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Greely, Hannah Macgregor

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Local Transit: Moving Through Medium

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

by

Hannah Macgregor Greely

June 2016

Thesis Committee:

Professor Charles Long, Chairperson

Professor John Divola

Professor Jim Isermann

Professor Brandon Lattu

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The Thesis of Hannah Macgregor Greely is approved:

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

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At first glance, the group of recent sculptures with its diverse exploration of subject matter and multiple use of art historical motifs, whether it be a figure, landscape, or interior domestic scene, along with its colorful characters and ambiguous narratives, may appear merely playful. However, given time and consideration they begin to reveal an earnest attempt through theatricality to capture the subtle movement that occurs through and between interior and exterior spaces. These spaces can refer to those in our everyday external reality, such as the interior of a house, but also discuss the space of the mind as it interacts with its environment. The need to communicate a subjective experience to another subjective consciousness is a tricky and imperfect but noble and necessary pursuit. To successfully translate the nebulous 'stuff' of thoughts, feelings, memory, and experience with so much unwieldy external material 'stuff' of the physical world, requires that the object, in this case a sculpture, be understood as standing in for something else. Sculpture, therefore, is subject to a distancing from reality that approaches a kind of theater or framing. This framing is necessary in order to immediately establish an understanding with the viewer that what is being communicated is not everyday reality but an abstraction of it. In my work, the use of figure, narrative, metaphor, cliché, as well as shifts in medium or dimension, are all devices employed to represent and explore this phenomenon in a variety of ways.

In this essay, words like interior and exterior can also be thought of

synonymously with subjective or objective, two dimensional and three dimensional, mind and body, even abstract and representational to some degree. This theme of dualism that emerges isn't meant to over simplify, but is an attempt to understand the complex whole of a work by breaking it down into slightly smaller parts. My use of the word theatrical or references towards the conventions of theater are, in essence, discussing the distancing or framing sculpture undergoes when being contemplated as art by the viewer and its separation from objects of the everyday while still occupying the same space. The use of theater in sculpture as a kind of medium that smooths the transition from the interior world of the maker to the exterior world of the viewer, makes a sculpture's role therefore similar to that of an actor on a stage. The stage varies from gallery, to studio, to home, and beyond but any attempt for a sculpture to blend in with its surroundings is merely costume.

Considering the sculpture as actor, what better form for sculpture to take therefore than that of the human figure? By its very nature it conceits to embody our own experiences as humans through its mimicry of form. To sculpt a figure, in many ways, is to create a model from which humans can play out different imaginary scenarios. Small figurine dolls can literally act out the imaginary worlds of children. Greek statuary can provide life like depictions of mythic narratives that pull a viewer in and better instruct him on moral, heroic, or undesirable behaviors. Sculptures of Christ on the cross can vary widely in style based on the way in which the artist wants a worshipper to reflect on their deity.

He can be emaciated and weak, reflecting his suffering, gentle self or muscular and powerful, providing the stern discipline of a his Old Testament father. The desire to breathe life into a creation of our own selves, to empathize with it, is undeniable, making the human figure a powerful tool for projection by its audience.



Fig.1
Anonymous, *The Seated
Scribe*, 2620-2500 BC
Old Kingdom Period

Beholder is a life size figure that references this ancient relationship by drawing its inspiration from an Egyptian seated scribe from the Old Kingdom period. The sculptural motif of the period depicts a middle aged man, mostly nude except a kilt, sitting with pen and papyrus in his lap. Engaged in his occupation as a kind of high status administrator, he looks up and outward in anticipation of receiving information, perhaps to record useful data and help organize for the good of his community. As opposed to a soldier caught in action in mid battle or royalty standing proud as to display power, the scribe is in a passive position in anticipation of action that will take place in the mind, inaccessible to us. In this way the scribe creates a relationship with the viewer that many other sculptures do not.



Fig.2 Auguste Rodin, *Le Penseur (The Thinker)*, 1840-1917

The action in Rodin's *The Thinker*, for instance, takes place in the mind but through his downward glances, the man is consumed in his thoughts and not inviting a relationship or interaction as the scribe does. We may wonder what the thinker is contemplating, but we remain alienated. Rosalind Krauss in

Passages on Modern Sculpture touches on the shift in the aims of figurative work when describing *I am Beautiful* by Rodin. She points to the irrational composition and physically impossible positioning of the two figures to emphasize a subjective interior life.

Because we are on the outside looking in, the artist's subjective experience is contemplated but inaccessible (Krauss 25) .

However, with the scribe, there is an implied communication. The scribe is listening and comprehending. Like the scribe, *Beholder*, sits upright with an outward gaze and open expression ready to receive information. In this way, the sort of presence the scribe

occupies invites and even recognizes the viewer's participation in his world.

Unlike the inlaid quartz crystal eyes of the scribe used to animate the being within, *Beholder's* eye sockets are hollow and made to hold a pair of marbles that sit freely, reflecting the ambient light of the room. Though subtle at first, the viewer upon closer inspection, recognizes the eyes as toy marbles that are

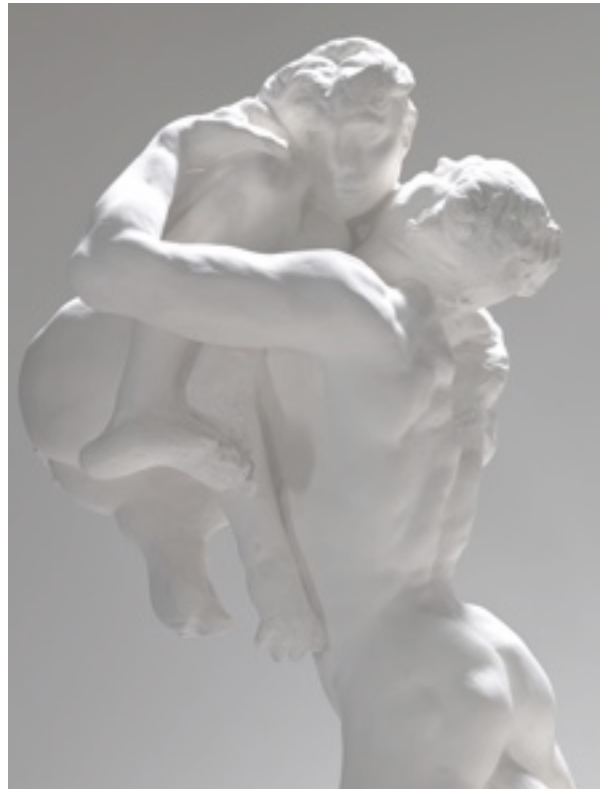


Fig.3 Auguste Rodin, Je suis belle (I am beautiful), 1882



Fig.4.1 *Beholder*, 2015-16

meant to roll. There is a temptation or desire to tip the marble back to see where it goes. If the viewer chooses to do this, they see the marble roll back and hear the sound it makes as it travels down the maze of tracks inside the body of the figure, reemerging through holes on the palms of the cupped hands held in the figure's lap. Just as the figure's eyes receive the marble they are offered again in the hands for the viewer to repeat the action. This implies a continuous loop of action that, in theory, can be perpetuated literally or in the mind of the viewer. As the marble rolls back into the chasm behind the eye socket, the viewer is left only with the sound of its movement. They imagine, but do not see the twist and turns, the inner workings of the figure as the marble descends through the body and the moment when it will reemerge remains unknown and inconsistent. This experience acts as a metaphor for entering another person's subjective experience through one's own imagination with little evidence to the accuracy of one's understanding. The inner life of another is never truly knowable except through spoken or written language which is limited in what it can convey. The visual language of art has the ability to present multiple concepts simultaneously but ambiguously enough so that the viewer may draw their own conclusions and participate in the activity of making meaning of the world around them. The viewer, whenever gazing upon a sculpture, is bringing their subjective consciousness into conversation with the artist and *Beholder*, in its quirky overstatement through awkward interaction, exaggerates the point in order to make it.



Fig.4.2 *Beholder* (internal view)

At times, *Beholder* resembles a kind of carnival game, the apparent goofiness of the kinetic and interactive aspect of the work seems to lower its status as high art, but it is this very basic level of interaction that parallels the elementary, yet highly complex principles of individual perception and the

communication of that perception. At the moment our eyes take in an image or experience, it is being filtered and shaped by our minds and held there for an indefinite amount of time in our memories only to reemerge later in our works and actions. As we behold something our consciousness influences it as much as it influences us.

Another striking resemblance *Beholder* takes is to that of an iconic buddha, a rotund seated figure calmly present in spiritual bliss. *Beholder* is sculpted in plaster and painted with bright colors much like some stone polychrome carvings of Hindu and Buddhist culture. The parallels between those cultural motifs and all they represent, to those in the West, is oblique but undeniable. The color is amped up to an extreme degree, with the flesh a hot pink, the nipples a bright yellow, and the shorts the gaudy purple of royalty. The figure wears a cloth bandana sourced from a tourist hat that reads “ Rosarito Beach Club ” in neon-colored lettering. Clearly, this particular buddha has somewhat missed the mark in his spiritual aspirations. There appears to be a cherry picking of cultural and spiritual influences. Though his interest may be sincere, there is an inability to dive deep into the sculpted block of spiritual waters on which he sits. For much of Western society, spirituality and the raising of conscious awareness are something to play with, but only recreationally or as a navel gazing form of self improvement. With Western society’s emphasis on the exterior, the rational and conspicuous consumption of material things, it leaves exploration of the interior something of a novelty and rarely a life long aim.

Though inspired by the East, it is unlike Eastern traditions where an ascetic may go into the wilderness for years to contemplate his consciousness and later return to society with something to teach.

I have shown how the figure can be used to stand in for, and act out different subjective experiences for its audience. Another way in which artists in history found a way to communicate their subjective experience is to find a more literal approximation of their point of view through different mediums. In writing, one can write from the first person perspective as a way to put the reader in their shoes as they are pulled into the narrative and observations of the writer. For visual artists, especially around the time of the Renaissance, when humanistic concerns and the value of the individual was increasing, the invention of multiple point perspective in painting and drawing was used to further convince the viewer of the sense of standing in someone else's place.



Fig.5 Piero della Francesca, *La Città ideale (The Ideal City)*, circa 1480

Illusionistic perspective attempts to not only transport the mind into another space but also the body with it, so that the viewer can more fully experience being in the artist's shoes as she paints the picture of places unseen. In a work like, *The Ideal City*, by Piero della Francesca, the artist's imagination is his only limit but the sense of place couldn't have been nearly as convincing to the public had he not employed such a meticulous rendering of its spaces.

Caspar David Friedrich in the early 1800's brought another development in the use of illusionistic perspective. Possibly borrowing techniques from Japanese prints, the principles of illusionistic space in his landscapes are amplified, with the figure looming large in the foreground and suddenly shifting to an extreme depth of field in the background so that the viewer is not led, but thrown into the picture. A *ruckenfigur* stands with his back to the scene, looking out onto the landscape, seeming to stand in for the viewer's own state of contemplation. One gets the impression they are not only being shown something outside their realm of experience, they are being asked to slip into another body's consciousness. *The Stages of Life*, from this period in the 1830's in particular, speaks of this sort of embodiment as it plays out an allegory representing the artist himself with his family on the beach as they watch the ships on the horizon meant to symbolize the figures on shore in their different stages of life on the journey towards death.



Fig.6 Caspar David Friedrich, *Die Lebensstufen (The Stages of Life)*,

Highway to Heaven plays with this convention of illusionistic perspective by representing the road disappearing into a vanishing point on the horizon. Taking this device meant to create an illusion in two dimensions and operate as a window in an imagined space, the sculpture attempts to bring the picture into a fully three dimensional or 'real' space. The implied objective view of the picture the sculpture depicts, when distorted in three dimensions, breaks down and transforms to a new objectivity subject to the laws of 'real' space.



Fig.7.1 *Highway to Heaven*, 2015

The ethereal window implied by the edges of a canvas become heavy hollow frames, holding dissected sections of a whole picture that accordion out into an improbable diorama of sorts. As a result of this dimensional shift, the flat road of a picture becomes a long ramp training upward and the sides of the piece, when connected, create an abstract and other worldly architectural space.

The images in the piece, however, are very simple recognizable cartoons. Tropes or signs, instead of attempting to recreate a specific place, do the opposite by conveying a general idea that triggers a more personal association in the viewer. Some imagery has been used so many times that only a few simple lines can be used to represent a very complicated scene. A sunset, with all its delicate hues and cast shadows, can also be boiled down



Fig.8

to a horizontal line and a semicircle with a few lines radiating out from it. This kind of representation says, "I will not try to show you a specific sunset, but suggest you think of your own sunset in hopes that some of your experience overlaps with mine." Both approaches seek to communicate a subjective experience but in very different ways. One privileges the artist's perspective; the other allows for the viewer's. When my work combines the symbolic nature of cartoon and various motifs with attempts at illusionistic perspective, it is trying to include the viewer's subjective experience as it is directed into the artist's point of view. In reality, this collaboration is always present when contemplating art, but I seek to address it within the piece. By combining cartoon imagery and illusionistic perspective and bringing it into three dimensional space, I speak of perspective in metaphorical terms by playing with the literal.

Cartoons are most at home in a picture and therefore better suited to my aims of giving something inherently pictorial a physical reality in order to point to the futility of translation. The imagery of seascapes, buildings, palm trees, and the occasional cat smacks of cliché. The use of cliché and art motifs serves to strip down the subject matter so as not to overshadow the strange incongruities resulting from the dimensional shift the work has gone through and exposes the idiosyncrasies in the interpretation of a common idea that make for individual expression. Each piece is held within a kind of mock frame meant to reference the literal frame of pictorial space and also the metaphorical framing which sculpture undergoes when being considered as an object. Since the figures depicted in the work are not life size, the frame also serves to



Fig.9 Alberto Giacometti, *Boule Suspendue* (*Suspended Ball*), 1931

encapsulate the imagery and provide a reference for the scale of the components within. A master of this technique, Giacometti's use of a welded box that acts as an open frame for his shapes and figures also allows his work to occupy any scale, not just that of the scale of the room in which it sits. It's this device that helps keep the work somehow pictorial while at the same time

addressing concerns uniquely sculptural. In some ways, this framing brings attention to the context in which sculpture exists and calls into question that arbitrary line that demarcates one world from another.



Fig.7.2 *Highway to Heaven* profile view

The sorts of spaces that are created in *Highway to Heaven* when translating pictorial space into three dimensions results in an odd sort of hybrid sculpture that stands between two dominant modes of sculptural style:

representation and abstraction. When shifting from two dimensions to three with representational imagery as a starting point, that the end result would reveal abstraction, itself another paradigm in the history of art, was a surprising moment for me. The spaces of the long ramp between the frames hold echoes of Minimalist sculpture from one view, but become only elements of a representational scene in another.



Fig.10 *Light Body*, 2016

Interested in continuing my investigation into the phenomenon of one paradigm shifting into another, I chose to shift the imaginary frame made solid and meant to contain a picture in Highway to Heaven into a literal frame that provides the image, as well as the structure, of the sculpture itself. *Light Body*, takes the loose schematic drawing of the four sides of an imaginary house and, much like when framing a house with studs of two by fours in the beginning days of construction, the sculpture's frames delineate the basic shape of a home. The frames are constructed using cardboard and plaster in a sketchy, cartoon style, complete with windows and doors. It is obvious with the way the frames sag and bend under their own weight and precariously lean against each other like a house of cards and further scaled down to something the size of a child's play pen, there is no reference to their usefulness as shelter. The frames of the house are like line drawings, so the negative spaces in the construction are as transparent as the windows they contain. Their ambiguous state as frame, window, and structure causes their unstable objecthood to dematerialize and give way to the interior of the piece while still providing a literal and figurative framework for the logic of the interior to play itself out.

Typically, as light shines through the window of a dark interior, shafts of light cut through the space and land on the floor, becoming almost solid forms to the eye and creating a composition of shapes of light almost tangible in mid air. In *Light Body*, I give these familiar forms solidity by encasing them with cardboard and plaster. These once ethereal specters of light now are hardened

shafts that transform into something closer to Minimalist forms or architectural elements. The interior of the shafts are hollow, making what began as a beam of pure light, into a triad of dark tunnels which converge at a single point on the floor. As the shafts of light solidify into one and hold up the delicate frames of the house, there emerges an interdependency of opposites. The sides of a house, which are normally opaque, provide shelter and privacy. In *Light Body*, the white sides of the house are open and transparent, acting as a window to shed light and expose the secrets of the interior, which normally dark, are now fully illuminated. The colorful shafts, normally made of light and empty space, are opaque and heavy and instead of brightening a dark interior, create a dark hollow space of their own which, inaccessible to the viewer, retains a sense of mystery. Shuttling through this series of paradoxes as the viewer moves from the exterior to the deepest interior of the piece and out again, there triggers an imagining of a further series of outsides and insides, opaque and transparent, light and darkness, continuing indefinitely. Though a slight departure from the aim of picture making in *Highway to Heaven*, the elements of a pictorial representation remain in the bare bones of the house frames, that through a twist of logic facilitate the manifestation of an alternate abstract reality within.

Another familiar structure chooses to reveal the life of its interior, in *The Great Escape*. An old fashioned style pup tent made of canvas drop cloth and PVC pipe efficiently delineates the home or setting of this piece. The front and back canvas flaps form the triangles that help to define the iconic camping



Fig.11.1 *The Great Escape*, 2016

shelter, but the sides of the tent remain open to reveal an unexpected interior scene. Hanging from the horizontal beam is a series of clothes hangers, on which each holds, instead of shirts and dresses, a single element of an imaginary forest scene. Together, there are an assortment of trees of different sizes and shades, a lake, a bear, flying geese, and the elusive Bigfoot all dangling in a row like a wardrobe sitting ready to be chosen from by its wearer. The plaster forest pieces are made with newsprint, cut into a basic shape and stuffed to create a slim but puffy presence, seemingly two dimensional in appearance, but breaking out ever so slightly into the realm of object and approximating the thickness and size of an item of clothing on a hanger. Their individual scales roughly correlate with the laws of perspective, with the larger trees and characters towards the front of the tent and diminishing in scale as the procession leads to the back. A few items, however, appear misplaced in terms of the appropriate scale. The use of perspective hints at a picture or diorama that keeps to the logic of its conventions but the variations in the placement of scale that break from this logic suggest that the rules are useful but arbitrary and encourages the viewer to imagine lifting one of the hangers from the rod, like they would clothes from a clothes rack, and rearranging their order to their own personal taste. To reinforce this ambiguous sort of landscape, the floor of the tent is made of stuffed, lumpy canvas that physically recalls bedding, but is painted to look like earth, complete with rock shaped pillows. The tents flaps are a light blue exterior and a dusky periwinkle interior to create a sky backdrop for the scene.



Fig.11.2 *The Great Escape* profile view

Much like *Light Body*, *The Great Escape* shifts its roles and associations as the viewer moves through the piece. This pup tent is an iconic form of camping shelter, but useless as shelter due to being cut away to reveal an interior whose elements look, not like a tent interior, but a closet clothes rack with various hanging figures that, when grouped together, build a forest picture scene over an earthen floor. The viewer is transported then from an interior scene, back outdoors into a landscape, but when the mind pulls out again to the overall structure, hangers, and floor bedding it flips us back to a shelter and its interior.

The Great Escape, of all the works discussed so far most closely resembles a theatrical set complete with props. The various roles it plays calls attention to the sculpture acting as object while remaining apart; a theme I continually come back to in my work. The overarching narrative of a forest scene can be read as a kind of play that invites the viewer to interact using the hangers to stage the scene within the particular theme chosen by the artist.



Fig.11.3 detail from *The Great Escape*

The recent work has been an experiment with the goal to better understand the modes in which sculptural space operates by investigating the changes and failures that occur when trying to translate pictorial imagery into the third dimension or 'real' space of sculpture. The drawings I have done alongside my sculptural practice have shown me just how differently pictorial space works from physical space. Imagery that is fantastic and absurd sits much more comfortably on the page than the floor and is much more ready to be believed and taken in by the viewer. The reason for this is still unclear, but perhaps it's such that a picture sits one degree closer to the space of the mind and imagination and one degree further from the harsh limitations of the space of reality. Viewers are not as willing to suspend their disbelief when confronted with a 'thing' very removed in appearance from a 'real' object but presented as such. Perhaps this disbelief is due to a discomfort with a kind of pretending inherent to sculpture. My attempt to bring imagery from my drawings into a sculptural space, to maintain their fantasy while engaging with the real, is from conception an impossible task of translation. If the thing is not a picture but acts as a picture and is an object, but not one of our everyday reality, then what is it? I see this exercise as ultimately an illustration of the failure of a sculpture to ever be convincingly real and hope it will open up a more honest 'in-between' space for a sculpture to sit that is particular to its medium. The scale approximates household furniture or domestic objects, making it

familiar in reference to the body. If it were larger, it would become a theatrical set and if smaller, a scale model. The scale, instead, sits uncomfortably as neither, though it connotes both. The works are made from cardboard, painted with layers of Aqua Resin and gypsum cement. This process causes the cardboard to sag and warp in unexpected ways, further suggesting its fragility and precarious position as a sculpture. The loose and lumpy brushwork of the layered plaster is



Fig.12 Claes Oldenburg, *Men's Jacket with Shirt and Tie*,

stained with washes of brightly colored tempera paint that mimics pictorial painting, while the tactile quality of the cement is very physical and expressive of the hand. The gestural evidence of my hand and my almost allergic reaction to clean lines and smooth finishes is a natural one and feels much in kinship with the work of Claes Oldenburg, particularly the objects from *The Store* and the soft sculptures. Oldenburg's ability to bring the seemingly rational object into the realm of the emotive, anthropomorphic, and subjective suggests the demonstration of the work of the mind acting upon and shaping the nature of a



Fig.13 Claes Oldenburg, *The Store*, Green Gallery Installation, 1962

person's reality and throwing into relief the dubious nature of our own perceptions of the real. As Donald Judd eloquently wrote that Oldenburg's sculpture's are "changeable, likely to collapse or dissolve, and unreliable ... In the old arguments about the nature of substance, tables and chairs were always the examples; they didn't argue about the primary and secondary qualities of their pants and shirts" (Judd 2) . My attraction to soft canvas, loose brushwork and lumpy plaster seeks to echo these ideas of the unreliability of things. The work's materiality is difficult to identify and upholds the 'otherness' of the piece. This emphasis on failure and 'otherness' that is continually reinforced in the work serves to expose the theatricality of a sculpture in its moment of pretending to be a real object.

In his essay "Art and Objecthood," Michael Fried discusses the role of theatricality in sculpture in reference to Minimalism. For Fried, the sort of "stage presence" (Fried 4) minimalist works occupy and the focus on the context of the work made the viewer the subject, whereas previous art was concerned chiefly with what was within it, allowing the viewer to transport themselves mentally through the relationships between its parts and into its interior. This "presence" or, inherent anthropomorphism, in his mind, was not admitted by the Minimalists and was therefore theatrical. Fried's use of the word "theatre" (Fried 3) is difficult to interpret but at times seems synonymous with a unique

consciousness' awareness of their own subjective 'real world' experiences as they endlessly unfold over time. His example of Tony Smith's experience, which Fried viewed as concerned with the pictorial nature of painting, on an unfinished turnpike fits this description of theater. Smith was so impressed with the moment of his experience that he desired to find a way to "frame his experience on the road" (Fried 5) .

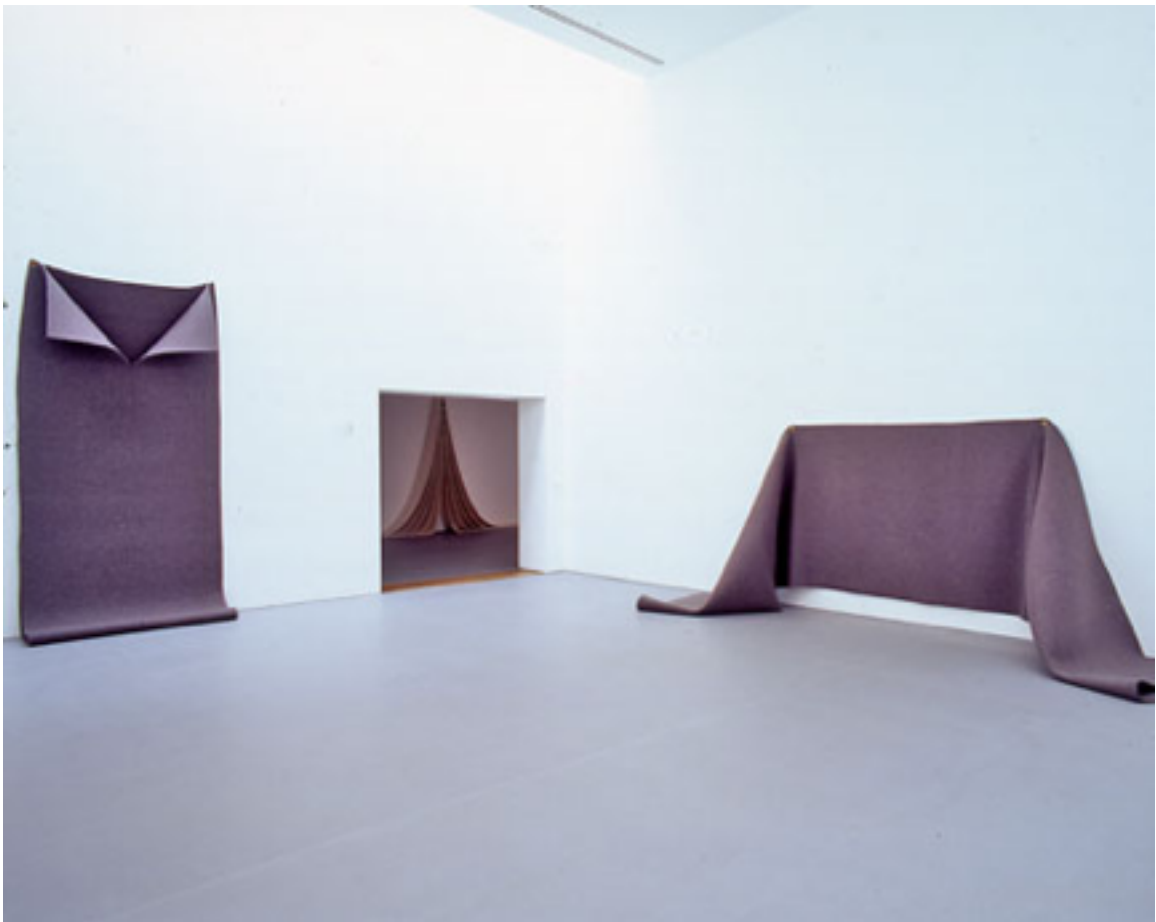


Fig.14 Robert Morris, *Felt Pieces*,

Fried sees theatricality as a negation of art so one would suppose that, for him, art is something in which the viewer loses herself as opposed to feeling self conscious or distanced from it. My attempt in *Highway to Heaven* to frame a moment on the road, in some ways seeks to address both concerns. There is the wholeness of the picture from one point of view that seeks to transport the viewer's mind into the piece, while the dissection of the moment as it unfolds over time in three dimensions reveals its object hood and brings the presence of the object to the fore. In some ways, as I mentioned earlier, the pictorial or two dimensional correlates more closely to the space of the mind, which is a kind of interiority. In contrast to this, objects or the three dimensional, which are more subject to the laws of physics in time and space, deal with a kind of exteriority or context. Artists and viewers collude in choosing how much they want to acknowledge or ignore this context. My work prefers to allow for both. The interactive elements in some works, especially seek to demonstrate this collusion and pose that the shaping of the meaning of the work necessarily "includes the beholder" (Fried 3) .

In response to Fried, I believe sculpture has always has been theatrical in the sense that only 'real' objects are truly enmeshed with their context and not subject to the sort of distancing inherent to sculpture. A sculpture is actually a part but apart from the everyday reality most objects inhabit. The sculpture's role as an actor on a kind of real world stage has always been present but not always admitted. My work seeks to lay bare the vulnerabilities of the medium of

sculpture, without abandoning the usefulness of its conventions, in hopes they can eventually be turned into a strength.

There is an eerie sort of presence to *Beholder* that despite its bright colors and loosely rendered quality gives the viewer the feeling that someone, not just a sculpture, is in the room. I have received multiple anecdotes and comments since the work's completion of people often doing a double take when spotting him and being frightened when coming upon him unexpectedly. This was a surprise for me, considering he is a hot pink plaster cast wearing a headband. Perhaps its the passive seated posture that feels at rest and more likely to jump out at you or that the hollow eyes fill themselves somehow with personhood or that simply any human shaped object is believable on some level.

Whatever the reason, the presence often found in sculpture is a kind of gestalt or moment when all the pieces become more than their sum. The ability for the viewer to instinctually key in to the anthropomorphic qualities of an object make all sorts of things susceptible to being ordained with presence. Due to sculpture's realm of three dimensionality, that the work have presence, is an essential tool which some artists have chosen to exploit in order to give life to their own works. And for my own work , I consider presence in sculpture a mark of success. Though the other works may not have the more literal presence of a human figure there is an undeniable animated quality to them all. The repeated frames in *Highway to Heaven*, with their slight variations in bits of car or cloud, call to mind film stills that unfold slices of moments in time with the moments in

between filled in by the mind of the viewer. They bear a resemblance to the early days of film where directors, like Georges Melies, were exploring a new medium and brought the familiar world of theater and its elaborate sets into the novel technology of jump cuts and stop animation.



Fig.15 Georges Melies, *Le Voyage dans la Lune* (*Voyage to the Moon*),

The results of this cross germination were a very unique, if short lived genre of filmmaking that seemed open to endless possibilities. In *Highway to Heaven*, the crossover is the pictorial to the sculptural but shares in this hybrid quality and contributes to its animated presence in the room. Much like *Highway to Heaven*, the many characters hanging from the roof of the tent in *The Great Escape* resemble characters in a play and the implication that the viewer may rearrange them brings the play to life. Though less clearly narrative, the sides of the frames

of *Light Body* are so warped and uneven that they feel like they could fall down at any moment and the hollow darkness of the windows suggest a void in which anything could be hiding. Given these instances discussed in the work, the sculptures' presence can manifest in one of two ways: anthropomorphism or implied action.

I dwell on the subject of presence because it brings me back to the investigation of the interior and exterior in the work. The presence, for instance of another person in a room, makes us aware of our presence in the room as well and therefore makes us self conscious. Fried describes this kind of presence as “disquieting” and “distancing” in its effect on the viewer. To know that there is another being experiencing the same space as us but to have the interior of their thoughts inaccessible, makes us aware of our own subjective interior. This is the fundamental basis of the movement that is kicked off from the interior self to its exterior environment into imaginings of another interior and back out again. I believe there is always a little anxiety around the ignorance of another's interior as described by Fried. By amping up the theatricality in my work responsible for its presence, there is a smoothing out of this transition from object to sculpture at the moment of its encounter with its audience. With a friendly wink it announces to the viewer that it is safe to engage.

Though idiosyncratic in many ways, the work does not seek to simply express my unique interior life. My hope is that when a viewer experiences the work, they go through these same moments of exploration through interiority and

exteriority and feel the sense of collaboration in drawing conclusions to the meaning of what they witness. The meaning of the work, therefore, is always in flux which keeps it viable as it becomes many things depending on its context. If multiple viewers are able to draw similar conclusions as to the meaning of the work that happen to overlap with my own then, like the converging shafts in *Light Body*, the overall meaning of the piece will begin to feel more solid. Perhaps, in the end, reality is nothing more than a lot of agreement.

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