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Un – quiet Body, Caving (in), Waxing

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Master
of Fine Arts

in

Visual Arts

by

Shana Jeanette Alpino

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2016

The Thesis of Shana Jeanette Alpino is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

Chair

University of California, San Diego

2016

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Un – Quiet Body, Caving (in), Waxing

by

Shana Jeanette Alpino

Master of Fine Arts in Visual Arts

University of California, San Diego, 2016

Professor Anya Gallaccio, Chair

Both the *failure to meet*, and the *surpassing of* expectations are without the intrigue that comes from their circumvention all together. At our most static there exists within, infinite motions of varying degrees. This is beyond the absence of staticity; it is rather the impossibility of it within what lives.

To encounter what lives is to encounter the other and the self simultaneously. There is anxiety here, seductive and repellent, as this work oozes alluring duality. Comparatively, in the more readily present, unmoving sculpture,

there exists a litany of safeties that solidify otherness alone: an inert stillness, a resonating unchanged volume and an irrevocable denial of time.

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Un – Quiet Body, Caving (In), Waxing

by

Shana Demassi (Alpino)

As we drift further into orbit, the things of our world grow wheels and speak invisibly across unseen lines. This torrential onslaught of mobility has not redefined the home thus far, but rather the definition is pending: the living world *becoming*. The home built on solid ground can be seen as uncanny, made unhomely by the times. From caving inside to placing inside on our back, what does it mean to carry home with you? If a sculpture can become home, can that home become visually tactile, physical, and can it crawl across the floor? Can it rise from the interior and grow towards the artificial lights of the ceiling? Who will feed it and who will be fed, and how malleable and long lived will the home for this food be?

Waxing is often imperceptible. From the seed of an idea to its pinnacle there is both space and time. This time line, often misrepresented as straight, in fact bends, curves, and pulses in disproportionate dimensions. The living line has no counterpart in the illustrations of books. It glistens, wet with life, like the shiny overlapping folds of soft tissue from which it arises.

Instability, Motion, Rhythm; Insolidity is Alive

Glass is now officially an amorphous solid, after years of belief that it was in fact a slow moving liquid. Much like the physical properties of the material itself, the argument continues to live, unseen but *in motion*. When you stand in front of “*a not – yet being*”, you are looking through a surface that moves, though you can’t see it. If you focus upon the imagery, you can’t see the material at all, but it’s still there, moving between you and what you see like the cornea of your eye.

The shiny exterior encapsulates the collage of lips like the gloss actually on their surface some time ago when they were captured by photography. They are captured again, but with compositional rhythm that swirls the eye to life, denying it rest even at the meandering border. The lips quiver *en masse*, a number of skilled performers collectively kissing each other and the viewer with sumptuous vitality, though fading inks mirror the time from delicacy to wrinkle to dust.

The line of “*it is not, it goes on*” will not stay still. The flexibility of it’s decaying insides paired with the viscosity of rubber skin sway, alive in unison with the conditions of changing surroundings. To pin down is to understand, to understand is to know. To know what cannot be wholly pinned down requires living understanding, thinking in motion, an absence of staticity in constant revision. To support instability is a fragile affair, the looming potential of shattering failure ever

present, but this is to live. This is to spring not from solid ground but rather the cracks that resist containment, to stand with feet on opposite sides of a fault line at once, to take a nervous breath a moment before the incident bursts.

Opposites, often presented as linear and separated, are in many cases actually just diametric points of a continuum, a *cycle* with many other points in between. In this a singular can be seen at the same time as a duality. A solid piece of ground extracted from its home can become a home itself, this division being as momentary as changing property lines, or the boundaries of a nation. The sculpture “*to move and stand in one place at the same time*” is whole and missing something at once. It is formed and falling apart, solid and with voids. Almost as a cubist intention, it is not one moment but many: not the frozen still life but the breathing real life. There are residents and visitors, essential ingredients for *interaction*; whether physical or mental, this is the activity of life.

Obscured Familiarity, Unhomeliness: The Return of the Prodigal Object

The strength often attributed to numbers is multifaceted, one isolated facet being the uncanniness of the usual (thus expected or accepted) vs. whatever else may be. To come upon none, one or some snails may be experientially ordinary while coming upon more than 100 may be extraordinary. There is an amplification and perhaps magnification that occurs towards the *often overlooked* by this tactic. While there may be hundreds upon hundreds of snails around our homes, it is seeing them at once that carries weight, not suppositions: this is the manifestation of the real that lives, not alludes to living; strange and underrepresented.

This unhomeliness is furthered by transplantation. The often sterile white cube can be disrupted by dirt and slimy crawlers, things that parasitically feed off the sterile surroundings to grow the mutual obscured familiarity of both- an additional compounding factor being the unpredictability of living creatures, incapable of understanding the socialized rules *we* observe in public spaces. These conditions dance with potential for both discord and harmony from moment to moment, and the living situation is unconcerned, unrestricted, and uninterrupted by business hours, attendance, and even changing conditions, which it instantly absorbs into its beating definition.

The lips of "*a not – yet being*" mirror this estrangement by numbers, grotesquely polluting desirability to the point of repulsion, but allowing for an elastic nature where this desirability is free to return and depart like the turning lamp of a lighthouse in the dark. The interplay encourages time, and with such a broad range of tiny moments to consider, this time can extend. From a larger view, an additional extension of altered familiarity is available by comparison of these lips to the other work, where they crawl, minus their wet pink surface which has adhered to another moving body elsewhere.

Allure, Seduction, Monstrosity: Licking the Grotesque

Materials can be both physically and visually tactile, the visually being of central interest when making work that desires reaching out: work that is too impatient to wait for the viewers touch but rather is wanting of touching the viewer from a distance. Whether that be inciting the keeping of a distance for fear of an unbalanced moment of accidental touch, or a leaning closer for a more finite inspection, the materials selected are charged to both attract and repel.

In a barren desert, the enticement of the only thing that grows is undeniable as it reveals, centralizes and grounds the location of water, of food, of life itself. However to approach the oasis and find decay there, or wandering resident guardians sustained by it, is a moment of pause, of potential retreat: *push and pull*. To see the imperfections in the oasis transform it to mirage: *rise and fall*.

The glowing pink skin of a contorted projection invites curiosity. Clearly visible in plain sight or from the corner of the eye, the color is both an invitation like the cellophane wrapper of a piece of candy, and sickly like a bottle of pink pepto bismol. To advance to the object is to see it's delicate nature and looming potential. There is enough space to pass beneath, frustratingly just out of arms reach.

From afar the lips are indistinguishable, floral yet abstract. Nearing, there is a moment when they come into focus. From there, they may serve as a call to play or a slug – like, vomitus body agape that is overly demanding and repellant.

Becoming: Dodging the Intervalometer Indefinitely

It takes volumes of water to encourage growth. The water flows, it adds weight, it nourishes, it erodes soil, it evaporates. It is a piece of a piece “*to move and stand in one place at the same time*” overlooked, but there. This work is becoming more and less all the time. If the degrees are left unconsidered, it is simply *becoming* all the time. Un-choreographed, residents move in and out like visitors. Some stay, others check out. Some get close, some are hiding. Someone needs to tend the grass or it’ll get shaggy, or yellow, or hungry. It might even attract something, maybe something will eat it.

The gravity of the bright line “*it is not, it goes on*” is weighing heavy on itself. It sags a little bit more everyday. I’m thinking it becomes an arc but maybe one day it just snaps. For a moment it was balanced as close to the word “perfectly” as warrants its use, but a lot of moments have gone by since then, and a lot more are going to go. The smooth glass crutch is strong and clear, but the potential to be slippery, even sharp, is there. There is a resulting echo, a silent buzz, a lit fuse, a second, elongated stare when you realize the car is not going to make the turn. This pregnant moment is translated from feeling to the humming tension inside the physical line itself. The echoing anticipation of the burst can be louder, longer, and more to deal with than the burst itself in many situations, like blocks of ice sliding past one another before the avalanche.

The only wall piece, "*a not-yet being*" is frameless but not glassless. The edge of that glass has nowhere to hide and only a few small places to rest. The hangers are like arrows drawn back in a bow, holding.

Drawing Lines Without Implements: Living Lines

The branch of *"it is not, it goes on"* is essentially a found line selected from a fallen tree. It is reanimated, transformed by the chemistry of death and other chemistries to a new, old form. The line is alive both in its stability and instability, twisted into form by decision, but fighting, falling, and sinking. It is in flux for all its life as an artwork, partially stabilized, but resonant of the ground below through ever-present vibration; the frequency-variance potentially wide as an ocean. The same turbulence is visual in the strange roaming of the line itself, which juts around as if in search of further growth. The counterweight dropped onto this line lowers, snugly melding itself around it. Its densely fertile insides are exposed, the cracked lines of a rupture framing a peak. The round mass is not whole, not defunct, it is between. It has weight but not like stone, rather like an overly dense lighter material, like freshly aerated soil too moist to fall apart momentarily. The lines inside are infinitely joinable and divisible by the eye, interlaced, muddy.

The living lines trailing behind the residents of *"to move and stand in one place at the same time"* are uncontrollable. They may evolve into strands of glistening hair upon the work, the gallery, the outside world, just as easily as they may concentrate like pools of sloshed liquid, burped over the side of a container with no lid. There is a blank, transparent canvas, which may draw their work, as the press their bodies against it - a totally uncontained space which is frameless but

framing; a comfortable rectangle familiar like a sliding door, simultaneously a barrier, window, entrance, exit. A living/dying line of grass grows in a collapse, a caving in, a cliff falling away minute by minute. Between this rough block and the polished window there are reinforced connections. They appear stable; kind of.

The lines of the red carpet and the lines at the supermarket intersect on the magazine rack, an ephemeral window whose view is so desirable it is duplicated and triplicated unceasingly. The soft, desirable comfort it offers is mirrored in "*a not-yet being*", and the lips it exposes as all different and all the same at once. Undulating lines like those formed by trained muscles in the crooks of the lips roll and boil below the wet surface. A rambling border and absent frame are in collusion with the lips, keeping the line alive and moving, offering no rest for attendees: no sanctuary here.

Growing in What: Spurts, Size, Support, Age, Definition, Etc.

Growth disregards a compass as it occurs in any direction. It also may be in any unit type measurable, the unit less significant than the measurability for definition. There are visible growths present in many places on this work, and some invisible. Grass can be measured with a ruler, a number may be counted with a finger, but some measurements, the kind taken in mind, are slippery to authenticate and substantiate.

The piece "*a not – yet being*" is the growth of a collection as well as a unified body from body parts. From "framed" to "free" and "free" to "framed" there are different kinds of growth. This shifting middle ground is embodied in the bilocation of this work. Growing towards both simultaneously, it is fragile but safe, *held* in rather than locked. The form of the image itself is changing and unchanged at once, with growths by visual alignments that appear, shift, and regroup, appearing different over time. From many multiples grows one; the single cut out portion printed a million times in replication, rendered individual by a grouping existing in only one place.

"to move and stand in one place at the same time" has a tendency to grow in size. In the physical sense, the outward expansion of its inhabitants over space changes its dimensions. The screen they sometimes traverse can also become a

projector, exhibiting their lengthening shadows elsewhere. At times the population changes, growing larger or smaller. The far ends of materiality are posted, from the earth below to the factory ejected, the chemistry to the raw element. They are united by growth that coincides with our technological progress spanning thousands of years. The single pane of glass present, at times is sandwiched by living flesh. Comparatively, the two panes across the room sandwich the image of living flesh. Both scenarios grow incomparably.