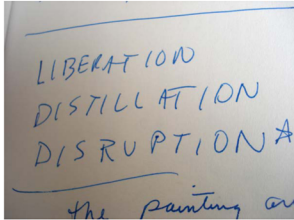


rachel uffner



1. What is your favorite thing about what happens when your work moves from the context of your studio to the context of an exhibition?

I think work usually looks better in the studio surrounded with it's stuff and it's mess. That said, I don't like trying to transport that look to the gallery and we want people to respond to the experience of seeing the work outside of the studio. I hope and know that somehow, the gallery creates a new context but it can be... (sometimes icky). My work has been exhibited in a lot of different types of spaces -- new under-visited galleries, non profit spaces, out-of-the-way museums, people's houses and more commercial galleries. These offer different types of experiences for the work and the viewers. Also, I'm using a very simplified explanation here-I still like to consider the gallery a "free space". I don't like the hierarchies that are in place sometimes. Of course many people don't, but we need to be reminded about that. It's the same sort of space that I hope gets defined and activated in the classroom.

I like the physical space the gallery offers to notice fragmentation, different angles, broken scales, de-centered ideas.

2. Is there anything that you feel gets consistently lost in translating your work from the studio to the exhibition site?

Well, artists have always been my best viewers, and they usually do pretty well with either site, but I don't want to exclude anyone. I want mostly for the work to give something to everyone. I think that something has gotten lost in the way the market is right now-but not the work. It's not that anything really gets lost, it's more that my work is constantly misunderstood, which is a form of loss. And it can also be a beautiful and complicated way to think about things. Some feminist theories rely on the misread metaphor. But I think right now there is some desire for clarity and then "CA-ching!" the sale. Because practice becomes content in the work and that doesn't always translate so easily to the other side. But it's pretty easy to explain how to look at it and a lot of other work:

"The ideal viewer would be okay with being temporarily stupefied --and then discovers that he can challenge his own conventions and comfort zones. He or she can pose a challenge to the dominant systems of thought, and the desire to translate the art into normative syntax." Not a direct quote, but me remembering something I read in *Ugly Feelings*.

I think of this sort of transaction as being political, but also moody and this is where I want the work to go. And what gets lost.

We live in the times where there is a lot of insistence that every day life and the art should be connected or "related". I'm a product of the 90's so I like hard critiquing and languages that had to be created to help us understand the visual-- but that didn't work out so well. They way out is poetry and more hard looking.

3. This may be the first time some viewers in L.A. may be encountering your work (and it is only a sampling)—what information about your larger practice would you want them to know?

-Because so much of my work is a result of how it is made -and it is dramatic to make sculpture-- it can be described as an attempt to expose the sort of image/experience/ edit that I go through when I'm in the studio or considering making a project. It seems confusing and arbitrary-but it is practice that has gotten me to this place. I'm okay if it's vague as long as it has been attained via constructed vagueness. And my love of form and sculptural concerns-things like composition, balance, volume, hollowness and materials, are constant considerations to me. I add to this approach my willingness to embrace chance or vulnerability as methods to add meaning-- and to make a connection to the condition of a contemporary life.

-That practically no one sticks with sculpture. That I have variety in my materials and ideas. That I have grown mushrooms and made gardens, shot videos, painted, made work to be given away, studied clouds and vents for form --all this and more as conditions to study sculpture.

4. What knowledge would you like for them to walk away with?

Anxiety, the parameters of sculpture, ones' physical approach to the work, and the beauty of failure. The relationship of the built environment to the landscape, homages to past art and artists, the history of sculpture, animals, global warming, plants, Buster Keaton, the residual use of logos, hollowness, and witchcraft. Stupidity, paranoia, and all of the sublimes.

5. If the same viewers of this show traveled all the way to New York to visit you in the studio, what would you additionally show them or say to them in person?

This is sort of like #3 and #4, so I'll continue.....

I am always seeking to initiate new thought processes and critical strategies to think about the work, even the same pieces. Since I have often adopted new approaches to both making the work and thinking about it and given that it is imbued with both a metaphorical and a literal dimension, it has assumed an extraordinarily diverse and multifarious range of formulations. I have often taken on adoptive methods for the sculpture-this is why I began painting about three years ago. Making the paintings increases the range of possibilities and is built into my practice to add meaning. In this work I want the painting too also offer variety. It all is positioned in painting space, but in that space it offers a world of variety. In addition there is also representation; which always complicates how an idea is considered. And -- reading the representation literally does not necessarily help you understand the work. And-- the idea that abstract and representational work are totally disconnected is ridiculous.



6. Can you tell us a little bit about the intergenerational pottery club you began?

Lots of artists have come by and made a ceramic cactus or a dog bowl or a sculpture. But there have also been some celebrity stand-up comics and chefs -- so it's in the spirit of all things at once on Sunday morning.

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7. Would you like to talk about all of the drag going on in your studio?
Every artwork seems to be either trying on another's media or getting a makeover.

I think sculpture is best described by the things it is not. Not painting, not film, not the body, so you have to have some of that around or try some of those to help the sculpture with its confused relationship to things in the world. When I say that I mean something like a chair.

8. Can you address some of the iconography within these new sculptures, (such as the colored stripes, the inverted gargoyles-like owls, etc.)?

I'm not a shopper. I don't use found or bought things, I just make them. It is a different kind of political to me -- to be hand made, which is a whole other conversation. Some of these things are from moments in sculpture or architecture that have a secret political life and some are just crazy stuff that I grab and becomes part of my work, like the way a social group can form.

Some of the paintings are made in such a state that I feel like they are found. Like the cooking show I saw advertised where someone was rushing around so much it was called "Get Out of My Way!".

9. How important is humor in your practice?

Very. But humor works so well with the body. I think that stand up comedy has the same relationship with sculpture that poetry should have with literary criticism. It's a vehicle to study but it will never translate.

10. Is there a relationship between your role as an art educator and your own consistent practice of maintaining a sketchbook?

The years of the sketchbooks are more about the active internal editing that I do when I close the door to the studio to make some of the work. It's not about shutting the world out. It's more about my practice and my very active inner life. I teach as a practitioner, but not necessarily as an extension of my practice. The last couple years it got a bit more bridged. I did a book of cartoons "about" teaching. But they are not meant as pedagogy, they are my work.

