

KALEIDOSCOPE

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K.R.M. MOONEY

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BY JEANNE GERRITY

People are quick to mention that K.r.m. Mooney was trained as a jeweler. In press releases, reviews and exhibition texts, this detail is grasped onto as key to understanding work that defies categories, escapes medium specificity and engages with its site. As though a connection to a profession outside of the fine arts could help explicate work that offers a quietly radical rethinking of our position in the world. Mooney's exquisitely detailed sculptures exhibit masterful technical skill, but more importantly, they also demand a change in perspective. Diminutive cast metal objects attach to ceiling beams above eye level, while connected grey postindustrial parts rest on the floor in harm's way. These strange yet familiar amalgams can resemble delicate living flora or suggest a cold, mechanical future, and often do both at once.

In an interview with artist A.K. Burns, Mooney said, "I'm interested in how difference is more present than ever within human and non-human bodies: intersex fish or flowers as interspecies cyborgs." In Mooney's work, clarinet parts reference both physical tools and the intangible sensation of wind moving through the body, a silver-plated steel can paired with cast lavender contrasts the manmade and the organic, and steel wire and plated fragments of plants wrap around fluorescent lights. The Cartesian dualism of mind and body inherent in the work establishes a language of diversity that introduces more questions than answers. Unexpected materials such as orange peels, silver, cuttlebone, glass, aluminum and molasses become deliberate agents in the creation of these unstable positions.

Space is also a material in Mooney's work, and they frequently choose to exhibit in trans-spatial sites. Take their first solo exhibitions in Oak-

K.r.m. Mooney (American, b. 1990) lives and works in Oakland. They are represented by Altman Siegel, San Francisco, and Hester, New York.

Mooney will have a solo exhibition at Altman Siegel at the beginning of 2017.

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Image: *Pose-Bin for Still Action*, 2014
Courtesy of the artist

land, California, at Important Projects (2013) and n/a (2014), or their recent shows "Near Passerine" at Pied-à-Terre in Ottsville, Pennsylvania (2015), and "Oscine" at Reserve Ames in Los Angeles (2016). Both Important Projects and n/a are apartment galleries that exist in liminal zones hovering between public and private. Pied-à-Terre is located in a small red shack in the countryside far from an art world center, while Reserve Ames is an old wooden shed with weeds pushing through the cracks.

Without the context of the traditional white cube, site is a key player in Mooney's exhibitions, emphasizing connections between space and body. "Near Passerine" consists of a single work that clings to the doorframe: a frosted glass form holding organic materials intersected by a silver-plated steel bar. The work resides on the edge of the structure, eschewing the impulse to fill the gallery space. At Reserve Ames, a dog whistle, which is designed to emit a high frequency that humans cannot hear, is integrated into a work, and acoustics become an alternate approach to the exhibition. Passerine and oscine are terms for songbirds, alluding both to this imperceptible sound and to the idea that in nature, identity is always mutable. Mooney is influenced by Donna Haraway's idea of abstraction as a tactic, and the objects here are a means of engaging with bodies in space.

Mooney's subtle monochrome assemblages of manufactured elements and natural components are abstract sculptures that host a bevy of references, creating complicated inter-subjective systems notable for their embrace of difference and diversity. They encourage the viewer to delve deep, exploring all possible meanings, intentional and otherwise. ◀

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