times simultaneously. Although it is still possible to read these columns separately, given the initial premise, this would be tantamount to driving along a three-lane highway claiming it had only one lane.

In 1947 Isamu Noguchi made a small model as a proposal for a monumental environmental artwork, entitled *Sculpture to Be Seen from Mars*, which was designed to be viewed from Mars. When seen from space, it would have recalled a human face, but would have looked like a hill range in the form of two cones and a pyramid when viewed on Earth.

Game in the Sand is an unreleased short film written and directed by Werner Herzog in 1964. The plot concerns four children and a rooster in a cardboard box and includes a scene in which the rooster is buried up to its neck in sand. There is very little information about the film and its production. The film was never released or screened in public, and Herzog has stated that he will never release it.

In 1969 Robert Morris was invited to submit a work to *Anti-Illusion*, a collective exhibition organized at the Whitney Museum in New York. The work—entitled *Money*—was a conceptual performance in which Morris requested that the museum borrow \$50,000 to be invested on the stock market, with a view to making a profit. He had stipulated that the work could be presented in the exhibition by means of any type of documentation chosen by the Whitney. Through a collector who worked as a financial broker, the

Toilet paper
Pine nuts
Potatoes
Apples
Rolls of packaging tape
Pieces of meteorite
Wood
Words
Found images
Plastic containers
Tahini paste
Buttons
Fabric
DVD
Wallpaper
Sleeve notes
Photocopies
Mayonnaise
Junk fax
Fake Max Ernst
White vinegar
Corduroy with Depakote dye
Cloth
Monitor
Crossword puzzle
Stephanie
Candy
Caroline
Lisa
Rocks
Mirrors
Beethoven's nine symphonies
Twine
Tortillas
Human skeleton
IKEA LACK shelves
1-liter bottle of Vita Coco
Head of organic garlic
Neti pot
16,937 dollars
Pretty faces
Measurements



Judas



installation views, *Cat*, Rivington Arms, New York, July 2004



installation view, *Put It In Your Mouth / I'll see you on the dark side of the prune*, Rivington Arms, New York, June-July 2005

artist managed to get an interest-bearing loan for the Whitney for the show's duration. The money was invested with Morgan Guarantee Trust on behalf of the Whitney Museum with a 5 percent yield. When the exhibition ended, the Whitney withdrew the principal and the interest accrued from the bank, and returned this to the collector, who subsequently made a tax-deductible donation of 5 percent of the total interest accrued, which the museum transferred to Morris.

In a 1970 pamphlet entitled *Dubbing Is Murder*, filmmaker Jean-Marie Straub—who used only directly-recorded sound in the work he made with Danièle Huillet, his wife and creative partner, and preferred the dialogue tracks be subtitled only sporadically—quoted an anti-dubbing statement Jean Renoir had made in an interview a few years earlier: "It is always a question of surprising life. Surprising life is also to surprise a voice, noises in the particular moment ... I still belong to the old school of people that believe in the surprise of life, in the documentary element, that believes it would be wrong to omit the sigh a young girl produces despite herself in certain circumstances that cannot be reproduced."

In 1975, two years before his death, Charlie Chaplin took part

Donation boxes
Ciborium
Niobium
Geranium
Tedium
Arreis® SDF
Sandwiches
Salmon
313
58
19
195
Mint chewing gum
Football table
Clitoris
Pajama trousers
Postcards
Green pepper
Books
Fortune cookies
11.62 euro
French toast
228 dollars cash
Egg
Ceramic Santa Claus
Rawhide cane
Bathing suit
540
291
385
63
Earrings
A painting by Michael Zahn
Strings
Cinnamon
Clay
Multivitamins
Nail polish
Found photos
Apple wireless mouse
Fabric
Paper bags



installation views, as = *poaching the poachers*, Rivington Arms, New York, March-April 2007



installation view, *No context*, Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo, June-July 2007



installation view, *Nic Cage: A Bridal Tour of Southern California Foundries*, 2nd Cannons Publications, Los Angeles, March-June 2008

in a Chaplin-lookalike competition in France. He came in third. Chaplin was not the only celebrity to lose such a contest: Dolly Parton once lost a drag queen Parton-lookalike competition.

In a scene in the film *Hot Shots! Part Deux*, Lieutenant Topper, seeking to reach the base where captured soldiers are being held, sets off upstream on a boat with his men (just as Captain Willard and his team did in *Apocalypse Now*). At a certain point they encounter another boat on which Willard himself (Martin Sheen, who starred in *Apocalypse Now* and is also the real-life father of Charlie Sheen, who plays Topper) is traveling. Greeting each other, the two proclaim, "I loved you in *Wall Street*!" citing the Oliver Stone film in which they acted alongside Michael Douglas.

When an exhibition of Amedeo Modigliani's sculptures was organized in Livorno in 1984 to mark the centenary of his birth, efforts were undertaken to investigate whether there was any truth in the legend that the artist had flung his sculptures into the city's Fosso Reale canal. In 1909 Modigliani showed a number of his sculptures to artist friends at the Caffè Bardi, yet they cast scorn on his work, pronouncing it should be thrown in the canal. That is precisely what the artist did in a fit of rage. The canal

- Heidegger text
- Gloves
- Ceramic chicken
- Antique vanity
- Shaved nimbus
- Seltzer
- Portable music player
- Bag of Cool Ranch Doritos
- Blue Sharpie marker
- Pin
- Moisturizer
- Stones
- Heirloom tomato
- Nail clippers
- Apricots
- Art Basel Miami Beach catalogue
- DVD player
- Backpack
- Cheesecloth
- Fans
- Postcard of Courbet's *Self-Portrait with a Black Dog*
- Nepalese paper
- Prepositions
- Magazines
- Couches
- Mattresses
- Tennis racket bag
- Paper towels
- Bran muffin
- A painting by George Condo
- A photograph by Roe Ethridge
- A photograph by Tom Burr
- Hamburger
- Chinese lantern
- Pack of cigarettes
- Black Sharpie marker
- Bottle of champagne
- Chowder
- Plants
- Electric rice cooker
- Medicine cabinet



installation view, *Nic Cage: A Bridal Tour of Southern California Foundries*, The Pauline Gallery, Los Angeles, March-June 2008



installation views, *T&S n' Kreps*, New York, January-February 2009

near Piazza Cavour and Caffè Bardi was dredged, revealing three sculpted heads in a style similar to Modigliani's other work from this period. A month later, three university students from Livorno turned up at the editorial office of the weekly magazine *Panorama*, declaring it had all been a spoof and presenting a photograph that showed them sculpting one of the heads by way of proof: they received ten million lire for the scoop.

On August 23, 1994, the K Foundation (created by Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty) burned one million pounds in cash in an abandoned boat shed on the Ardfin estate on Jura, a Scottish island. The money represented a good part of the funds of the K Foundation, which Drummond and Cauty had earned as KLF, one of the most successful English pop bands of the early 1990s.

Zaireeka is the eighth studio album by alternative rock band The Flaming Lips. The album, released on October 28, 1997, is made up of four CDs. Each of the eight songs has four stereo tracks, one for each CD. The album is designed to be played simultaneously on four sets of audio equipment, with the four CDs producing a harmonious or superimposed sound. The CDs can also be played in various

- A fake photograph by Robert Adams
- Surge protector
- Corbis brochure
- Duvet cover
- Skateboard
- 88-key keyboard
- A fake work by Mateo Lopez
- Yoga mat
- Laptop computer
- Green bag
- Chicken
- Deodorant
- Stuffed dolls
- Cars
- Bag of groceries
- Flowers
- Sweaters
- Telephone book
- Face painting
- Car insurance application form
- Lemons
- Kangaroo
- Lobsters
- Numbers
- Bag of soil
- Staple remover
- MP3 file
- Boxer briefs
- Ditch blade
- Bag of rice
- J. C. Leyendecker monograph
- Packaged candy
- Water cooler
- Pedestals
- Set of keys
- Banknotes
- Certificates
- Epsom salt carton
- Tote bag
- Bottle of olive oil
- Birdseed



installation view, Taka Ishii Gallery booth @ The Armory Show, New York, March 2009



proposal for Performa 2009

combinations, leaving out one, two, or three of the four.

Toward the end of 2008, S.M.A.K. in Ghent gave French artist Michel François carte blanche to curate its exhibition program in two rooms for more than a year. François picked two identical exhibition spaces and called his project *Faux Jumeaux* (False Twins). He asked fifteen people to pick two works of art, each of which, although very similar in form or material, were created independently. The idea of showing these false twins arose from a discussion François observed between two museum directors addressing the obvious similarities between a work by Ann Veronica Janssens and one by Michelangelo Pistoletto, although they knew that Janssens's work was produced independently of Pistoletto.

At the 2011 Frieze Art Fair, German artist Christian Jankowski presented *The Finest Art on Water*, comprising a 10-meter Aquariva Cento and a 65-meter CRN superyacht, each with two distinct sales tags. They were available either as boats at the market price, €500K and €65 million respectively or, alternatively, were to be sold as works of art, costing an additional €125K or €10 million respectively. Jankowski stated that the boats were not works of art until

Bumper stickers
Kiehl's Ultra-Moisturizing Face Cream
Poland Spring water dispenser
Drinking glasses
Notorious B.I.G. tracks
Jeff condoms
Grapefruits
Pineapple
Couscous
Goat
Banana
Avocado
Kiwi
Blu-ray DVD
Waxed maple
Bicycle
Car passenger seat
Fluorescent tube
Baguette
Shrimp
DVD covers
Acne cream
Motorbikes
Birth control pills
Baboon skull
French fries
Electric razor
Noodle soup
Books by Virginia Woolf
Contact lenses
Soap
Tables
Lawnmower
Marble
Light bulbs
Cupcakes
Sidewalk pavement
Emails
Press releases
Contact lens solution bottle
Crab meat



installation view, *Odeon*, with Uri Aran and Ara Dymond, Ritter/Zamet, London, April-June 2009



installation view, *New Work*, 303 Gallery, New York, May-June 2009



installation views, *Number[s]*, Eighth Veil, Los Angeles, February-March 2010

a certificate of authenticity was granted to the new owner, who from that moment on would be authorized to call the vessels "Christian" (the motorboat) or "Jankowski" (the superyacht).

On April 15, 2012, a hologram of Tupac Shakur was shown onstage at the Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival at Empire Polo Field in Indio, California.

In summer 2015, 1,000 Italian Foo Fighters fans met in Cesena to play "Learn to Fly" together, hoping to convince Dave Grohl to give a concert in the city.

All the events or facts recorded above—taken from the Internet and from books—are organized solely on the basis of chronology. Some can be *directly* associated with works created by Darren Bader, others *unconsciously*, others *erroneously*.

Looking at many works by Bader, one often finds oneself wondering about how something (be it an object, an image, or an action) can be intentional without having a clearly defined purpose. Alberto Savinio—Giorgio de Chirico's brother—defined metaphysics as being half physical and half not [Translator's note: a pun on the Italian terms "metà" (half) and "fisica" (physical)]. Bader seems to put awareness of what is merely possible (art) on

Human flesh
Vitamin Water
Orangutan meat
Saw V poster
Written proposals
Chanel boomerang
A work by Thomas Struth
Ponytail
Baby-blue sweatshirt
Rattlesnake
Airplane tray table
Concert harp
Sugar
Decorative wicker skyscraper-top
Axe
Snowboard
Closet
Oysters
Peanut butter
Borscht
Omelet
Riot shield
Yarn
Pothole
Shoe box
Patella
Theater tickets
Rickshaw
Russian doll
Rope
Summit
SCOBY
Smoke
Mohel
Fork
Oar
Notes
Orc
Perfume
Trapezoid
A work by Martin Boyce
Iguana



installation views, Alex Zachary, New York, May-June 2010



installation views, *Chad Ochocinco*, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, February-March 2011

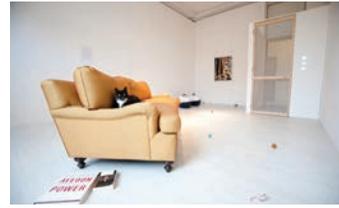
an equal footing with what really happens (history).

Someone so famous they do not need to be named proclaimed that everything is art, for art is not an object or an idea, but an activity of the spirit.

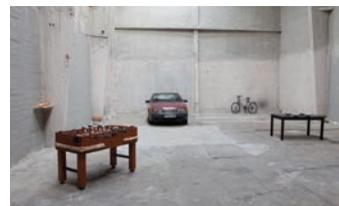
Unlike other artists of his generation, Bader does not draw on fiction as an instrument to generate possible realities, instead using reality to construct both concrete and imaginary relations. Darren defines himself as a sculptor. He brings together two elements (sometimes even more than two) that can be complementary even if many see them as incompatible. He may pick consumer goods, words, images, animals, people. He plans speed dates that sometimes turn into weddings. He makes love spark between two people in love who do not realize how they feel.

He does not create, he edits. He selects rather than producing. He shows rather than representing. Inspiration may spring from Google Images or from everyday situations. "Language is the house man lives in," Juliette Janson asserted. Darren is closed within this house wondering not about what is (made) or has been (already made) but about what could happen if ... (mayde): why, and in which circumstances, a certain something awakens a

A work by Matthias Merkel Hess
"I Only Have Eyes for You" by
The Flamingos
A work by Peter Regli
Sleeping bag
Bryan Cranston
14
6
Pointed shoes
Recycling bin (for separate collection of various categories of waste)
Composer
Shin guard
Archivist
Globe
A fake painting by Peter Halley
"Paper Planes" by M.I.A.
Subwoofer
Swing
Glovebox
Dovecote
Font library
Insulin
Penis
Zombie film
Breast
Camera
Anus
Grayness
Testicles
Weekend
4428 1/2
Unicycle
Bell jar
Widower
Mail
Gift box
Foghorn
Tripod
Sous-chef
Persian rug



installation views, *Images*, MoMA PS1, New York, January-May 2012



installation view, *Where Is a Bicycle's Vagina (and Other Enquiries), or Around the Samovar, 1857*, Oslo, April-June 2012

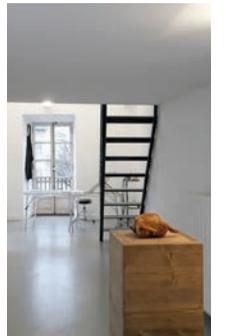
sense of rejection or attraction; when it produces meaning or is ruled insignificant.

Many works by Bader appear assertive but are irresolute and, as such, profoundly generous toward the viewer. They put to the test any absolute definition of art and/or authorship without invoking their death, but making the most of their dormant vitality. He tailors homeopathic works. Into art he injects the same poison that created it. He constructs oxymorons on several intercommunicating levels: linguistic, visual, material and—in the rhetorical sense of the term—*paradoxical*. Indicating clearly contrary ideas, in French rhetoric the oxymoron was also categorized as a paradox (from the Greek *pará* "against, contrary" and *dóxa* "idea, opinion"). In the paradox as in the oxymoron, two ideas normally kept separate and viewed as irreconcilable are set in close proximity to provoke an unexpected short circuit, endowing them with an unexpected "energy of meaning" that will strike the listener or reader. Lasagna with heroin. Peanut butter with oysters. Pizza with earring(s). The cow and the bed. Bader tests his imagination in experiments conducted with Calvinist rigor and a libertine spirit. He draws circles in the form of straight lines. He imprisons the freedom of

Hornet nest
Turmeric
Pay phone
Comic book
8
12
Magnesium
Braille
Kale
Costume
161
39
Cinder block
Tuning fork
(Dead) shark
Rubber-band ball
Jack-o'-lantern
Weather balloon
Patricia Arquette
Painting by Giorgio de Chirico
Pizza
Painting by John Finneran
Chicken burrito
Beef burrito
Audio file
Vegetables
Cat litter
French horn
Guacamole
Lion
Parmigiano-Reggiano
Pneumatic office chair
Rocking chair
Crumbs
Amplifier
Instructions
Cantaloupe
Cow
Bed
Flute
Tambourine
Snare drum



installation view, *New Buildings About Songs and Food*, Sadie Coles HQ, London, September-October 2012



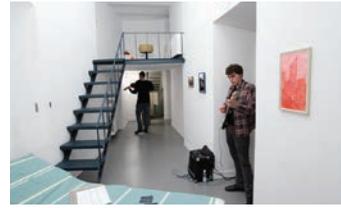
associations in binary codes open to multiple interpretations. He evades linearity by confronting the viewer with apparently playful and/or futile proposals. Starting from an observation of the world around him, he auditions the things that interest him (music, film, texts, images, objects, works by other artists) for certain roles and exploits language as a weapon to set them riding upon epistemological rollercoasters.

Picture and text are each entirely dear to me. They are what I gravitate toward most: word and image. Their intermix is becoming less and less important for me in any strict relationship to either one. I stand by my words here ... intermix was at times a strict relationship to both-as-each-one, now it is more an ascetic practice for me of trying to tap each one's lymph on its own terms. Word, image, audio, hyperlink: each are quantities that are fundamentally interchangeable to me. They're all sculptural entities, each occupying space (sensory-cum-cognitive), cognitive/aestheticizable space.

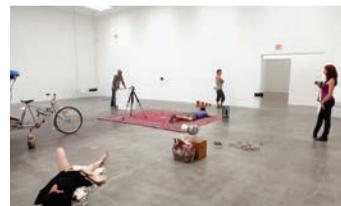
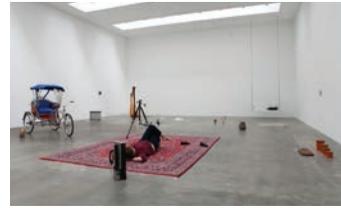
These impossible sculptures often exist in a specific time and context, contemplating the problematic nature of their presence and survival through the art system's codes.

He has made works, has curated exhibitions, has devised works as

- Lasagna
- Socks
- Heroin
- Clam chowder
- Trois Gnossiennes* by Erik Satie
- DJs
- Tattoos
- Web domain buttons
- Electric circuit
- Electrical wires
- iPhone
- Rogaine
- Fossils
- Digital images
- Nike Air Max
- Donations
- Villette* by Charlotte Bronte
- Blue jeans
- Céline bag
- Contraband* by Taryn Simon
- Pianists
- Mailbox key
- Finger
- Documentary film
- Desiccant
- Chess pieces (knights)
- Crucifix
- Carbon monoxide detector
- Dandruff
- Boat
- Salad
- Oil drum
- Pole
- Packet of gum
- Nightstick
- Performance artist
- Frame
- Ping pong table
- Mascara brush
- Camouflage
- Liquid nitrogen



installation views, *#I am just living to be dying by your side*, Galleria Franco Noero, Turin, February-April 2013



installation views, *Heaven and Earth*, Blum and Poe, Los Angeles, July-August 2013

exhibitions, has published books, has written texts. Right from the outset, the artist has never stopped raising questions about how to exhibit, interpret, define, document, collect, and preserve something that is defined as a work of art within a specific context. He shares with the viewers the various gnoseological, epistemological, and syntactic possibilities that a particular object in a particular space in a particular time can produce.

He probes the possibilities and limits of the experience of the artistic object with an ontological approach. He proposes compatibility checks between two apparently irreconcilable elements, driven by the desire to empirically try out the relationships between signs (be they images, objects, people or animals). He works with language, taking care not to stare into the eyes of the Medusa of metaphor. He puts forward linguistic proposals animated in temporary visual constructions. Sculptures that, depending on the situation, present themselves as images and/or objects in a space, with instructions that it is up to the viewer to activate, or simple lists of words. He is attentive and meticulous around the instruments deployed in circulating and communicating about his own work (from the titles to the captions, from the press releases to the interviews



Garage Magazine #6



installation views, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, May-June 2014

to the—brilliant—texts that he writes).

He hates the self-referentiality of contemporary artistic production, preferring the great classics of painting and modern literature—when the avant-garde was not called avant-garde but most certainly was precisely that. Today it no longer exists, but it defines itself as such. Bader loves beauty. He probably finds it in things where many people would have trouble imagining it could exist. He never forgets that a work of art unfolds as much on a linguistic-semantic level as on an aesthetic one. An idea of aesthetics more complex than a simple formalistic quest for the beautiful, understood more in the Marxist sense as the characteristic that distinguishes man from the animals. Aesthetics as a space that must connect forms, needs, pleasures, desires. The romanticism of his position clashes with the art world's cynicism and superficiality. He runs the risk of being misinterpreted or not understood at all but such precariousness is a key ingredient of his work.

Over and above any speculation, the most important thing is that Darren Bader produces a rigorous, generous, romantic, metaphysical, emotional, playful, polemical work. Slotting him into a history or imprisoning



installation view, Atelier Calder, Saché, November 2014



installation views, *The World as Will and Representation*, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, February-March 2015



installation view, *light (and) regret*, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, February-March 2015

him in a panoply of definitions is tantamount to someone in analysis refusing to talk to his psychoanalyst. It doesn't help. It would be like trying to discover the meaning of symbols alongside the names of the artists in Alighiero Boetti's *Manifesto* or opening a tin of Piero Manzoni's *Merda d'artista*. It would be better to hang a Baselitz painting upside down and understand the conditions in which this selfsame object can or cannot produce meaning.

Postscript:

In 2015 the artist took part in the Lyon Biennale with two works. Dissatisfied with the text in the captions alongside his work, he added in pen the words "some of this is untrue." The same applies to this text.



Christie's London, Post-War and Contemporary day sale, February 12, 2015



installation view, *The Visitors*, Governors Island, New York, Summer 2015



installation views, *Reading Writing Arithmetic*, Radio Athènes, Athens, September-October 2015



installation view, *rocks and mirrors*, Galleria Franco Noero, Turin, November 2015 - January 2016



installation views, *proposta per le 9 sinfonie*, Galleria Franco Noero, Turin, November 2015 - January 2016



installation views, *such are promises*, Sadie Coles HQ, London, January-February 2016



installation views, *Meaning and Difference*, The Power Station, Dallas, February-March 2017



installation view, *Forest/Trees*, Greenspon, New York, May-July 2017

Il miracolo di (). Talvolta anche [,] e . o ...

Nota a chi legge.

Il pezzo è strutturato in tre parti, ognuna delle quali è presentata in una colonna:

1. Un breve testo sull'attività artistica di Darren Bader
2. Una lista incompleta - in parte precisa, in parte generica - di cose che compaiono nei lavori in varie forme e/o modalità.
3. Una lista di fotografie che documentano mostre, soprattutto personali, nelle quali l'artista ha presentato il proprio lavoro tra il 2002 e il 2017.

Il testo è stato scritto in italiano, tradotto in inglese e quindi ritradotto in italiano.

Il formato delle immagini è stato convertito da .JPEG a .TIFF e poi da .TIFF a .JPEG.

Le tre colonne sono concepite come elementi di una stessa partitura. Di conseguenza funzionano in corrispondenza se non in simultaneità. Sebbene sia possibile leggere le colonne separatamente, data la premessa iniziale sarebbe come viaggiare su un'autostrada a tre corsie e sostenere che ne abbia solo una.

Nel 1947 Isamu Noguchi realizzò un modellino per presentare una monumentale opera di land art intitolata *Sculpture to Be Seen from Mars*, progettata per essere appunto visibile da Marte. Vista dallo spazio avrebbe dovuto ricordare un volto umano, mentre dalla Terra sarebbe apparsa come un paesaggio collinare formato da due coni e una piramide.

Spiel im Sand è un cortometraggio inedito, scritto e diretto da Werner Herzog nel 1964. Racconta di quattro bambini e di un gallo dentro uno scatolone; in una scena il pollo è immerso fino al collo nella sabbia. Si sa poco di questo film e della sua produzione: non è mai stato distribuito né proiettato pubblicamente e Herzog ha dichiarato che non intende farlo.

Nel 1969 Robert Morris fu invitato a proporre un lavoro per *Anti-Illusion*, una collettiva organizzata dal Whitney Museum di New York. L'opera, intitolata *Money*, consisteva in una performance concettuale nella quale Morris invitava il museo a chiedere un prestito di 50.000 dollari da investire poi in borsa con l'intento di creare profitto. Il progetto prevedeva che l'opera sarebbe quindi stata esposta all'interno della mostra mediante una documentazione qualsiasi, scelta dal Whitney. Grazie a un collezionista che lavorava come

Carta igienica
Pinoli
Patate
Mele
Rotoli di nastri da imballaggio
Pezzo di meteorite
Legno
Parole
Immagini trovate
Contenitori di plastica
Crema di sesamo
Bottoni
Tessuto
Dvd
Carta da parati
Note di copertina
Fotocopie
Maionese
Fax spazzatura
Falso Max Ernst
Aceto bianco
Velluto a coste fatto con tintura alla depakote
Stoffa
Monitor
Cruciverba
Stephanie
Candy
Caroline
Lisa
Pietre
Specchi
Le nove sinfonie di Beethoven
Spago
Tortillas
Scheletro umano
Mensole Lack di Ikea
Bottiglia da 1 litro di Vita Coco
Testa d'aglio organico



Judas



installation views, Cat, Rivington Arms, New York, July 2004



installation view, Put It In Your Mouth / I'll see you on the dark side of the prune, Rivington Arms, New York, June-July 2005

broker, l'artista ottenne per il Whitney un prestito fruttifero per tutta la durata della mostra. Il denaro fu investito per conto del Whitney Museum tramite la Morgan Guaranty Trust con un rendimento del 5 per cento. A mostra conclusa il Whitney ritirò dalla banca il capitale e gli interessi maturati e li trasferì al collezionista, il quale fece una donazione deducibile pari al 5 per cento dell'interesse totale maturato e il museo versò la cifra a Morris.

In uno scritto del 1970 intitolato *Contro il Doppiaggio*, il cineasta Jean-Marie Straub, il quale nei film realizzati con Danièle Huillet, compagna di vita e di lavoro, girava esclusivamente in presa diretta e preferiva che i dialoghi fossero sottotitolati solo in casi sporadici, citava una dichiarazione di Jean Renoir contro il doppiaggio presa da un'intervista di qualche anno prima: "Il punto è sempre sorprendere la vita. Sorprendere la vita vuol dire anche prendere di sorpresa una voce, dei rumori in un momento particolare... Appartengo ancora alla vecchia scuola di chi crede nella sorpresa della vita, nell'elemento documentaristico e di chi crede che sarebbe sbagliato omettere il sospiro emesso da una ragazza, senza volerlo, in una certa circostanza non riproducibile".

Neti Lota
16,937 Dollari
Facce carine
Misure
Box per le donazioni
Ciborium
Niobium
Geranium
Tedium
Arreis® SDF
Panini Salmone
313
58
19
195
Gomma da masticare
alla menta
Biliardino
Clitoride
Pantaloni da pigiama
Cartoline
Pepe verde
Libri
Biscotti della fortuna
11,62 Euro
French toast
228 dollari in contanti
Uova
Babbo Natale in ceramica
Bastone di pelle non
conciata
Costume da bagno
540
291
385
63
Orecchini
Un quadro di Michael
Zahn
Corde
Cannella
Argilla



installation views, as = poaching the poachers, Rivington Arms, New York, March-April 2007



installation view, No context, Taka Ishii Gallery, Tokyo, June-July 2007



installation view, Nic Cage: A Bridal Tour of Southern California Foundries, 2nd Cannons Publications, Los Angeles, March-June 2008

Nel 1975, due anni prima di morire, Charlie Chaplin partecipò a un concorso per sosia di Charlie Chaplin in Francia. Arrivò terzo. Chaplin non è stata l'unica star a perdere una simile gara: Dolly Parton una volta perse a un concorso per sosia di Dolly Parton come drag-queen.

In una scena del film *Hot Shots!* 2 il tenente Topper parte con i suoi uomini alla ricerca di una base dove sono tenuti prigionieri alcuni soldati, risalendo un fiume in barca (proprio come faceva il capitano Willard con il suo equipaggio in *Apocalypse Now*). A un certo punto incontrano un'altra barca, sulla quale sta viaggiando lo stesso Willard (ovvero Martin Sheen, il quale aveva recitato in *Apocalypse Now* e nella vita reale è il padre di Charlie Sheen, che interpreta Topper); i due si salutano e dichiarano: "Mi sei piaciuto molto in *Wall Street!*", facendo riferimento al film di Oliver Stone nel quale avevano recitato a fianco di Michael Douglas.

Quando nel 1984 fu organizzata a Livorno una mostra dedicata alla produzione scultorea di Amedeo Modigliani per celebrare il centenario della sua nascita, si cercò di scoprire se ci fosse del vero dietro alla leggenda secondo cui l'artista avrebbe gettato alcune sue sculture nel Fosso Reale. Nel 1909 Modigliani aveva mostrato alcune sue sculture a degli amici artisti

Multivitaminici
Acetone
Foto trovate
Mouse senza fili Apple
Tessuto
Buste di carta
Un testo di Heidegger
Guanti
Gallo di ceramica
Beauty case antico
Contenitore criogenico
Seltzer
Lettore musicale
Un pacchetto di Cool Ranch Doritos
Pennarello indelebile blu
Spille
Crema idratante
Sassi
Pomodoro canestrino
Taglia unghie
Albicocche
Catalogo di Art Basel Miami Beach
Lettore dvd
Zaino
Stamigna
Ventagli
Cartolina dell'Autoritratto con cane nero di Courbet
Carta nepalese
Preposizioni
Riviste
Divani
Materassi
Borsa da tennis
Carta assorbente
Muffin alla crusca
Un quadro di George Condo
Una fotografia di Roe Ethridge



installation view, Nic Cage: A Bridal Tour of Southern California Foundries, The Pauline Gallery, Los Angeles, March-June 2008



installation views, T&S n' Kreps, New York, January-February 2009

riuniti al Caffè Bardi, i quali non apprezzarono e anzi dichiararono che andavano gettate nel fossato. E così avrebbe fatto l'artista in preda alla rabbia. Il canale fra Piazza Cavour e il Caffè Bardi fu dragato e furono rinvenute tre teste scolpite, simili nello stile all'opera di Modigliani di quel periodo. Un mese più tardi tre studenti universitari di Livorno si presentarono alla redazione del settimanale *Panorama*, sostenendo che si era trattato di una farsa, presentando come prova una fotografia che li ritraeva mentre scolpivano una delle teste. Come compenso per lo scoop ricevettero dieci milioni di lire.

Il 23 agosto 1994 in una rimessa abbandonata per barche, nella tenuta di Ardfin sull'isola scozzese di Jura, la K Foundation, creata da Bill Drummond e Jimmy Cauty, bruciò un milione di sterline in banconote. Il denaro bruciato – una parte consistente dei fondi della K Foundation – era stato guadagnato da Drummond e Cauty quando vestivano i panni dei KLF, uno dei gruppi pop inglesi più di successo dei primi anni novanta.

Zaireeka è l'ottavo album registrato in studio della band di rock alternativo The Flaming Lips. Uscito il 28 ottobre 1997, l'album è composto da quattro CD. Ognuna delle otto canzoni ha

Una fotografia di Tom Burr
 Hamburger
 Lanterna cinese
 Pacchetto di sigarette
 Pennarello Sharpie nero
 Bottiglia di champagne
 Zuppa di pesce
 Piante
 Pentola elettrica per riso
 Armadietto per medicinali
 Una foto di Robert Adams
 Limitatore di sovratensione
 Brochure della Corbis
 Copri piumino
 Skateboard
 Tastiera 88 tasti
 Un'opera di Mateo Lopez
 Tappetino yoga
 Computer portatile
 Borsa verde
 Pollo
 Deodorante
 Bambole
 Macchine
 Busta della spesa
 Fiori
 Felpe
 Elenchi telefonici
 Pittura facciale
 Richiesta polizza assicurativa della macchina
 Limoni
 Canguro
 Aragoste
 Numeri
 Busta di terriccio
 Levapunti
 File mp3
 Boxer corti
 Falce taglia erba
 Busta di riso



installation view, Taka Ishii Gallery booth @ The Armory Show, New York, March 2009



proposal for Performa 2009

quattro tracce stereo, una per CD. L'album è progettato per essere riprodotto simultaneamente su quattro impianti, in modo che i quattro CD producano suoni armonici o sovrapposti. I CD possono anche essere riprodotti in diverse combinazioni, escludendone uno, due o tre.

Verso la fine del 2008 lo S.M.A.K. di Gent assegnò all'artista francese Michel François la curatela del programma espositivo di due stanze del museo per oltre un anno, dandogli carta bianca. François scelse due spazi espositivi identici e chiamò il suo progetto *Faux Jumeaux*. Chiese a quindici persone di selezionare due opere d'arte, ognuna delle quali, pur essendo molto simili per forma o materiali, era stata creata separatamente. L'idea di esporre questi falsi gemelli nasceva da una discussione sentita da François, nella quale due direttori di museo discutevano delle ovvie somiglianze tra un lavoro di Ann Veronica Janssens e uno di Michelangelo Pistoletto, pur sapendo che l'opera di Janssens era stata prodotta indipendentemente da quella di Pistoletto.

All'edizione 2011 della Frieze Art Fair l'artista tedesco Christian Jankowski presentò *The Finest Art on Water*, opera che consisteva in uno yacht Aquariva Cento di 10 metri e un superyacht

Monografia di J.C. Leyendecker
 Caramella confezionata
 Distributore di acqua fredda
 Piedistalli
 Set di chiavi
 Banconote
 Certificati
 Cartone di sale Epsom
 Tote bag
 Bottiglie di olio d'oliva
 Becchime
 Adesivi da paraurti
 Crema ultra idratante viso Kiehl's
 Distributore di acqua Poland
 Bicchieri
 Tracce di Notorious B.I.G.
 Profilatattici Jeff
 Pompelmi
 Ananas
 Couscous
 Capre
 Banane
 Avocado
 Kiwi
 DVD Blu-ray
 Acero cerato
 Bicicletta
 Posto del passeggero in macchina
 Tubo florescente
 Baguette
 Gamberi
 Covers di dvd
 Crema per l'acne
 Motocicletta
 Pillole anticoncezionali
 Teschio di babbuino
 Patatine fritte
 Rasoio elettrico
 Pasta in brodo



installation view, *Odeon*, with Uri Aran and Ara Dymond, Ritter/Zamet, London, April-June 2009



installation view, *New Work*, 303 Gallery, New York, May-June 2009



installation views, *Number[s]*, Eighth Veil, Los Angeles, February-March 2010

CRN da 65 metri, ognuno dei quali era fornito di cartellino con rispettivo prezzo. Le due barche erano disponibili come semplici imbarcazioni al prezzo di mercato (rispettivamente 500.000 euro e 65 milioni di euro) oppure, in alternativa, era possibile acquistarle come opera d'arte, per un costo aggiuntivo di 125.000 e 10 milioni di euro. Jankowski dichiarò che le barche sarebbero diventate opere d'arte nel momento in cui fosse stato emesso un certificato di autenticità al loro nuovo proprietario, il quale da quel momento in avanti sarebbe stato autorizzato a chiamare le imbarcazioni "Christian" (il motoscafo) e "Jankowski" (il superyacht).

Un ologramma di Tupac Shakur si è esibito sul palco del Coachella Valley Music & Arts Festival all'Empire Polo Field il 15 Aprile del 2012 a Indio in California.

Nell'estate del 2015 mille fan italiani dei Foo Fighters si radunarono a Cesena per suonare assieme "Learn to Fly", nella speranza di convincere Dave Grohl a tenere un concerto in città.

Gli eventi e i fatti riportati qui sopra – presi da Internet o da pubblicazioni varie – sono organizzati secondo un criterio puramente cronologico. Alcuni di essi sono *direttamente* associati a opere di Darren Bader,

Libri di Virginia Woolf
Lenti a contatto
Sapone
Tavoli
Tagliaerba
Marmo
Lampadine
Cupcakes
Pavimento del marciapiede
E-mails
Comunicati stampa
Bottiglia di soluzione per lenti a contatto
Carne di granchio
Carne umana
Acqua vitaminica
Carne di orangotango
Poster di Saw 5
Proposte scritte
Boomerang Chanel
Un'opera di Thomas Struth
Coda di cavallo
Felpa da bambino blu
Serpente a sonagli
Tavolino pieghevole da aereo
Arpa da concerto
Zucchero
Cesto di vimini
Ascia
Snowboard
Armadio
Ostriche
Burro di arachidi
Borscht
Omelette
Scudo antisommossa
Gomitolo
Buca
Scatola di scarpe
Patella



installation views, Alex Zachary, New York, May-June 2010



installation views, Chad Ochocinco, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, February-March 2011

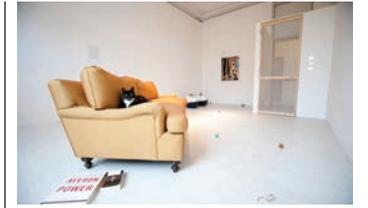
altri lo sono *inconsciamente*, altri ancora *erroneamente*.

Osservando i lavori di Bader ci si trova spesso a chiedersi come qualcosa (che sia un oggetto, un'immagine o un'azione) possa essere intenzionale pur senza avere uno scopo chiaramente definito.

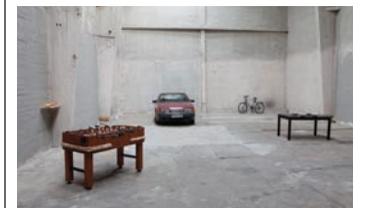
Alberto Savinio, fratello di Giorgio de Chirico, disse che la metafisica è per metà fisica e per metà no. Bader sembra porre sullo stesso livello la consapevolezza di ciò che è meramente possibile (arte) e ciò che accade realmente (storia). Una persona talmente famosa, da non avere bisogno di essere citata per nome, dichiarò che tutto è arte, in quanto l'arte non è un oggetto o un'idea, bensì un'attività dello spirito.

A differenza di altri artisti della sua generazione, Bader non utilizza la finzione come strumento per generare realtà possibili, piuttosto usa la realtà per costruire relazioni sia concrete che immaginarie. Darren si definisce uno scultore. Prende due elementi (a volte più di due) che possono essere complementari, anche se per molti sono incompatibili, e li combina. Sceglie di volta in volta beni di consumo, parole, immagini, animali, persone. Architetta speed dates che a volte diventano matrimoni.

Biglietti del teatro
Risciò
Bambola russa
Croda
Cima
SCOBY
Fumo
Mohel
Forchetta
Remo
Appunti
Orco
Profumo
Trapezio
Un'opera di Martin Boyce
Iguana
Un'opera di Matthias Merkel Hess
I Only Have Eyes For You dei Flamingos
Un'opera di Peter Regli
Sacco a pelo
Bryan Cranston
14
6
Scarpe a punta
Contenitore per la raccolta differenziata
Compositore
Parastinchi
Archivista
Mappamondo
Un finto quadro di Peter Halley
Paper Planes di MIA
Subwoofer
Altalena
Vano portaoggetti
Colombaia
Libro font
Insulina
Pene



installation views, Images, MoMA PS1, New York, January-May 2012



installation view, *Where Is a Bicycle's Vagina (and Other Enquiries), or Around the Samovar*, 1857, Oslo, April-June 2012

Fa scoccare la scintilla dell'amore tra due innamorati che non si rendono conto di ciò che provano.

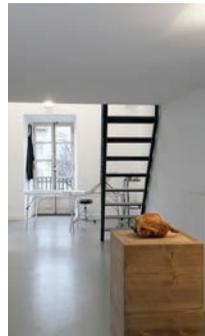
Non crea, assembla. Seleziona piuttosto che produrre. Mostra anziché rappresentare. L'ispirazione può venire da Google Images o da situazioni quotidiane. "Il linguaggio è la casa in cui l'uomo abita", disse Juliette Janson. Rinchiuso in questa casa, Darren si pone delle domande non tanto su ciò che è (*made*) o è stato (*already made*) ma su ciò che potrebbe succedere se ... (*mayde*). Perché e in quali circostanze qualcosa di indefinito risveglia un senso di rifiuto o di attrazione, quando produce significato o quando invece viene scartato come insignificante.

Molti lavori di Bader appaiono assertivi ma sono irresoluti e, in quanto tali, profondamente generosi verso l'osservatore. Mettono alla prova ogni definizione assoluta di artista e/o autorialità, senza invocare la loro morte, bensì sfruttando al meglio la loro vitalità dormiente. Bader confeziona opere omeopatiche. Inietta nell'arte lo stesso veleno che l'ha creata. Costruisce ossimori su vari livelli comunicanti tra loro: linguistici, visivi, materiali e, nel senso retorico del termine, paradossali. Nella retorica francese l'ossimoro, che veicola idee chiaramente opposte, era inserito nella categoria

Film zombie
Seno
Macchina fotografica
Ano
Grigiastro
Testicoli
Weekend
4428 1/2
Uniciclo
Campana di vetro
Vedovo
Mail
Cesto regalo
Sirena da nebbia
Trepiede
Sous chef
Tappeto persiano
Nido di calabroni
Curcumina
Telefono a gettoni
Libro di fumetti
8
12
Magnesio
Braille
Kale
Costume
161
39
Blocchi in cemento
alleggerito
Diapason
Squalo (morto)
Palla di gomma
Lanterna di zucca
Sonda atmosferica
Patricia Arquette
Quadro di Giorgio de Chirico
Pizza
Quadro di John Finneran
Burrito di pollo



installation view, *New Buildings About Songs and Food*, Sadie Coles HQ, London, September-October 2012



del *paradosso* (dal greco *pará* "contro, contrario" e *dóxa* "idea, opinione"). Nel *paradosso* come nell'*ossimoro*, due idee che di solito sono tenute separate e considerate inconciliabili, sono poste a stretto contatto una con l'altra per provocare un cortocircuito inaspettato, il quale conferisce loro un'inattesa "energia di significato" che colpirà l'ascoltatore o il lettore. *L'eroina nella lasagna*. Burro di arachidi e ostriche. Pizza con orecchino/i. La mucca e il letto. Bader testa la propria immaginazione tramite esperimenti condotti con rigore calvinista e spirito libertino. Traccia cerchi in forma di linea retta. Imprigiona la libertà di associazione in codici binari aperti a interpretazioni multiple. Si sottrae alla linearità confrontando l'osservatore con proposte all'apparenza giocose e/o futili. Partendo da un'osservazione del mondo che lo circonda, fa un casting delle cose che lo interessano (musica, film, testi, immagini, oggetti, opere di altri artisti) e, usando il linguaggio come un'arma, le fa salire su montagne russe epistemologiche.

Tengo molto sia all'immagine che al testo. Parola e immagine sono le cose attorno a cui gravito di più. La loro interconnessione sta diventando sempre meno importante per me, nel senso di un rapporto stretto con ciascuno dei due. Dico sul serio... a volte questa

Burrito di manzo
File audio
Verdure
Lettiera per gatti
Corno francese
Guacamole
Leone
Parmigiano reggiano
Sgabello pneumatico da ufficio
Sedia a dondolo
Briciole
Amplificatore
Istruzioni
Melone di cantalupo
Mucca
Letto
Flauto
Tamburello
Rullante
Lasagna
Calzini
Eroina
Zuppa di vongola
Trois Gnossiennes di Erik Satie
DJs
Tatuaggi
Pulsanti con domini web
Circuito elettrico
Cavi elettrici
I phone
Rogaine
Fossili
Immagini digitali
Nike Air Max
Donazioni
Libro *Villette* di Charlotte Bronte
Blue jeans
Borsa Celine
Libro *Contraband* di



installation views, *#I am just living to be dying by your side*, Galleria Franco Noero, Turin, February-April 2013



installation views, *Heaven and Earth*, Blum and Poe, Los Angeles, July-August 2013



installation views, *Heaven and Earth*, Blum and Poe, Los Angeles, July-August 2013

interconnessione era un rapporto stretto con entrambi in sé, ora per me è più una pratica ascetica consistente nel cercare di estrarre la linfa di entrambi secondo le loro specifiche condizioni. Parola, immagine, audio, hyperlink: sono tutte quantità fondamentalmente interscambiabili per me. Sono tutte entità scultoree, ognuna delle quali occupa una porzione di spazio (sensoriale e cognitivo), uno spazio cognitivo/estetizzabile.

Queste sculture impossibili spesso esistono in un tempo+contesto specifici, contemplando la natura problematica della loro presenza e della loro sopravvivenza nei codici del sistema arte.

Bader ha creato opere, curato mostre, concepito opere come mostre; ha pubblicato libri, scritto testi. Fin dal principio l'artista non ha mai smesso di porsi delle domande su come esporre, interpretare, definire, documentare, raccogliere e conservare qualcosa che in un determinato contesto è definito un'opera d'arte.

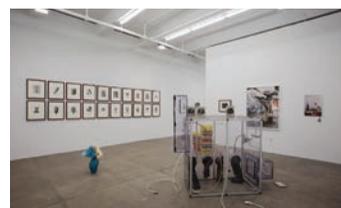
Condivide con l'osservatore le varie possibilità gnoseologiche, epistemologiche e sintattiche che un oggetto specifico può produrre in uno spazio e in un momento specifici.

Indaga le possibilità e i limiti dell'esperienza dell'oggetto artistico secondo un approccio

Taryn Simon
Pianisti
Chiave della cassetta della posta
Dito
Film documentario
Essiccante
Cavalieri di scacchi
Crocifisso
Rilevatore monossido di carbonio
Barca
Insalata
Barile
Palo
Pacco di gomme
Manganello
Performance artist
Cornice
Tavolo da ping-pong
Scovolino del mascarà
Azoto liquido



Garage Magazine #6



installation views, Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York, May-June 2014

ontologico. Propone verifiche di compatibilità tra due elementi apparentemente inconciliabili, motivato dal desiderio di testare empiricamente la relazione tra vari segni, siano essi immagini, oggetti, persone o animali. Lavora con il linguaggio, facendo attenzione a non fissare negli occhi la Medusa della metafora. Porta avanti proposte linguistiche animate in costruzioni visive temporanee. Sculture che, a seconda della situazione, si presentano come immagini e/o oggetti in uno spazio, istruzioni che sta all'osservatore attivare, o semplici elenchi di parole. È vigile e meticoloso riguardo agli strumenti impiegati nella circolazione del proprio lavoro e nella comunicazione: dai titoli alle didascalie, dai comunicati stampa alle interviste, ai (bellissimi) testi che scrive lui stesso.

Odia l'autoreferenzialità della produzione artistica contemporanea, alla quale preferisce i grandi classici della pittura e della letteratura moderna. Quando l'avanguardia non era definita tale ma era esattamente quello. Oggi non esiste più, ma si definisce avanguardia. Bader ama la bellezza. Probabilmente la trova in cose dove molti avrebbero difficoltà a immaginarla esistere. Non dimentica mai che un'opera d'arte si sviluppa su un livello linguistico-semanticamente tanto quanto estetico. Un'idea di estetica più



installation view, Atelier Calder, Saché, November 2014



installation views, *The World as Will and Representation*, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, February-March 2015



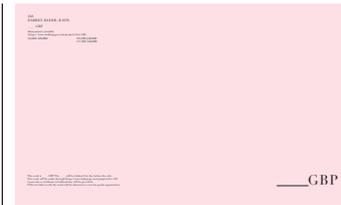
installation view, *light (and) regret*, Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne, February-March 2015

complessa di una semplice ricerca formalista del bello, intesa più in senso marxista come la caratteristica che distingue l'uomo dagli animali. Estetica come spazio dove connettere forme, bisogni, piaceri, desideri. Il romanticismo della sua posizione si scontra con il cinismo e la superficialità del mondo dell'arte. Rischia di essere frainteso o non capito del tutto, ma questa precarietà è un ingrediente fondamentale del suo lavoro.

Al di là di qualsiasi speculazione, la cosa più importante è che Darren Bader produce lavori rigorosi, generosi, romantici, metafisici, emotivi, giocosi, polemici. Volerlo collocare all'interno di una storia o imprigionarlo in un assortimento di definizioni equivarrebbe a rifiutarsi, da paziente in psicanalisi, di parlare con il proprio analista. Non è d'aiuto. Sarebbe come cercare di scoprire il significato dei simboli che affiancano i nomi degli artisti nel *Manifesto* di Alighiero Boetti o aprire una scatola di *Merda d'artista* di Piero Manzoni. Sarebbe più sensato appendere un dipinto di Baselitz a testa in giù e comprendere le condizioni in cui questo stesso oggetto può produrre significato o meno.

Poscritto:

Nel 2015 l'artista partecipò con due lavori alla Biennale di Lione. Insoddisfatto del testo delle



Christie's London, Post-War and Contemporary day sale, February 12, 2015



installation view, *The Visitors*, Governors Island, New York, Summer 2015



installation views, *Reading Writing Arithmetic*, Radio Athènes, Athens, September-October 2015



installation view, *rocks and mirrors*, Galleria Franco Noero, Turin, November 2015 - January 2016

didascalie che accompagnavano le sue opere, aggiunte a penna le parole: "in parte non vero". Per questo testo vale lo stesso.



installation views, *proposta per le 9 sinfonie*, Galleria Franco Noero, Turin, November 2015 - January 2016



installation views, *such are promises*, Sadie Coles HQ, London, January-February 2016





installation views, *Meaning and Difference*, The Power Station, Dallas, February-March 2017



installation view, *Forest/Trees*, Greenspon, New York, May-July 2017

LUCA LO PINTO is curator at Kunsthalle Wien

NEGAR AZIMI

I met Darren, an elusive presence, in my early twenties, in New York. He worked at a gallery attached to a bar that I occasionally passed by with a famous dance floor that would light up in RGB colors, a little like Skittles on speed. His art, which I first saw at a gallery on the Lower East Side that has since shut, had a participant-observer vibe; there seemed to be a great deal of commentary about the situation: you, a gallery, you in a gallery. A disembodied wink. If that sounds like having your cake and eating it, it may well be. Our conversations over the years have touched on many things—our respective moods, where we’ve been, where we’ll escape to when the soot and speed and narrowness of New York become too much. Darren’s manner is distinctly lugubrious, but what might come across as gloom or fatalism is undermined by an abiding humor. He also, it should be said, has the air of an enthusiast. Darren loves to love. He is a spindly epicurean. A pilgrim and a reader, too. Inevitably, our conversations and emails end—or in some cases begin—with “What are you reading?” The last time we exchanged, it may have been Calvino lectures (him) and Henry James (me). He often walks around with a book under his arm. It’s almost

always a paperback; I think this is important, but he may well disagree. Darren is nothing if not particular.

.....

Let’s go back in time. A portrait of the artist as a belletrist. Early on, Darren published a book called *James Earl Scones* (2005), in which he collects letters sent to an array of eminent personages—museum directors, government ministers, movie stars, and so on—with one or another proposal.

The first letter in the volume begins:

Dear Tom Cruise and NASA:

I am an artist. Never mind which kind of artist, for it is such an onerous thing to have to deem oneself this or that.

It continues:

I would like to shoot Mr. Cruise and a (sexless) 5-year-old into outer space.

There are specifications:

Mr. Cruise shall always look the age he is on the cover of last summer (2002)'s *W* magazine (I think he may be wet on the cover—I don't think he should be wet in space; sounds uncomfortable).

Moreover, and characteristically, food will be one of his primary raw (although, rather, mostly cooked) materials:

While in outer space the "space capsule" will contain enough egg salad to feed any hungers and maintain a sense of there being more egg salad than might be thought of as "decent" ... Perhaps the "space capsule" is just one not-so-capacious quarter in which Mr. Cruise and the 5-year-old commingle with egg salad.

Darren goes on to specify the sort of eggs (sometimes free-range, sometimes "shitty egg-factory-smells-like-death egg") and mayonnaise (sometimes soy, sometimes "slightly rancid Hellmann's") to be used in said operation.

As it winds up, the letter sounds an apologetic but hopeful note:

I don't know how to efficaciously and pluralistically communicate in any language other than English. I bid thee so many things.

Linger over this: *I bid thee so many things.*

.....

Another letter. This one is addressed to Serge Lemoine, esteemed director of the Musee d'Orsay, and reads, "It is my current artistic project to integrate haptic and gustatory phenomena into the act of seeing." The artist goes on to (politely) request permission to nourish himself by gazing at two paintings by Gustave Courbet, *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory* and *The Man with the Leather Belt (Self-Portrait)*. A catch: he wants to do so while sitting atop a bucket of black beans, his pants dropped around his ankles, the better to "elucidate certain ... libidinal investments I have for both food (especially viscous foods) and master oil paintings."

The book carries on in this spirit, reprinting letters requesting permission for the artist to tape a saran-wrap sandwich (variety unspecified) next to Balthus's

The Mountain at the Met; install a baby-changing table at the base of Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*; and, finally, to shit his pants beneath the frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel.

.....

Intercutting the letters is a spare diary of sorts—a compendium of tasks and chores, thoughts thought, works executed or abandoned, the occasional birthday gift gifted.

Books appear frequently, although they, too, are materials (raw, cooked) for artworks, and typically with great specificity. In *James Earl Scones*, we encounter Albert Camus, Thomas Mann, Teilhard de Chardin, Sophocles, Philoctetes, Freud, Kafka, Dostoevsky, Henrik Ibsen, Ingmar Bergman, William Faulkner, and Yukio Mishima.

In one diary entry, Darren records chucking a copy of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Bantam Classics edition) onto a store roof:

The book soaring through the air, for the briefest of moments ... brought back wonderful memories of the text, its lissome thunders.

Lissome thunders! Sweet juvenilia? Maybe. And yet, having wrested said haloed text from history—or the library or his bookshelf or whatever—Darren has endowed it, ever so briefly, with new life. There's a lot of this kind of thing in *James Earl Scones*. Darren leaves books at construction sites, in porta-potties, tapes them to automobiles (windshields, wheel rims, both expensive and ordinary), to the backs of movie theater seats; in one memorable entry, he and an unnamed accomplice unspool rolls of clear packing tape that have been fastened to a paperback copy of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1981 Signet Classic edition, with the Edward Burne-Jones cover), leaving Bunyan dangling from an overpass. In another, he envisions feeding books to a whale off a pier. Darren wants to reconnect to the text. He is expanding the books'—and our—experiential universe. *Lovingly*.

James Earl Scones has an epigraph: "Coming of age in (the) artghetto." Call it a Bildungsroman.

Oh, and one might ask what, precisely, the distinguished actor James Earl Jones is doing here, why his name, in particular, has been subjected to *détournement*? We will come back to that.

.....

A trip to the Darren Bader interior is studded with knock-knock jokes, double entendres, impassioned shrugs, a lot of *Whatever you want it to mean* & a good dose of *I'm not sure*. Still, the metaphorical shrug belies a numbing exactitude. Many turn to surrealism or absurdism in grappling with the ready-made nature of the work, the incongruous Frankenstein pairings. I do it myself, sometimes. But there is something else. There is tenderness, and a conspicuous commitment to words—words on the page, words spoken, unspoken, too. As time passes, I have come to believe that one of the great, understudied subjects of Darren's art is language.

"It is such an onerous thing to have to deem oneself this or that," he confides to Tom Cruise and NASA.

"My art can be called performance, sculpture, conceptual; but preferably, nothing at all," he informs Henri Loyrette, director of the Louvre.

"I work with performance and other unreliable media," he tells Davide Banzato of the Musei Eremitani.

Words, brimming with meaning, also glimmer with false promise.

.....

Over the years, critics and curators have puzzled through the antic zigzag of associations in Darren's various texts, objects, instructions, and audio pieces, groping for meaning like seekers at an ashram. Rope with/and Don Quixote. Couscous in the swimming pool. Cow with/and flute. Barack Obama with pasta. Lion and/with cantaloupe. Etc.

To be sure, Darren makes the work of writing about his art a pleasure, a stroll in the park, even, in that one can pile up long pyrotechnic lists of incongruous nouns, which give one's writing the appearance of being "fun."

*Burritos, cat adoption, a green iguana.*¹ We stretch to make sense of it all, working through the babel of associations. His art is generative, and it is generous. He's created a world strewn with exquisite corpses.

I am leaning on the surrealists, again.

.....

Isabel Archer, the lady protagonist of Henry James's 1881 novel *The Portrait of a Lady*, makes a fine point as she ponders the enigmatic Madame Merle. "What's language at all but a convention?" she says. "[Merle] has the good taste not to pretend, like some people I've met, to express herself by original signs." James wrote his book almost four decades before Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's fateful course on linguistics was posthumously published and came to define the field, and yet they do share a thesis of sorts. Saussure argued that language is a convention, which in turn operates through a series of contrasts. Objects are composed of signifier (sound emitted) and signified (concept). The relationship between the two, which is called the sign, is

arbitrary. In other words, a fur-and-bones cat may as well have been called a "hat." C-A-T does not embody catness, per se. The string of signs, in turn—*the cat ate the burrito*—is language.

In 2010, Darren conjured Saussure's ghost when, around a more or less rectangular room, he affixed a series of vinyl numbers extending from 2 to 3,266. Every once in a while, the spread was interrupted by an object—a book of Polaroids by the late Dash Snow, three and a half blades of sushi grass, a set of Apple earbuds, a plaster potato, a twenty-dollar bill (Andrew Jackson side up, two dimes affixed to its surface), a bag of fertilizer, bottles of Syrah and Pinot Noir, et cetera. The juxtapositions, odd-fangled as they were, produced both befuddlement and delight.

In the eyes of at least one critic, said exhibition, which was called *Number[s]* and held at a space called Eighth Veil in Los Angeles, offered a "leveling gesture," conjuring some vague democratic promise in which Pinot Noir and a blade of plastic sushi grass have equal rights. This argument is probably not not true. And yet, as I think about the elements of

that exhibition, I'm inclined to think of it more as a text of sorts, an evocative, eclectic Darren Baderian grammar. The objects open up worlds, just as these words by Vladimir Nabokov do in *Lolita*: "My very photogenic mother died in a freak accident (picnic, lightning) when I was three." (Picnic, lightning), of course, is enormously ripe with possibility. And yet Nabokov breezes by the two, denying us the pleasure of his spelling it all out, and creating a different sort of narrative pleasure. The inside of the parenthesis is tantalizing, almost a sentence itself, despite lacking a verb. This is, I think, an apt analogy for what the objects in a Darren Bader artwork are doing.

"To *name* an object is to lose three-quarters of the pleasure of the poem, which is made of the happiness of guessing little by little; to *suggést* it, there is the dream," says Mallarmé.

Darren, in other words, creates worlds the way a poet or a novelist does, one brick at a time, using the motley tools at his disposal. And like Nabokov, or perhaps more like Raymond Queneau—an author he once encouraged me to read—Darren is invested

in language's possibilities, but also its limitations. Queneau's *Exercises in Style* is composed of ninety-nine versions of the same story about a protagonist who ends up in a fight, on a bus, and then is seen later, the same day, at the Gare Saint-Lazare, soliciting advice as to how to deal with a missing button on his overcoat. The story is, for the most part, meaningless. Still, each of the ninety-nine tellings offers up new details, a new style, new atmosphere.

As Darren once told the writer Bruce Hainley, "it all comes down to bridgeable abysses."²

.....

A sampling of openings from Darren's hitherto unpublished "novels":

I came upon a thirsty aubergine in the wood. It was sipping pond water from a plastic straw.

*Somewhere in Switzerland, a BMW station wagon sits, filled with sticky pasta.*³

.....

In all this, Proust is never far. Working my way through Darren's work, the mention of a burrito (again) reminds me of a smelly Taco Bell I once knew, where I had "fast food" for the first time, not long after coming to America; a cat (again) takes me back to a teenage after-school job feeding cats in a neighbor's dark, damp, plant-strewn apartment. My thoughts wander.

As Proust wrote, in *In Search of Lost Time*, "We find a little of everything in our memory; it is a sort of pharmacy, a sort of chemical laboratory, in which our groping hand may come to rest, now on a sedative drug, now on a dangerous poison."

Among the unrealized projects documented in the diaries in *James Earl Scones*, just days after pondering the meaning of one's artistic legacy and how to plan for one's "inevitable disappearance," Darren writes to Whole Foods requesting "enough expired rice, wheat flour, onions, tomato, avocado, jack

cheese, etc. to construct a burrito big enough for me to be the protein center of."

Perhaps Darren wants to become his own madeleine. And ours, too?

.....

Let us return to the cans of beans, almost-destined to perfume two works by Courbet. Darren, a *lover* (my emphasis) of art, wants to make it *stink*, in the case of those paintings, or make it *soar*, as with the Joycean paperback we began with.

Having initially trained as a filmmaker, he has often worried over film's inability to be "tactile."

A fragment from a statement attached to a 2007 show:

This is
Why and What happens when i wish to reconcile the
literary, the cinematic, and the tactile.
(mis)aligned feast.

Here's the critic Viktor Shklovsky on art, and literature's, ability to conjure the richness of human perception: "Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar," to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important."

Darren, I believe, endeavors to make the stone stony.

At the same time, he couldn't care less about the stone. The object is not important at all.

.....

More than five decades after Saussure's text was published, Roland Barthes's *The Reality Effect* took a further leap. In his exhumation of Gustave Flaubert's *A Simple Heart*, Barthes lingers over a superfluous

barometer amid a thick description of objects in a room. Eight mahogany chairs, an old piano, etc. *A barometer*. Why on earth is the barometer there? No reason in particular, says Barthes, except to signify the real. In *S/Z*, he extends the train of thought as he sifts through Honore de Balzac's novella *Sarrasine*, proposing that realism itself, as a genre, is a system of codes—"not from a language to a referent but from one code to another."

And yet, for Darren, this coded, artifice-laden prison—let's call it language—is a gilded one, for it encloses a garden of earthy delights.

"All legitimate art deals with limits," says Robert Smithson.

I think Darren would approve of Smithson's statement, but I prefer this one, by Yeats: "We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry."

.....

Cat filled with dirty laundry
Cat with invisible paws
*Holding in Kristin Scott Thomas's pee for her*⁴

.....

Faith. Darren worships at the altar of art, even if its contemporary manifestations mostly seem to let him down. It is not uncommon for him to—in “real life”—visit this or that altarpiece, fresco, church, or museum. I implied as much, earlier, by referring to him as a passionate “pilgrim.” In the letter printed in *James Earl Scones* in which he suggests taking a discreet shit beneath the Giotto frescoes, he elaborates:

I came to like art because it made me believe in something greater than myself (even if in my cloister). I don't know if the art I see in its contemporary quarters makes me believe in that something-greater. Much like with the images I see online, it's quite easy to “like.” And yet, the infinity of images online does give me faith, just as the spiritual infinity of art keeps me company. I trust a past I never lived and I doubt a present(-future) I can't see.

Whether or not the lasagna has been injected with heroin, to evoke another Darren Bader artwork (*lasagna on heroin*), is precisely not the point. In Guy de Maupassant's short story *The Necklace*, the joke is on the protagonist, who spends years paying off loans attached to replacing a prized necklace she once borrowed and lost, only to find out, years later, now destitute, that the necklace was a fake all along.

“I'm very much about re-gifting,” Darren once said. “The beauty of a ‘forgery’ does not a fake work of art make.”⁵

*Art might be sleeping in the parking lot, but art could also drive up and take you out for dinner.*⁶

.....

The first Donald Barthelme work I read was a novel, *Snow White* (1967), which is a fairy tale turned on its head, told from multiple perspectives, starring a tall twenty-two-year-old heroine who lives with seven dwarves with whom she has unsatisfying sex (always in the shower). The dwarves, in turn, work in a Chinese baby-food factory. Paul, who plays the

reluctant prince, is a rootless slacker. He tries out life as a monk, and not digging that, drops out.

“THEN I took off my shirt and called Paul because we were planning to break into his apartment.”

That’s one of the dwarves, speaking in the telegraphic manner that is de rigueur in *Snow White*. Very often, Barthelme’s text fuses such seemingly unrelated fragments—the call, the stripping of the shirt, breaking into an apartment—to stirring effect. In this case, the individual fragments are dynamic, interchangeable, even, not entirely unlike the objects embedded in and around Darren’s wall of numbers.

“I wish there were some words in the world that were not the words I always hear,” declares Snow White.

As if standing in for the author, she continues, “I am tired of being just a horsewife!”

For Barthelme, words “are not inert, rather they’re furiously busy ... have halos, patinas, overhangs, echoes.”

.....

From Barthelme to Bader, one might begin to gravitate toward the Russian critic Mikael Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia. Bakhtin’s term, unpacked in his *Discourse of the Novel*, points to a literature that can hold different tones of language within a single text, that can accommodate contradiction and plurality. The scholar Nicholas Sloboda has argued that Barthelme’s work is a quintessential manifestation of heteroglossia.⁷ After all, in Bakhtin’s conception of the genre, authorial voice is promiscuous; it can absorb and encompass and be many things, it is polyphonic, it runs counter to the singular epic hero of older writing traditions, which Bakhtin describes as “hopelessly ready-made.” Barthelme’s riff on Snow White, with its exploding piñata of meaning, is just that. So, too, is Darren’s work, with its shifting registers, DIY spirit (artist + audience, “and/or” format), and plentitude of ambiguities.

Suddenly, *James Earl Scones* begins to make sense. Why else invoke a fellow who starred in *Roots*, *The Lion*

King (as kingly Mufasa), *Star Wars* (as Darth Vader), and *The Simpsons* (as Edgar Allan Poe, no less)?

Heteroglossia addresses, in Bakhtin's words, "the problem of artistically representing language, the problem of representing the image of a language."

This may as well be an evocation of Darren's work. *More Buildings about Songs and Food* is the title of an exhibition he once had.

In the heteroglossic realm, there is beauty and there is contradiction and there is beauty in the contradiction. There is Darren who worships the original object; but then again, any old burrito will do. It is no wonder that a great number of his works revolve around food, for food perishes. Here today, gone tomorrow.

Historically, still lifes depicting fruit fell at the bottom of the painterly hierarchy.

.....

Darren is the guy wearing sneakers to his debutante ball, selling his junk mail to the highest bidder, simply because he can get away with it (oh, vexed artghetto). Darren worries about what "legacy" means, and subverts his own at every turn. Still, disembodied winks need not be spiritual cul-de-sacs. The road is the thing. Make the stone stony, or die trying.

Finally, I am reminded of a work of Darren's that was once on sale in a booth, which is to say at an art fair, called *pretty face* (2012). I didn't see it, but I did hear about it. As there was no obvious physical trace of said "pretty face" in the booth or its environs, the "work" inspired a lot of energetic head scratching and seeking among collectors and curious others.

Are you pretty face?

Are you a pretty face?

I'm/We're looking for a pretty face.

Beauty, always in the eye of the beholder. A (mis)aligned feast.

¹ While any number of nouns could have been selected, this list is drawn from an exhibition at MoMA/PS1 in 2012.

² From a conversation between Darren Bader and Bruce Hainley, published in *Spike* 28 (2011).

³ The aubergine and the BMW were sculptures shown at the Biennale de Lyon (2015) and Art Basel Parcours (2014), respectively.

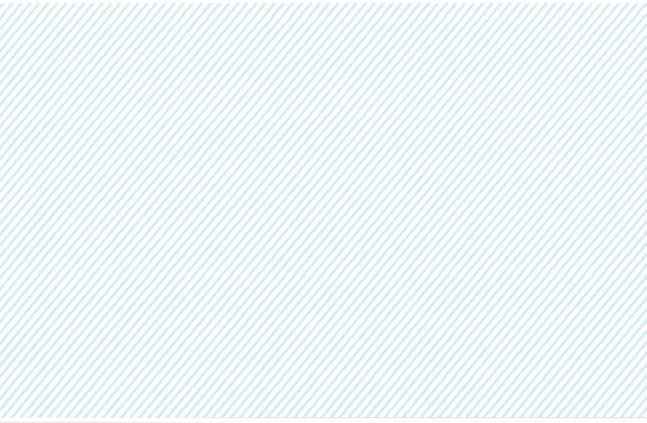
⁴ Various Darren Bader artworks.

⁵ From a conversation between Darren Bader and Peter Eleey, published in *Mousse* 35 (2012).

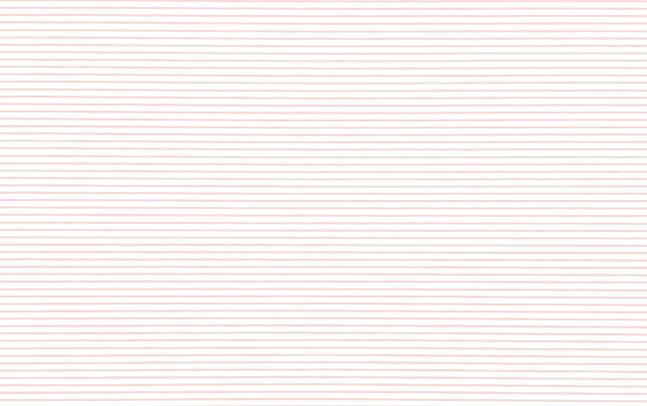
⁶ A wall text from Darren's 2012 MoMA/PS1 exhibition.

⁷ Nicholas Sloboda, "Heteroglossia and Collage: Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*," *Mosaic* 30, no. 4 (December 1997): 109–23.

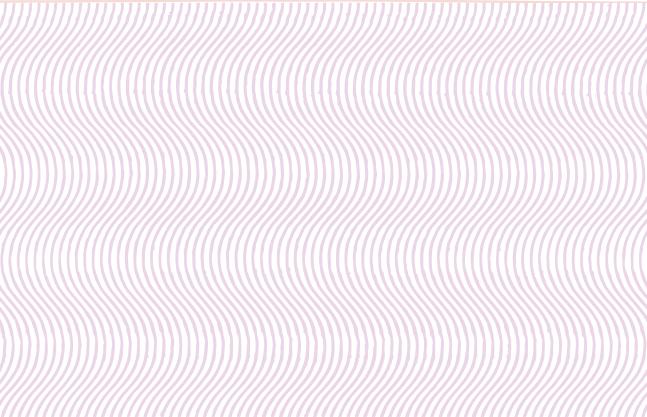
NEGAR AZIMI is a writer and editor



TESS EDMONSON



ANDREW NORMAN WILSON



DENA YAGO

Dear Darren Bader,

In a letter to Tom Hanks from 2003, you mused that, “dead friendships seem less stressful, less sexual than living friendships. Perhaps genital fervor persists beyond the grave, or beneath the earth; if this is so, then I wish I wouldn’t bring genital drive with me after I cease living.” Well, dead friendships do seem less stressful, less sexual than living friendships. But if—and I hope it does—genital fervor persists beyond the grave, I would like to imagine erections breaking through the soil like asparagus in May.



Or that your *Rogaine®* experiment: *fossil* would yield measurable regrowth.

I read that you invited famous people to participate as artworks in *Images*, your exhibition at MoMA PS1 in the spring of 2012. By showing up at the exhibition, the famous people would form a “celebrity sculpture” or part of a celebrity sculpture: “each famous person just doing his/her own thing for a half hour or so.” It’s a proposal whose power seems similar to “and/with” and “with/and”: things, including celebrities, have meaning, even if it’s constructed or projected, and placing one or more things in proximity or in conversation can change these meanings, or produce new ones. My body, that of a not-famous person, means something different in the gallery from Bryan Cranston’s, an image of the latter perhaps pointing to the circuit between the extraordinary and the mundane (and art’s operative role within it). Did any famous people show up at the gallery in the end?



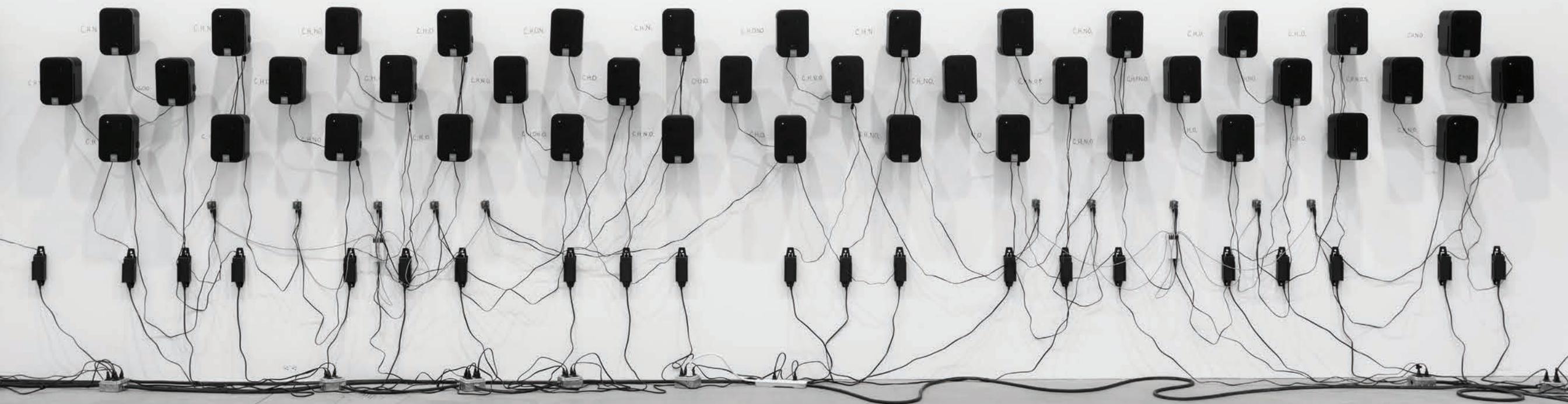
The epistolary mode is always tied to claims of authenticity, where a letter speaks more to a person's (or character's) relationship to themselves than to those they address. This is also why it's a successful vehicle for satire. At the apex of the epistolary novel's popularity, in the eighteenth century, the form was associated with women's experiences and writing, even when the authors were men. The closed loop was most frequently put to use in portraying the interiority of a woman or an imagined woman. Maybe this could also be read as the public sphere taking from the private sphere, where we understand this division as a gendered one.

Reading a text by artist Gordon Hall, titled "Object Lessons: Thinking Gender Variance through Minimalist Sculpture," I was taken with the idea of engaging with sculpture as a form of "embodied pedagogy," or approaching sculptures as objects from which we learn. Hall argues in favor of sculptures that, when viewed as "Object Lessons," ask for "nuanced, open-ended forms of reading that can accommodate these objects of ambiguous functionality." Hall writes of approaching these objects specifically in relation to the way we perceive non-normative gender identities and queer bodies, though I think this approach has potential for all bodies that have become alienated due to, say, mental health, physical disabilities, or emotional states. The ur-object for Hall is the Slant Step, a linoleum-covered, slanted step found in a Mill Valley salvage shop by California artists William Wiley and Bruce Nauman, his student at UC Davis.



The objects used in these proposed lessons are ones that produce bodily estrangement and open readings, achieving this through the use of minimal, abstract sculpture. Your work is sparse rather than minimal, but it embraces a nuanced, layered reading of artworks as symbolic, metaphorical, representational, historical, and autobiographical—in any constellation you choose. Moreover, these objects are primarily readymades laden with existing cultural signifiers.

Any “reads” of these objects are equivalent, and it would be a stretch to read your work in a purely historical or purely metaphorical context. When I look at a wheel of Parmigiano shown on a gallery floor in Turin, or any of the varied rocks and mirrors shown in the *rocks and mirrors* show, the layering of “reads” and significance in each object leads these representational objects into a cacophonous slide toward abstraction.



That slide, that motion, also seems to collapse the distance between representation and abstraction, and it seems hard to maintain the idea that these are opposing poles. They can have different relationships. One can make up the other, as in *Forest/Trees*, your current show at Greenspon Gallery in New York. There, wall-mounted speakers play playlists of your making: “Months” collects twelve songs titled January through December; “Smoke and Mirrors” contains one titled “Smoke” and another, “Mirrors”; “Snakes” lists songs whose titles correspond to forty-two different kinds of snakes; “Salade Niçoise” contains songs called “Tuna,” “Green Beans,” “Olives,” “Tomatoes,” “Potatoes,” “Hard Boiled Egg,” “Anchovies,” and “Vinaigrette.” These all play simultaneously, which renders them mostly indecipherable, and the gallery overwhelmingly loud. Listening to more than one pop song at a time is so antithetical to what pop songs are designed for that it really had never even occurred to me that it could be done. It feels like the height of absurdity. But maybe there’s a decadence in it too. Like ordering two or three meals simultaneously at a restaurant. I remember a story about a friend of a friend who worked on the tar sands in Northern Alberta, where for most of the 2000s the extraction economy was so strong and so unregulated that one could make ten thousand dollars a month doing entry-level manual labor. This friend was doing that, living in a hotel in Fort McMurray and making more money than there was really anything to do with in this remote, and kind of terrible, part of Canada. He paid the hotel to install a second TV set in his room so that he could watch *Die Hard* and *Die Hard 2* simultaneously, and did so every night. Why not?

I feel a short circuit forming between the terms maximalism and minimalism here, the former historically being a reaction to the latter that now affords a synthesis of the two in your work. On the one hand, the dissonance created by a plentitude of objects serves to unfix their individual meanings and gives me a sense of the infinite. Yet at the same time, something like the minimalism of Samuel Beckett is at play in the language used in your contracts, or your *rocks and mirrors* show at Galleria





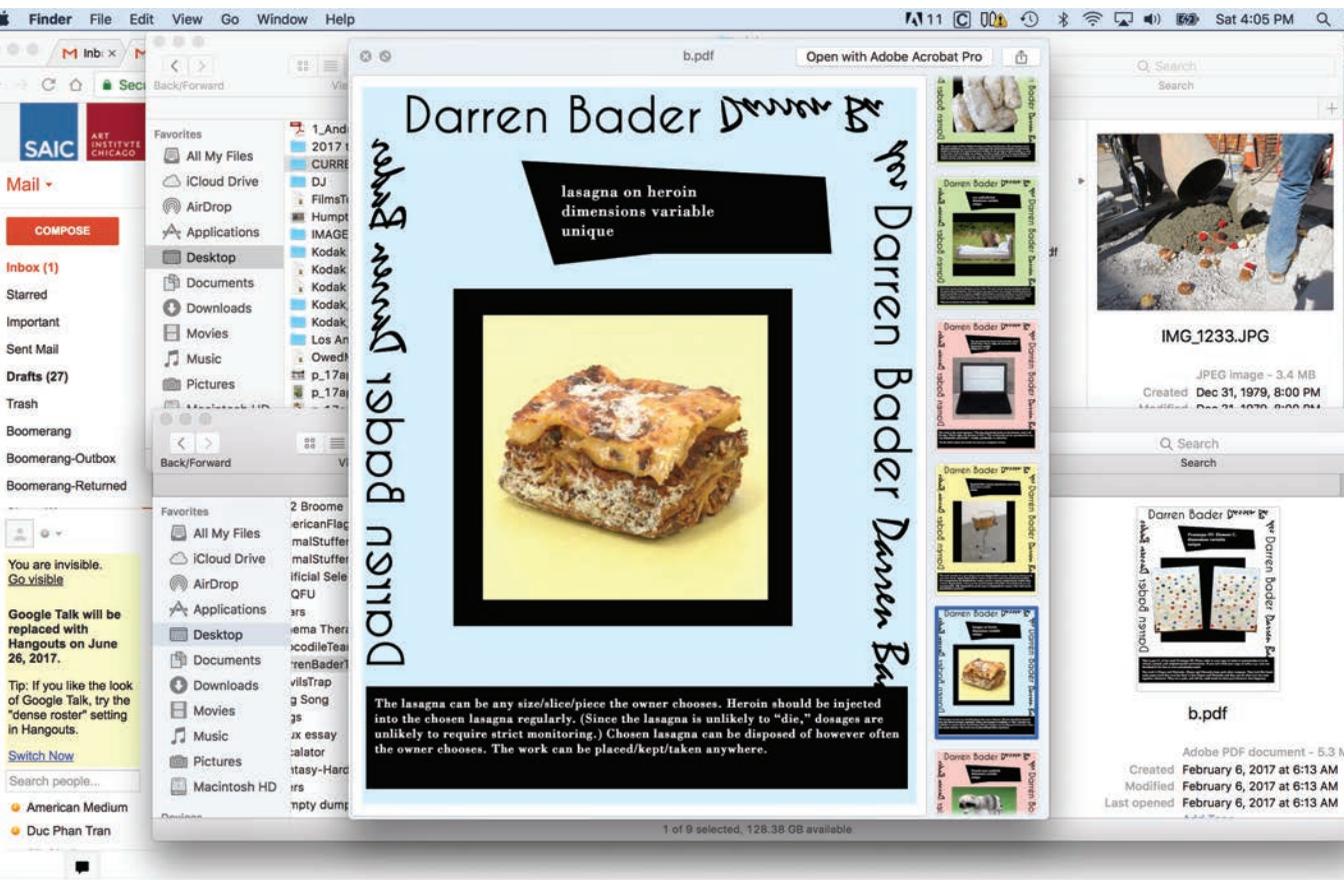
Franco Noero in 2015, which consisted entirely of rocks and mirrors. An absurdist nominalism steers our attention away from the objects' meanings toward the obsessive mechanics of a machine disconnected from reason. From Beckett's *Molloy*:

Pausing then, and concentrating, so as not to make a balls of it, I transfer to the right pocket of my greatcoat, in which there are no stones left, the five stones in the right pocket of my trousers, which I replace by the five stones in the left pocket of my trousers, which I replace by the six stones in the left pocket of my greatcoat. At this stage then the left pocket of my greatcoat is again empty of stones, while the right pocket of my greatcoat is again supplied, and in the right way, that is to say with other stones than those I have just sucked. These other stones I then begin to suck, one after the other, and to transfer as I go along to the left pocket of my greatcoat, being absolutely certain, as far as one can be in an affair of this kind, that I am not sucking the same stones as a moment before, but others.

These belabored descriptions of a man trying to figure out a logical system for sucking each of his sixteen stones without sucking the same stone twice before sucking them all continue until he arrives at an actual solution. Here the gears spin in an extraordinary performance of "thinking," where it is clear that the object of this "thought" is entirely contained within the brilliance of the routine. Thinking of the stones, or the hands and pockets they move through, as ideas get me nowhere: they're simply a pretext for a display of skill, the outburst of which provides its special emotional tenor, its sense of being suspended before the immense spectacle of the irrational. As Sol LeWitt wrote, "irrational thoughts should be followed absolutely and logically," but there is also playfulness in your work, offering trapdoors out of the absolute.

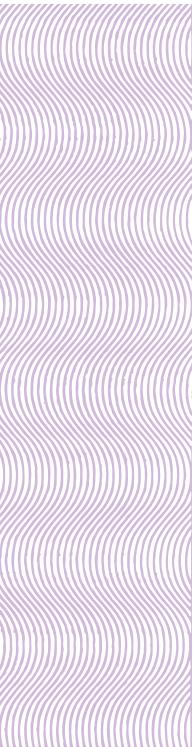
Among the objects in your 2014 exhibition at Andrew Kreps, *To Have and to Hold*, is an English-language copy of Robert Musil's *The Man Without Qualities Vol. 2: Into the Millennium*. The press release for this exhibition is a copy of the contract outlining the terms for the purchase of an artwork, which include (optionally) losing or destroying the original artwork and replacing it with another similar object. I don't want to read the presence of this particular book in the exhibition too literally, as the contract really emphasizes the fungibility of the show's objects, and the possibility that any discrete object might easily be exchanged for any other. But the inclusion of *The Man Without Qualities* made me think of its publication history, where Musil spent over twenty years, 1921 to 1942, writing it, ultimately dying before its completion. It was published in a variety of unfinished versions. The one in the gallery is the second volume of the current standard English edition, whose total length is nearly two thousand pages. It feels both morbid and obvious to say that the author's death was the only way to finish a project that was otherwise unfinishable. Though manifested differently, Musil's maximalism seems like a good match for yours, where one permutation of a given set of factors isn't really enough. Donna Haraway, describing her writing style, said that she has "always ... felt we need more than one word at a time."





Both the contractual conditions of the work and the veiled meanings of your object constellations provoke an instinctual urge to solve a puzzle, as if each show deployed several broken or unsolvable riddles. Every time I've been to one, I've become very self-aware of my attempts to make connections and speculate on logics, where things are both specific (utility) and undetermined (fantasy). *Futility*, as you called it in a statement of artistic aims submitted to the Whitney Museum upon their collection of your work. There's also the recognition that this portman-teau is already another word with another meaning, which sets off a recursive logic that spirals down a network of rabbit holes.

To return to *To Have and to Hold*, as an example—I'm looking at a closed box of dried noodles from Thailand. I think about the box of eight Jew's harps, and my eye wanders to an oddly shaped HP printer, and then an opaque purple vibrator. I wonder what is *actually* inside all of these things? Is this a show about the inaccessible interiority of everything?



Perhaps? Considering bodies as vessels is an act of magical thinking, propagated by institutions—such as the church, hospitals, athletic coaches, or old-school psychoanalysts—that traditionally espouse a division between body and mind, a hierarchy of dominance and submission. Anyone who has had experience with an eating disorder or body dysmorphia has encountered this—the mystification of bodily interiority, considering one’s body as a liminal threshold of the self. For the anorexic, the process of ingestion, of the bodily incorporation of foreign objects in the form of food, elicits a recondite sense of horror and visceral wonder. When it hears “you are what you eat,” some part of my brain immediately imagines my insides filled with all of the elements of a meal rattling around in there. It’s that part of my brain that believes you when you say that an eggplant on all fours, drinking from a river in Lyon through a straw is indeed filled with used frying oil and hair swept up from a salon floor, or when you list “cat as printer” as one of the “[works] in the gallery (during the show)” during the 2009 exhibition at T&Sn’Kreps. There are moments when you actually reveal the process of embedding/encasing objects in the sidewalks of New York, as with your cupcakes-in-cement install in front of Andrew Kreps in 2011. These sculptures operate on faith, and I want to stare at them until it feels more or less true. I want to believe.







Inaccessible interiority seems like a tendency throughout your work, but you won't go so far as to make an entire show about that. So alongside the HP printer and the vibrator, there's a print affixed to a freestanding door that's about Christopher Plummer's sex injury that nullifies that hunch I had about a totalizing thematic.

A 2012 show at 1857 in Oslo, Norway, called *Where Is a Bicycle's Vagina (and Other Enquiries)*, or *Around the Samovar* similarly lures me in with unsolvable riddles. At first I see a bike, a motorcycle with birth control pills propped on it, and a car with someone in it, but the transportation theme is thrown off by some other kinds of stuff. It starts to seem like the sculptural "move" is to sandwich an object within another object: a fluorescent tube in a baguette, salmon and acne cream in between DVD cases of *Cool Hand Luke*, baguettes wrapping around a foosball table ... but maybe it's more about nesting objects in other objects—there are fresh shrimp dumped into the foosball table, the 90s' Saab sedan in the corner has a young man in the passenger seat, there's a Norelco shaver in a bowl of noodle soup and, according to the checklist, contact lenses in another. This glance at the checklist reminds me that I don't know what a samovar is, so I google it. A metal container used to heat and boil water—seems somewhat appropriate. But then there's that bike leaning against a wall, all by itself. And a sticker on another wall that reads, "16 people decide to drink/marry 9% of the Atlantic Ocean." Maybe their attachment to the wall is meant to suggest that they're nested in the gallery? My questions start to seem dumb, and I have this feeling that while I trust the artist, I don't trust my own cognitive faculties.

PLUMMER: 'My Sex Injury Made Shatner A Star'



21 August 2008 5:01 AM, PDT

Veteran actor Christopher Plummer is livid an injury he suffered during from a one-night stand meant that William Shatner played his part in *Henry V* - it made the *Star Trek* for a star.

Plummer was lined up to perform in the Shakespeare play in 1956 - but an unplanned romp left him unable to take to the stage, according to New York gossip column *PageSix*.

He says in his autobiography *In Spite Of Myself*:

"I woke up alone the next morning... (pain) all around my groin and lower abdomen... I started to whimper like a whipped dog.



'So this is what syphilis is like?' I thought. 'I suppose I deserve it, but Christ, how the hell was I to know?'

But instead of being struck down by the disease, Plummer had dislodged a kidney stone and had to undergo a medical procedure with a surgical wire to resolve the problem.

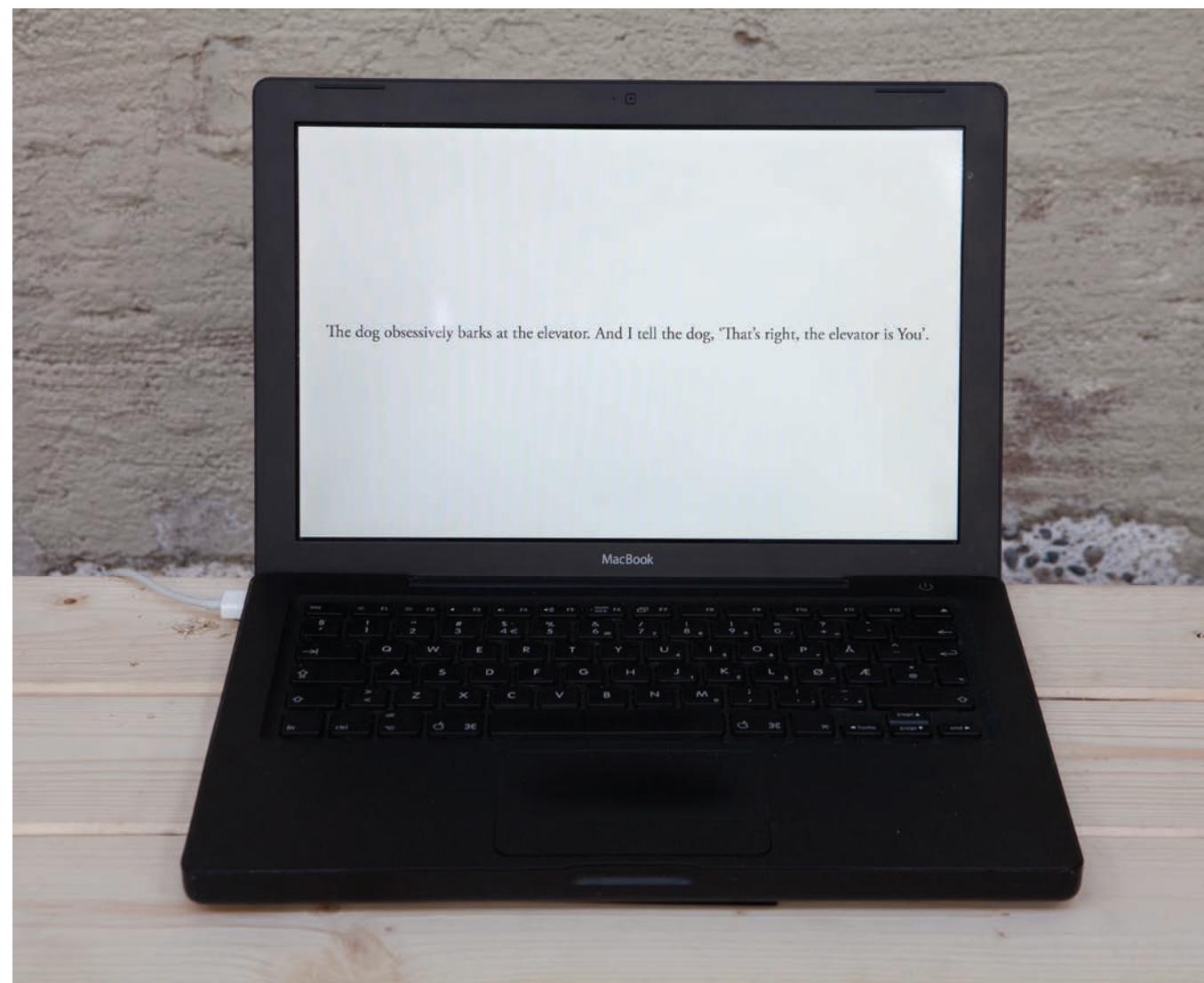
He adds, "It began to sink in... Shatner, my understudy, would have to go on... (It) instantly brought back the pain. I screamed for a nurse who jabbed me with more morphine."

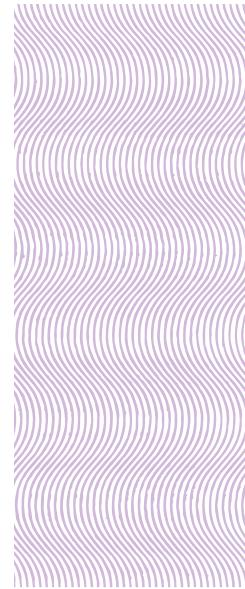
"I knew then that the Sob (son of a b**ch) was going to be a 'star.'"





I experienced the same kind of reeling, I think, when trying to shape these connections into fact patterns. It feels like these works do something at the intersection of material culture, the conceptual act, and the semantic act that casts doubt on ways of knowing, critical methodologies among them. If words are arbitrarily paired to their referents, how can we trust that they have value? Why use language at all? Is there a word for this feeling?





This talk about material logics and nesting has me thinking about “oddly satisfying”—instances of visual ASMR popular on Reddit and elsewhere. They are videos, animations, and photos of objects that fit perfectly into one another—sculptural moments that trigger a Pavlovian response. It’s vernacular sculpture, but one that implies kinesis. Oddly satisfying hinges on a pay-off of orgasmic visual relief. Recent posts titled, “Can of coke fits perfectly into glass half full of water, filling it perfectly with water at the end” or “Using a cheese slicer on a brick of sand,” sum this up. While the photographs are static, they imply motion (“How these eggs ended up in a bowl”), serendipity, and entropy. Much of your work deals with objects in entropic states, though the exhibitionary and museological context signals that these objects have, in some sense, “arrived.” A tray of cat litter and olive oil. A wooden panel with carved imprints for five avocados, with three occupied and two vacant. A marble slab atop a pedestal, also covered in olive oil. These works are oddly satisfying, though their stasis drives us to see them more as objects, less as actions.



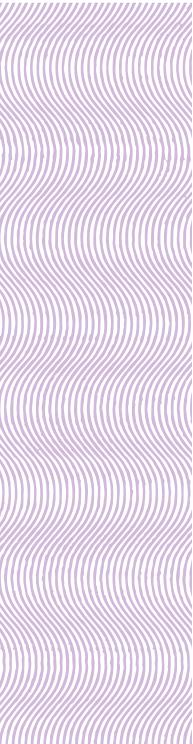


What prevents your work from sliding into complete nonsense is your structural sensitivity. Art, like most cultural forms, could be said to have a “front end” and a “back end.” I’m borrowing these terms from software engineering, where the front end is what anyone can see and interact with (fonts, buttons, menus) and the back end consists of an application that stores information in a database on the server all that was created on. For a typical art show, the front-end design could be said to be the sculpting of the objects in the studio and the way in which they’re all installed together in the gallery. The back-end development then includes the gallerists, the install team, any collector that buys a work, those transactions, what the collector does with the work once it’s purchased (stored? displayed?), the rent and utility bills for the gallery, and so on.





When an artist like Mierle Laderman Ukeles performs maintenance tasks for an art institution as the content of her own show, the back end of art is pushed forward, offering up a reveal of the wiring beneath the institution. When you displayed the press release prescribing the conditions of ownership for each of the works in *To Have and to Hold*, a similar gesture organizational wiring becomes artistic content. One speculates upon the future of each purchased object and its impact on the lives of those who not only chose to *live with it*, as the first condition demands, but also agree to the changing terms (and therefore notions) of ownership across time.



Mierle Laderman Ukeles is an interesting artist to mention here, because I think of her work within the context of maintenance and service. She directly refers to these works under the moniker “Maintenance Art,” which was framed by her *Maintenance Art Manifesto* of 1969. But, I’m not sure if and what the service or maintenance you’re rendering is exactly. You do work with animal rescue groups such as the SaveKitty Foundation. This is both done as what I believe to be an empathic act of genuine care for these animals and as a mitigation of artistic responsibility when dealing with involuntary actors. For instance, during *Images* at MoMA PS1, you included cats (two or three at a time) in the exhibition, incentivizing their adoption as a two-for-one deal of also acquiring an artwork. The cats/artworks were then given names/titled “cat who used to date Don Henley,” or “cat made of orangutan flesh and Vitamin Water®.” You then doubled back on the cat-as-artwork incentive by stating that the animal’s status as artwork was not a mandate, that the titles should not influence collectors’ decisions, and that the cats did not, in fact, sign off on their own naming. This last statement strikes me, in that you are acknowledging that the act of naming the cats further diminishes their agency in the exchange, even if benevolence is at the heart of your intentions. As Anne Truitt once said, “generosity is often the stalking horse of control.”

To Have and to Hold

On the gallery floor are objects.

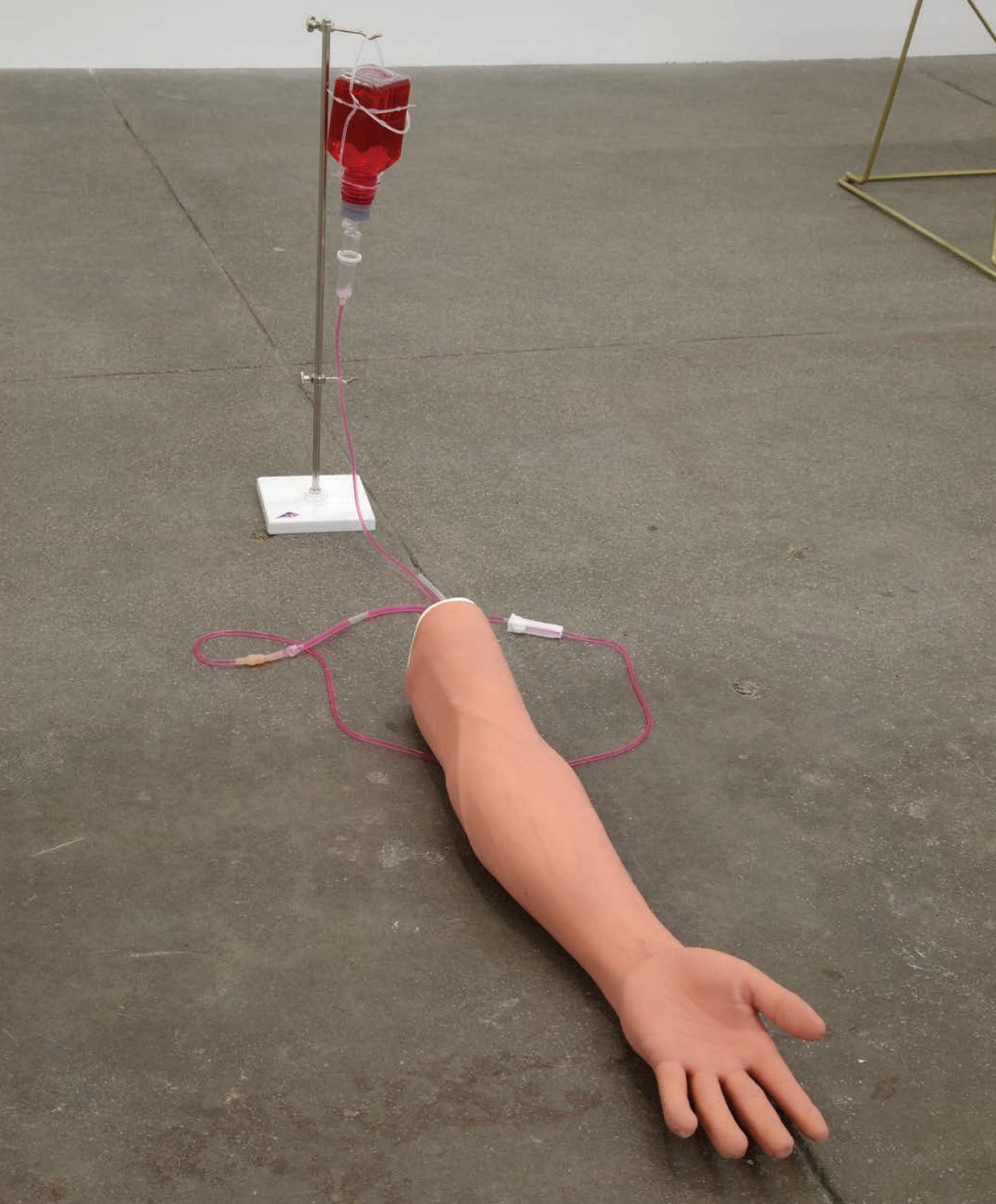
When any of these objects leave the gallery, the following is prescribed:

1. Live with the object.
2. After a year or so of living with the it, inquire into its origin. This could mean tracing it back to the source(s) of all its component parts*. This could also mean imagining its source(s) as other than those of the physical aggregate achieved by man or nature. Either way, a dedicated inquiry is recommended.
3. Some time after this inquiry into the object’s origins—not much longer than 2 years at most—make an effort to collect objects identical** to the object. These should be collected *ad infinitum****.
4. Once a certain, indeterminate quantity of identical objects has been collected, destroy/lose the original object. This is optional (O1).
5. Within 8 years of having begun the collection process, select one of the collected identical objects at random and give that object to someone, telling him/her to copy it within 6 years. Repeat this gift every 6 years, each time to a different person.
6. Every third year, destroy x number of the collected identical objects. To determine x, blindly choose any number between 1 and y. If the number of collected identical objects is less than y, they will all be destroyed except one, which will need to be given away. If left with no collected identical objects, begin the cycle again with a new object of your choosing—this is optional (O2).
7. If you die, the number of collected identical objects should not diminish while dead. Any bequests should make note of this. If O2 has been chosen, a bequest can reflect this format.

**This could lead into the infinitesimal, so perhaps it’s easier to suggest that its component parts be defined as those immediately perceived by the senses. Language is tricky here, since “parts” and “immediately” can easily contradict one another, but the point is to probe as far as one can without need of sensory prosthetics.*

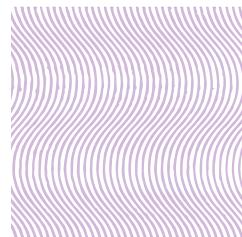
***Identical is a difficult word. What exactly is identical? It would be tough to prove anything identical. That being said, in collecting identical objects, one should be as exacting as possible.*

****In collecting ad infinitum, one should keep in mind that any reproduction of the collected object[s] will undoubtedly adversely effect someone(s) and something(s) somewhere(s).*



As with Ukeles's performance of routine maintenance, the everyday is fully present. This is also the case with *To Have and to Hold*, where the artworks themselves are a blue plastic bottle cap, a tracking mount for astrophotography, a *Mortal Kombat vs. DC Universe* game for XBOX 360, and so on, ranging from things that are all-day-everyday like sneakers to specialized tools like a medical injection training arm.

In relation to the legacies of conceptual art and institutional critique, what surprises me about your work is the sense that one can actually have one's cake and eat it too. The reprogrammed back end of the show conveys a sense that things are more profound than their social and economic relations. Like any good riddle, the works play with the conceptual boundaries of the situation to suggest the instability of its construction. So a magical trapdoor exists in which, for instance, Object Z—once a set of eight Jew's harps (or was it just the Jew's harp box?)—becomes literally anything.



Putting the details of exchange on display—and creating a work wholly out of these contractual details—has been common practice amongst conceptual artists consistently for the last forty years or so, often to bring attention to the exchange of currency for value. What I can really appreciate in your work is the thaumaturgic dark arts of these contractual exchanges.



Yes, and what strikes me as distinct in *To Have and to Hold* is that its legalese language drag ironically gives way to plenitude, unfixing meaning to objects rather than fixing it. Here, as in some of your other texts, the conventions of formal writing are present, but their usage is inverted: footnotes make the text less precise rather than more, introducing the possibility of altogether new ambiguities, and the spiral of the logical extreme.



It's a pretty modest conceptualism—the work's epistemology emphasizes the limits of knowledge. What at first seems like a materialist analysis through readymades in which the back end is pushed forward and revealed is actually a cumulation of gestures in which the front end meets the back end in the middle to form a hypnagogic world of impressions and illusions. But you also once scrawled “throw a hearing aid in a volcano and you get a porch” on a gallery wall, and because we don't have access to the back end of the universe, we can't quite say that that statement will never come true.

Artistic Aims

Well, I'm most interested in making sense of the world I/we live in through asking myself what makes something *something*. To be a little less ambiguous, I want to know why something I encounter has the capability to render someone attracted/indifferent/repelled. From there, questions of utility and fantasy come into play, with no clear answers. Trying to summarize this "futility" is something I'm in the habit of attempting, and failing at (which is possibly an apt summary).

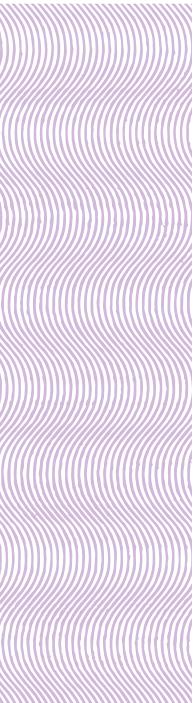
Style

Well, my style has developed from obsession to chance to reconciliation. To be less vague, what is desired can't quite be had, so then it became a matter of seeing what might happen if desire was subjected to a bunch of empirical tests, followed by an (admittedly limited) understanding that these tests, however "ethical," resulted in an aesthetics that is ultimately inconclusive. This inconclusiveness has been the germ of some sort of personal revolt towards absolutist chance, less patience towards the vagaries of everything, while still fully embracing them. Yes, that is vague.

Career

Well, I'm pretty sure I committed myself to being an artist (in the art world context) in 2003.

Throw a hearing aid in a volcano and you get a porch



Your work isn't particularly abstract, but it does take both objects and language (and language-objects) out of daily circulation, arresting them in isolation and small constellations that, when meditated on, result in semantic satiation. Semantic satiation is what happens when you repeat a word to the point at which it loses meaning and is then perceived as the repetition of sound. The sound and act of utterance then become the meaning itself. For me, this word is "horror." Whenever it comes out of my mouth it seems that I've mispronounced it. Sometimes it comes out in a Queens accent, sometimes slightly British. But, invariably I find myself repeating the word until I feel that I've gotten it right, which is never, and it descends into a state of semantic satiation—sound without meaning beyond the meaning of sound itself. Recently watching a comedy special, where the comedian had an entire bit about exactly this with "horror," I found it pretty odd and am now wondering if semantic satiation with this word is a broader thing. Why does the word "horror" so quickly, for so many people (alright, two known people), devolve into pure acoustical resonance? But, any word can become onomatopoeic if you say it enough times, and this holds true for objects as well if you spend enough time with them.



It seems like you're directly addressing this with the work *obi and/with SCOBY; oak with/and smoke; owl and/with towel; oar with/and store; oil with/and mohel; oat and/with note; orc with/and fork*. There's semantic satiation in the contract: "The obi can be any obi; the SCOBY can be any SCOBY. The oak can be any oak; the smoke can be any smoke. The owl can be any owl; the towel can be any towel. The oar can be any oar; the store can be any store. The oil can be any oil; the mohel can be any mohel. The oat can be any oat; the note can be any note. The orc can be any orc; the fork can be any fork." Compounded with the visual of an orc with a fork, semantic satiation is achieved.



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DENA YAGO is an artist based in Los Angeles

In Order of Appearance:

Rogaine® experiment: fossil
Bryan Cranston and/with sleeping bag
Gordon Hall's ur-object
installation view, *Forest/Trees*, Greenspon, New York, May-July 2017
installation view, *rocks and mirrors*, Galleria Franco Noero, Turin, November 2015 - January 2016
78 x 58 x 5 cm / 30 3/4 x 22 7/8 x 2 in
To Have and to Hold—Object U1
re lasagna on heroin
To Have and to Hold—Object Z
To Have and to Hold—Object P
To Have and to Hold—Object K
pavement piece: cupcakes
pavement piece: cupcakes
pavement piece: cupcakes
installation view, Alex Zachary, New York, May-June 2010
Sculpture #1 [edition 1]
To Have and to Hold—Object X1
person sitting in passenger seat of car
sandwiches (detail)
The dog obsessively barks at the elevator. And I tell the dog, "That's right, the elevator is You."
29 1/2 x 9 x 9 in / 75 x 23 x 23 cm
two avocados with kiwis inside; one avocado with a chrome pit
proposal for Barbara Hepworth's *Two Segments and a Sphere*
study
olive oil and cat litter in litter tray
dimensions variable
To Have and to Hold press release
To Have and to Hold—Object L
cat made out of crab meat, reincarnation of Ronald Reagan
goat made of banana, goat as microprocessor that vomits blood to grow basil
To Have and to Hold—Object O2
filled-out Whitney Museum of American Art permanent collection questionnaire
throw a hearing aid in a volcano and you get a porch
orc with/and fork

To create this book, I first invited the authors. I then provided them with a broad, identical selection of files from my archive. I asked them to (per)use the files and write about whatever they would, and made myself available for any questions an author might have. Any image appearing in an author's/ authors' chapter has been chosen by the author(s), except the Dürer, Caravaggio, Courbet, Sturtevant, and Steinbach in the first chapter (Peter and Bruce asked me to pick my "favorites." That was impossible (except in the case of Sturtevant, maybe), but I do like the selected works very much).

I tried to be as impersonal as possible with this publication. I've provided, or contributed to: epigraph(s), image captions, cover, spine, title page, image credits, colophon, copy editing, and the text you're reading now. (That's not entirely true. Jesse, the designer, asked me to give notes on his design as we moved along. This is our fourth book together; we work nicely together, and he wanted to keep that in play.)

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This catalog is published on the occasion of:

Darren Bader, (@mined_oud)

October 14, 2017 – April 2, 2018

Madre • Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Donnaregina,
Naples

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Design: Jesse Willenbring – The Sunset People

Text management: Textschiff – Christina Bösel
English editing and proofreading: Simon Cowper
Italian editing and proofreading: Franca Comalini, Marina Spinelli
Translation Italian–English: n.n.
Translation English–Italian: Alessandro Bortolazzo

Production: Lösch GmbH & Co KG

First published by Koenig Books, London

Koenig Books Ltd
At the Serpentine Gallery
Kensington Gardens
London W2 3XA
www.koenigbooks.co.uk

Printed in Germany

Distribution:

Germany, Austria, Switzerland / Europe

Buchhandlung Walther König
Ehrenstr. 4,
D - 50672 Köln
Tel: +49 (0) 221 / 20 59 6 53
verlag@buchhandlung-walther-koenig.de

UK & Ireland

Cornerhouse Publications Ltd. - HOME
2 Tony Wilson Place
UK – Manchester M15 4FN
Tel: +44 (0) 161 212 3466
publications@cornerhouse.org

Outside Europe

D.A.P. / Distributed Art Publishers, Inc.
75 Broad Street, Suite 630
USA - New York, NY 10004
Tel: +1 (0) 212 627 1999
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ISBN 978-3-96098-253-1

Darren Bader would like to thank the following for their invaluable assistance in preparing this book:

Alice Conconi, Lilly Daniell, Anna Cuomo, Marco Rovacchi, Sam Kahn, Bryan Cranston, Nicoletta Beyer, James Oates, Bruce Hainley, Peter Eleey, Luca Lo Pinto, Negar Azimi, Dena Yago, Andrew Norman Wilson, Tess Edmonson, and Jesse Willenbring

Darren Bader and Andrea Viliani would like to thank the following:

Galleria Franco Noero, Andrew Kreps Gallery, Sadie Coles HQ, Blum and Poe, Sherrie Levine, Marciano Art Collection, Paul Myers, Anca Munteanu Rimnic, Whole Foods LLC, Urs Fischer, Mathew Cerletty, Jesse Willenbring, Moses Hosiery, Peter Knell, Antoine Catala, 47 Canal, Kimberly Chang Mathieu, Salon 94, Roe Ethridge, PSM, Heji Shin, Real Fine Arts, Christopher Williams, David Zwirner Gallery, Michael Zahn, Alexander and Laetitia Köser, Jonathan Monk, Marc Kokopeli, Lomex, KAYA, Michael E. Smith, Corin Hewitt, John Auerbach, Barbara Kasten, Lucas Ajemian, Marlborough Contemporary, Frank Schelstraete, Andrew Kreps and Chiara Repetto, Sadie Coles, Christian Kobald, Galerie Xavier Hufkens, Shane Akeroyd, Andreas Melas, Monica Bonvicini, Francesco Dalla Rovere, Aurelia Di Meo, James Oates, Anicka Yi, Ashley Bickerton, Murder Me Ltd., Lena Henke, Nina Beier, Josh Smith, Standard Oslo, Liz Craft, Liszt, Fredericks & Freiser, Judith Hopf, Talia Chetrit, Kaufmann Repetto, Jessi Reaves, Erica Fenaroli, Bridget Donahue, Bradley Kronz, and any names we may have forgotten.

Darren Bader would also like to thank his family, friends, and gallery families.



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Realizzato nell'ambito del progetto "Itinerari del Contemporaneo - Confronti"
finanziato con fondi POC (PROGRAMMA OPERATIVO COMPLEMENTARE)
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