No Ball Never Not Moves

by

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When walking past a rotting log, I think about bugs moving things around, and wonder how are they busying themselves? What is the number of sprouting fungi? How many things are changing? I want to know the intricacies of what's going on in that log. When I see a V formation of flying geese, I try to calculate the exact point one flies over me and I imagine grabbing a piece of chalk and making an X to mark the spot.

It began when I was young. I truly wanted to know everything, seeking a language of exactitude to counter a life of chaos. Unsolvable problems became riddles; abstract solutions became a means to an end.

My first influences were books. Herman Hesse's "The Glass Bead Game" and "The Fountainhead" by Ayn Rand shaped my concepts of the capabilities of mankind. I became focused on the rugged individualism Ayn Rand glorified, and the possibilities of a devoted intellectual community. I developed my own desire for excellence and dedication. I took the falling action of The Glass Bead Game as a personal warning against beliefs founded in a realm of pure intellectuality, resolving to give equal attention to things I observed externally and things I felt I knew in my guts.

I have recently rediscovered the work of Robert Smithson, and feel a deep resonance with his work. Smithson is especially relevant to the direction in which my work is going. In particular, I relate to his wall structures, mirror and salt works and his allusions to land as a reference point. Like Smithson, I am very interested in repetition in nature (crystalline structures, mirror images) and larger ideas boiled down into sculptural representational essence. I relate to this minimal aesthetic and complex undercurrent, as well as using the concept of mapping as a tool to organize conceptual strata.

Sarah Sze continues to influence me in her marked sensitivity to each relationship in her sprawling, weightless accumulations. The elements of her work are precious, warmly considered fragments of data independently at work. I have often looked at her work as an orchestrated traffic jam, amazed at her ability to control and allow the magic that occurs.

Regardless of the specific concept, I have always worked to purify what I experience and synthesize what I learn. This process of distillation occurs in my mind as I try to boil down the components that come together to create iconic representations of what I experience or understand. I then translate those components into physical representations and make sketches of them. As I begin to see flaws in planning the outcome of each piece I crave more exploration and discovery, and I want the process to be the point of origination.

My most recent work is comprised of a freestanding topographical diorama, with two connected satellite pieces. Organic shapes of land play with each other, gliding and floating above and below to create a loose topography. Each component is sensitive to the colors and shapes with which it interacts, and is conscious of the collective silhouette.

Excavations occur in fields of green terrain, revealing the individual materials that make up the substance of the earth: rocks embedded in moss colored powder, large salt crystals, gravel, and transparent shards of gelatinous plastic shimmering with hints of pink. There is an additional excavation occurring off the mainland that is marked by construction-orange flags around its perimeter, articulating the grid laid over the opening. The hole left is empty however, revealing the actual material of the underlying object: white translucent foam. The excavations are perfect squares, referencing human activity

and traditions of research, yet there are no piles of removed material to be found. The simplified aesthetic is reminiscent of images commonly found in grade school level science books, giving it an innocent intelligence. I have always been attracted to the specificity of these images, they represent reality, and yet they are detached from it, causing me to imagine them constructing their own.

The pair of detailed blow-ups also exhibit this simple style of representation. A cave located at the base of the mountain is connected to a diorama located on the wall, which contains a scene of stalactites and stalagmites. Upon closer inspection it becomes clear that the stalagmites are identical. A mound is found in the center of one set of stalagmites and a lake in the other. I am repeating images of nature, but giving each instance its own identity through a single detail, this represents both patterns, and complications through inconsistencies.

A mysterious globe separates a solitary deer from his herd, while a horse of a much larger scale stands feet away but times apart. Each goose flying over the mountain indicates the point over which it hovers with a line. Every example of wildlife is of its own scale and purpose, be it an articulation of data or mystery. The coordinates created by the geese have no practical application, they simply symbolize neutral information. This neutrality is important because it represents the different ways something can be analyzed or understood in a vacuum, providing a solid foundation for problem solving outside of that vacuum. The isolated deer references this solitary, controlled reflection. A grid on three of the four walls of the room acts as a field for the events to occur upon. A controlled color palate, ambiguous materials, complex detail, and a dynamic massing of

forms urge the viewer to become intimately familiar with the individual elements in order to understand the mentality of this created universe.

The simplification and repetition aids the viewer in digesting the relatively complex concepts presented. This stylization talks about pushing the boundaries of the traditional landscape. The simple, direct relationships insinuate that there are formulas in nature that, once understood, can be applied to infinite situations. Excavation and points of specificity in broad areas represent some of the building blocks that lead to a better understanding of the world. The world I have created indicates this by making all the elements visible, as in a diagram, so that they can be understood and compared simultaneously, without the distractions of reality.

Rocks have a natural fractal quality that I am very drawn to: scaled up or down, a rock is a mountain or a pebble. They contain the same amount of visual information. This is where it becomes possible for humans to represent nature—it would be impossible to recreate the level of detail that nature contains. I want to discover and play with these naturally occurring generalizations such as crystalline structures, rocks, and leaves.

At its most basic function, art has served as documentation and representation of the human experience. The scale model has remained true to this objective. So many people have been driven to create small versions of reality that an industry grew out of it. I wonder if people do this to better understand what they experience. Or if it is a way of being part of the reality it represents. The desired accuracy of this hobby is simultaneously what interests me and what excludes model making from the realm of fine art. The fact that so many people participate in this hobby indicates some basic level of universality, an objective perception of the world. Yet there is still room for a certain

subjectivity, which I wish to explore and push. Model making is an appropriate medium for the concepts I am working with because it represents the human desire to synthesize and understand their surroundings through simplified creation.

Completing my senior project caused me to examine the way that I work. Usually, a concept begins the calculated planning process that is then implemented in a systematic, rigid execution, resulting in a finished piece. This time, I purposely planned less from the beginning to allow for more discovery, and learned that that was what I enjoyed most. As I loosened up and trusted the journey I not only allowed for a development of my understanding of materials, but the concept became fuller and clearer as I worked. Where my past work sought to outline a philosophy, the plans I have for my future work is more experimental and direct. I want discovery to be my point of origination.